

RARE CANCERS AUSTRALIA SUBMISSION ACCESS TO CANCER MEDICINES IN AUSTRALIA REPORT

The Deloitte Access Economics report on Access to Cancer Medicines in Australia shines a much needed light on the need for change to the systems and processes we currently have in place to treat Australians with cancer. In days past, the PBS and other government initiatives provided our community with world's best practice in the treatment of the disease. In particular, there was significant focus on the more common cancers namely, breast, bowel, lung, melanoma and prostate.

Sadly, we have been and still are, less successful with the treatment of rare and less common cancers. There are many reasons for this disparity including lack of research, lack of awareness and, when treatments are available, lack of mechanisms to ensure that Australians with rare and less common cancers can receive affordable access to those treatments.

The current cost effectiveness tests for listing of drugs on the PBS require extensive clinical trial data that is difficult if not impossible to provide in the case of rare cancers. This makes the approval process and subsequent agreement on commercial terms of supply extremely challenging.

The current mechanisms in place to address the issue of rare diseases being the Life Saving Drugs Program and the Rule of Rescue have not been used to facilitate the funding of treatments for rare and less cancers. They are not a solution.

As our understanding of cancer increases and the pharmaceutical industry produces more targeted therapies that are applicable to small or rare patient groups the challenge of assessing and funding new treatments for small population groups will increase.

Cancer doesn't give second chances, it is a lethal disease. With this in mind Rare Cancers Australia believes we urgently need an interim mechanism to expedite access to the latest cancer drugs whilst a detailed review of the PBS approval process can be undertaken.

Rare Cancers Australia would like to thank the OIT for the invitation to comment and applaud the taskforce for the commissioning of the report.