

Natural therapy

Business start-up guide

Natural therapy industry overview

Businesses in the natural therapy industry deliver alternative therapies that are not commonly practised under mainstream Western medicine.

Treatments given in the natural therapy industry are intended to either complement Western medicine or as an alternative form of treatment. Treatments include:

- acupuncture
- traditional Chinese medicine
- chiropractic services
- herbal remedies
- massage
- aromatherapy
- homeopathy
- other therapies that fall outside of the scope of commonly accepted Western medicine.

Over the past decade, alternative and complementary health therapies have increased in availability and acceptance among the general community. This indicates a community desire to extend these services and the global influence on Australia's health services.

Starting or buying a natural therapy business involves many essential steps. Legally, you must ensure that you apply for and receive the correct licences.

This guide explains how to start a natural therapy business in Queensland. It will help you understand the challenges and opportunities of entering the natural therapy industry so you can make good business decisions.

Getting into the natural therapy industry

Before you start a natural therapy business in Queensland, you need to understand how the industry works, what things you need to consider in your planning, and the legal requirements you must meet.

Finding a competitive edge in Queensland's natural therapy industry

Prospective clients often choose a natural therapist based on price because Medicare doesn't cover most treatments. However, some private health funds do cover some of the costs of natural therapy if it is provided by a registered practitioner. You may be able to register as a recognised natural therapist with some private health funds, which can help you attract more customers.

As well as pricing your services competitively, you can find a competitive edge by providing exceptional quality of care and offering a range of treatments.

The level of personal interaction involved in treatments means that you can also find a competitive edge through your personality and connection with clients. This can build customer loyalty and result in more business through word-of-mouth recommendations.

Key success factors for a natural therapy business

To start a successful natural therapy business, you need to:

- be a member of an industry organisation
- offer a range of services
- grow your reputation and client loyalty
- find a good location that is easy for your target market to get to.

Natural therapy industry entry barriers

The natural therapies industry faces external competition from allied health services, such as those provided by physiotherapists, dieticians and nutritionists.

Aside from external competition, there are few barriers to entering this industry. New operators can start by treating customers in their own homes. Set-up costs to

establish a practice are therefore relatively low.

Entry into certain segments of the industry requires some level of skill and training. The industry is becoming more professionalised, so barriers to entry are expected to increase, but remain low overall.

(Source IBISWorld, March 2012)

Natural therapy industry requirements

A number of licensing and registration regulations govern the natural therapy industry. When starting a natural therapy business you need to consider the following requirements.

Importing goods from overseas (including therapeutic products)

If you import goods (including therapeutic products like herbal medicines, massage oils etc) from overseas, you may be subject to import controls managed by the [Australian Customs and Border Protection Service](#). Import controls are immediate in effect and costs include duties and taxes on the arrival of goods. Goods being imported into Australia without the necessary permits can be seized on arrival so check with Customs to see if the goods you import are permitted into Australia.

You may also need approval from the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#) to import controlled substances. You may need this approval to import substances, such as steroids, growth hormones and narcotics.

Manufacturing therapeutic goods

If you manufacture therapeutic goods (e.g. herbal skin care products), you may need a Licence to Manufacture Therapeutic Goods from the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#). Licence costs vary and it may take the Therapeutic Goods Administration up to 6 months to process your application. You may need this licence to manufacture therapeutic goods that are used for the prevention, diagnosis or treatment of sickness and disease.

Marketing therapeutic goods under your name

If you market therapeutic goods under your name, you may need to register or list these goods with the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#).

Legislation that may apply to your business

- *Customs Act 1901*
- Customs (Prohibited Imports) Regulation 1956
- *Health Act 1937*
- Health Regulation 1996
- Heath (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation
- *Therapeutic Goods Act 1989*
- Therapeutic Goods Regulation
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

To access copies of legislation, visit www.legislation.qld.gov.au.

Useful industry contacts

Business Support Unit

For more information on licences, regulations, market research, business planning and other support services phone 13 25 23 or visit business.qld.gov.au

Australian Acupuncture and Chinese Medicine Association Ltd

Phone (07) 3324 2599

Visit www.acupuncture.org.au

Australian Register of Homeopaths

Phone 0488 065 145

Visit www.aroh.com.au

Australian Natural Therapists Association Ltd

Phone 1800 817 577

Visit www.anta.com.au

Australian Traditional-Medicine Society (ATMS)

Phone (02) 8878 1500

Visit www.atms.com.au

Chiropractors' Association of Australia

Phone 1800 075 003

Visit www.chiropractors.asn.au

Chiropractic & Osteopathic College of Australasia

Phone 1300 139 950

Visit www.coca.com.au



National Herbalists Association of Australia

Phone (02) 8765 0071

Visit www.nhaa.org.au

Australian Association of Massage Therapists

Phone 1300 138 872

Visit www.aamt.com.au

Australian Homoeopathic Association

Phone 0409 476 847

Visit www.homeopathyoz.org

Massage Association of Australia

Phone (03) 9555 9900

Visit www.maa.org.au

