



15 May 2022

Elizabeth de Somer

Chief Executive Officer

Medicines Australia

By email: [Elizabeth.desomer@medicinesaustralia.com.au](mailto:Elizabeth.desomer@medicinesaustralia.com.au)

Dear Ms de Somer,

I write in response to your correspondence of 6 May about the Federal Election. Labor is committed to an innovative medicines industry that can deliver accessible and affordable medicines for Australians. These are fundamental to Labor's view that all Australians deserve access to universal, prompt, and world class medical care, and no one deserves to face a multi-year wait for vital treatments simply due to the cost.

If Labor is elected to Government on 21 May, Labor will work collaboratively with Medicines Australia to deliver on this vision, and the detailed arrangements in place regarding the approval of medicines in Australia.

In relation to the four specific policy areas that you nominate for our consideration, please find Labor's response:

## **1 Commitments Made in the Strategic Agreement**

Labor agrees to the full implementation of the existing Agreement within agreed timeframes and KPIs. Specifically:

- A shared goal of reducing time to medicines access for patients and encouraging Australia's attractiveness as a first launch country.
- The independent Health Technology Assessment review, including to better capture the value of new medicines to patients.
- Early consideration and notification of changes to listings eligible for ministerial discretion.
- A reduced discount rate applied to medicines to match international best practice.

Labor will ensure that sufficient resources are made available within the Department of Health to progress these reforms including consulting with Medicines Australia on the membership and terms of reference of the independent HTA Review.

In addition, Labor will also review the appointment of Dr Peter Boxall as the independent chair of the HTA Review.

## **2 Accept the Recommendations from the House of Representatives Inquiry**

Labor commits to careful consideration of the recommendations of the inquiry and to publish a Government response. I look forward to engagement with MA and other stakeholders on Labor's response to the inquiry recommendations.

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

Labor commits to restart the National Medicines Policy Review, noting that stakeholders, including MA, have previously called for a pause in the review through the election period. In addition, I am aware the approach taken by the government to this review was seen by both industry and consumer group stakeholders as failing to have a significant focus on improved patient access and outcomes, as well as supporting a sustainable, innovative Australian industry.

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

Labor is committed to the principal of collaboration with industry to drive increased investment in innovation, create jobs and ensure better health outcomes for Australians and improving social, health and economic outcomes through a vibrant life sciences sector.

Labor joins Medicines Australia, MTAA and AusBiotech in noting that there are several government strategies, plans and reviews already in this space such as the NMP review, HTA review, MRFF 10-year plan and AusBiotech blueprint.

Labor will consult with Medicines Australia and other stakeholders and consider the best mechanism to put in place to support continued cooperation and consultation between government and relevant stakeholders.

Thank you for your correspondence on these matters. I look forward to working with you to realise our objectives of accessible and affordable medicine.

Yours sincerely



Mark Butler