

China-Australia Chinese Medicine International Cooperation and Promotion

Signing Ceremony and Forum

**Professor Peter Shergold
Chancellor, University of Western Sydney**

12 November 2012 – Shangri-La Hotel, Beijing

Good morning everyone. Welcome.

I am very pleased to be here representing the University of Western Sydney, within which sits the National Institute of Complementary Medicine and the Centre for Complementary Medicine Research. On behalf of myself and Professor Alan Bensoussan I would like to acknowledge:

- Our generous hosts Mr Liu, Hui and Ms Yan, Ao Shuang from Beijing Municipal Commission of Science and Technology;
- Professors Fan, Ji Ping and Liu, Bao Yan, Vice Presidents of the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences;
- Mr Li, Da Ning, Vice Director, State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine;
- Mr Li, Zhen Jiang, Chairman of Shineway Pharmaceuticals;
- Professors Tang, Xu Dong and Liu, Jian Xun, President and Vice President of Xiyuan Hospital;
- Mr Wu, Zhen, Deputy Director, State Food and Drug Administration; and
- Mr Jin, Xiao Ming, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Science and Technology.

Reflecting the importance which the Australian Government places on such Australian-Chinese cooperation, I welcome in particular Ms Cathryn Hlavka, Minister Counsellor (Education and Research) from our Australian Embassy.

It is a great pleasure to be here, as head of our University delegation. We are about to sign four agreements. These agreements are important. They will allow us to strengthen and deepen our relationship with Xiyuan Hospital, particularly through the establishment of a Joint Research and Development Centre. We will sign a renewal of a collaborative agreement between our National

Institute of Complementary Medicine and the China Academy of Chinese Medical Sciences. And importantly we will sign a major clinical trial agreement between Shineway Pharmaceuticals and our Centre for Complementary Medicine Research.

Each of these agreements formalise and provide structure around partnerships, and friendships, that have grown over many years. They assist to further develop and expand collaborative research, clinical training and a range of education activities between our organisations.

The agreement with Shineway Pharmaceuticals also symbolises an important new step in Australia-China relations - it represents the largest clinical trial of Chinese medicine funded by a Chinese company to be undertaken in Australia. Whilst commissioned international trials like this are routine for the pharmaceutical industry, this research project demonstrates a maturing of the Chinese medicine industry and a courageous but critical first step in internationalising Chinese medicine. This is why we are delighted to be here today.

The University of Western Sydney is one of Australia's largest and fastest growing universities. It is already an internationally recognised leader in Chinese medicine research. We send our students to study in this country. Most importantly our University's research has helped influence Australian government policy, leading this year to the national regulation of Chinese medicine practitioners. I cannot over emphasise the significance of this development. Australia is the first western nation to do so.

Australia has also built over time an environment for herbal medicine product approval and regulation that formally and explicitly recognises the traditional claims made by Chinese medicine. To my knowledge we are the only regulatory environment in the West to do this. This is a win-win situation. Australia can enjoy the benefits of China's rich and impressive medical traditions: China can use Australia to help gain wider international recognition and respect for its herbal remedies.

This cooperation is significant. Australia places great importance on our economic, trade and cultural relationship with China. Building these ties is one of the top priorities of our Government. Indeed, in the last two weeks our Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard, released a White Paper entitled Australia in the Asian Century. This White Paper articulates a clear recognition of the importance and role of a rising China in the global economy.

The University of Western Sydney can provide a conduit to enhance this important, mutually beneficial partnership. Over the years the University has received significant support from both the Australian and NSW State Governments to build research and development partnerships with Chinese academic units, hospitals and companies with an interest in strengthening the appropriate

use of Chinese medicine. The agreements we will sign today represent some of the fruits of these efforts.

China is the birthplace of traditional Chinese medicine. It is the most developed indigenous medicine in the world. The world has a growing interest in it. Consumers globally want to be able to exercise greater choice and make informed decisions on how they manage their health, maintain their well-being and address illness. Chinese medicine provides additional options, but to date it is not well understood or developed in the West.

My perception, however, is that China has reached a crucial point in the transmission of Chinese medicine internationally. There are key opportunities ahead, which need to be developed in a strategic manner. Australia has a transparent and supportive regulatory environment for herbal medicines and an international reputation for strong medical research. Not all environments are as welcoming of Chinese medicine as Australia.

The University of Western Sydney specifically is committed to offering help in this regard. Our University has a strong history of education and research in Chinese medicine. We are the only Australian university providing qualifying programs in both Chinese medicine and conventional western medicine. This has enabled the development of strong collaborative research and integrative care principles.

The University of Western Sydney brings to these partnerships we are about to sign, our academic resources and know-how, our well respected teaching and our reputation for careful and internationally recognised research. Above all we bring our history of, and future commitment to, the international development of Chinese medicine.

I would like to acknowledge all of my University colleagues who are present for their efforts over the years in fostering cooperation in traditional Chinese medicine activities with China. I say to them, as to you, how important they are to the intellectual vigour of the University of Western Sydney.

I commend these agreements and the relationships they reflect. Thank you to all of our Chinese colleagues for building these relationships and supporting the wider vision of the scientific validation of strong Chinese medicines for a world community. I wish you all successful collaborations.

I look forward to visiting again in the near future to see at first hand the fruits of our partnerships.