

6 May 2022

Hon Mark Butler MP  
Shadow Minister for Health and Ageing  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Mr Butler,

**RE: FEDERAL ELECTION 2022**

I write on behalf of Medicines Australia, the peak body representing the research driven, innovative medicines industry in Australia.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the support that you and the Australian Labor Party have shown for the innovative medicines industry and the challenge of delivering accessible and affordable medicines for Australian patients.

As the Federal Election draws near, Medicines Australia is seeking the commitment of the ALP to support our industry's policy priorities to ensure Australia continues to strive for the timeliest medicines access for patients and promptly lists all medicines that receive a positive recommendation from the PBAC.

The addendum to this letter outlines Medicines Australia's four policy priorities for your consideration and commitment if the ALP wins government. Medicines Australia wants to work with you, in partnership, to deliver a world's best healthcare system in Australia. Good health policy underpins economic and social policy more broadly.

Medicines Australia will also seek similar commitments from the Coalition on the policy objectives outlined in the addendum. We intend to share the commitments agreed to by the ALP and Coalition with our members, including making these publicly available online prior to election day.

If you or your office would like to discuss this, please feel free to contact me directly on 0418 774 596.

I look forward to receiving the ALP's response in due course and wish you all the very best for the upcoming election campaign.

Yours sincerely,



Elizabeth de Somer  
Chief Executive Officer

*Cc: Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Labor Leader*

## ELECTION COMMITMENT REQUESTS

### 1. Deliver on the commitments made in the Strategic Agreement

Given the central role played by the Strategic Agreement in ensuring faster access for Australian patients to new therapies, Medicines Australia looks forward to its full implementation according to agreed KPIs and timelines. In particular, Medicines Australia is seeking from the ALP a commitment to deliver on:

- A shared goal of reducing time to medicines access for patients and encouraging Australia's attractiveness as a first launch country (this aligns with Medicines Australia's pre-Budget submission calling on the Government to commit Australia to reaching the top 5 of similar OECD countries for speed of access by 2027)
- The independent Health Technology Assessment review, including to better capture the value of new medicines to patients
- Early consideration and notification of changes to medicines listings eligible for ministerial discretion
- A reduced discount rate applied to medicines to match international best practice

Medicines Australia further seeks assurance that appropriate departmental resources are made available to progress these reforms as quickly as possible, including consultation with Medicines Australia on the members of the independent HTA review reference committee and the terms of reference for the review.

The independent HTA review and review and reduction of the discount rate will deliver policy certainty to the medicines industry (further driving investment) and budgetary certainty to an ALP Government with significant savings and minimal cost over the forward estimates.

### 2. Accept the recommendations from the House of Representatives Inquiry

The House of Representatives inquiry into the reimbursement of new and novel medicines attracted nearly 200 submissions from across the sector and 13 days of public hearings, clearly highlighting key themes from across a myriad of stakeholder responses.

Medicines Australia seeks the ALP's commitment to ensure, within 6 months of forming government, that the recommendations of the inquiry are accepted and a Government response is tabled, including a plan for the implementation of agreed changes. Medicines Australia is particularly keen for the Government to accept the inquiry's recommendations relating to:

- Clinical trials
- The patient voice
- Improving the HTA process

### 3. Finalise the NMP Review and commit to its vision and purpose

The National Medicines Policy Review has been welcomed by a broad range of stakeholders across the healthcare industry with more than 150 submissions made to the stakeholder consultation. This review, designed to ensure that breakthrough therapies can be accommodated, and choice be maintained for Australian patients, is critical to ensure the future sustainability of the Australian system.

Medicines Australia welcomed the Coalition Government's commitment to pause the Review and not finalise it until the next term of Parliament. Medicines Australia seeks the ALP's commitment to

restart the Review should it win government and commit to its vision and purpose so it fully reflects patient, industry and clinician priorities.

#### **4. Establish a high-level, Government-Industry, life sciences roundtable forum**

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to underline the central role played by medicines and vaccines in economic and health policy and Medicines Australia, MTAA and AusBiotech (our combined memberships representing the full biopharmaceutical industry sector from start-up discovery to commercialisation, manufacturing and supply) propose the establishment of a high-level Government-industry forum for the life sciences sector.

The forum would be led by the Health and Industry Ministers, with the Minister for Finance as a standing member of the roundtable and other portfolios joining as required. Its focus would be on collaboration with industry to drive increased investment in innovation, create jobs and ensure better health outcomes for Australians. Importantly, the forum would also send a positive message to global companies that the Australian Government is committed to improving social, health and economic outcomes through a vibrant life sciences sector.

Medicines Australia, MTAA and AusBiotech note that there are several government strategies, plans and reviews already in this space eg NMP review, HTA review, MRFF 10 year plan, AusBiotech blueprint etc, but we believe that the life sciences forum is a means to bring it all together and drive future directions. We look forward to working with an ALP Government to determine the details of the proposed forum, including regarding its resourcing.