



## POSITION STATEMENT

### The Practise of Laser/Photobiomodulation Therapy

The Australian Medical Laser Association, Inc. (AMLA) is primarily responsible for promoting and facilitating the advancement of laser medicine, photobiomodulation and allied sciences in Australia. Two key elements of this responsibility are to encourage effective regulation, and to cultivate and maintain the highest principles of practice and ethics.

The use of lasers and other light-based devices is becoming popular in physical therapy and rehabilitation, dentistry, and human and veterinary medicine. In particular, Photobiomodulation (PBM), also called Laser Therapy or LLLT, is a highly-tolerable and generally safe and effective method of treatment for pain, inflammation and tissue repair when used appropriately.

**It is the AMLA Council's considered opinion that LLLT/PBM should be prescribed and applied only by appropriately-qualified, licensed, accredited and/or registered medical or allied health practitioners acting within their scope of qualified practice as defined by the relevant National Board and in compliance with State regulations and/or Federal Legislation.**

### Background

The use of lasers and other light-based devices to alleviate pain, promote wound-healing and tissue-regeneration, resolve inflammation, reduce oedema, and to stimulate acupuncture points, is becoming popular in physical therapy and rehabilitation, dentistry, and human and veterinary medicine.

Devices used in such applications typically produce visible and/or infrared light of sufficiently low intensity that it does not cause destruction of the irradiated tissue, nor do they necessarily employ the light output to heat the tissue in order to elicit beneficial effects.

Many terms have been used to describe this form of light-based treatment, such as *Low-Level Laser/Light Therapy (LLLT)*, *Low-Intensity Laser/Light Therapy (LILT)*, *Laser Phototherapy (LPT)* or, simply, *Laser Therapy*, however, the most accurately descriptive name is Photobiomodulation (PBM) Therapy.

PBM Therapy is formally defined as:

*"A form of light therapy that utilises non-ionising forms of light sources, including lasers, LEDs, and broadband light, in the visible and infrared spectrum. It is a nonthermal process involving endogenous chromophores eliciting photophysical (i.e., linear and nonlinear) and photochemical events at various biological scales. This process results in beneficial therapeutic outcomes including but not limited to the alleviation of pain or inflammation, immunomodulation, and promotion of wound healing and tissue regeneration."*

PBM is an easily-applied, non-invasive method of treatment with few contraindications or side-effects, and it is considered safe when applicable measures (such as e.g. the wearing of suitable laser-protective eyewear) are employed. However, PBM is an active therapeutic intervention and, as such, should be utilised only when medically-appropriate for the treatment of a specific diagnosed condition.

Further, PBM should be applied only by an appropriately-qualified and suitably-trained health practitioner. For example, a Podiatrist is an allied health practitioner who specialises in foot and lower limb disorders and associated chronic diseases, and, so, is not appropriately-qualified to diagnose or treat shoulder pain, as this is outside his or her Scope of Practice.

When in doubt, consumers should ask their medical or health practitioner about their qualifications, training and experience relevant to the specific treatments being provided.