

Senate Select Committee into
Funding of Research into Cancers with Low Survival rates
C/O Committee Secretary
Department of the Senate
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

20 October 2017

Via email: cancer.research.sen@aph.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Response to Questions on Notice (hearing date, 8 June 2017)

Medicines Australia would like to thank the Committee for the opportunity to appear before it during Inquiry hearings in Canberra on 8 June 2017. During the hearing, Medicines Australia took a number of Questions on Notice. [Attachment A](#) provides our considered responses.

Overall, we believe more can be done to reduce the barriers to the funding of research into, especially cancers with low survival rates. In particular, reforms that help bring efficiencies in the setting up and running of clinical trials in Australia would more likely result in Australian patients having more scope to access the cutting-edge, novel therapies that at least for rare disease, are often only accessible through clinical trials. We consider that the recent allocation by COAG of \$7 million toward clinical trials reforms is a positive step in the right direction; important inroads on streamlining of research governance have also been made by the National Health and Medical Research Centre (NHMRC), but funding for this work has unfortunately ceased.

Pricing and reimbursement systems including the processes leading up to decisions about whether to list a medicine on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), also merit examination. Rare disease molecules are often not well-accommodated by the current processes. As the national therapeutic goods regulatory reform agenda has resulted in welcome amendments to the definition of such things as 'orphan' drugs, and will speed up regulatory approvals in certain cases of high unmet need, it is now also time to review the reimbursement processes for those medicines.

We trust that this response to the Questions on Notice will serve to highlight these points, and we thank you for the questions. Should you require any further information on this submission, please contact Ms Elizabeth De Somer, Director Research & Policy, at edesomer@medaus.com.au or 02 6122 8525.

Yours faithfully



Chief Executive