

31 March 2025

Hon. Mark Butler MP  
Minister for Health and Aged Care  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Email: [mark.butler.mp@health.gov.au](mailto:mark.butler.mp@health.gov.au)  
Cc: Hon Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister

Dear Minister,

**RE: FEDERAL ELECTION 2025**

Thank you for your hard work and commitment to improving Australia's health system over the past term.

Your support for accessible and affordable medicines for Australian patients is exemplified by the listing of new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and in working with us to implement the Strategic Agreement between Medicines Australia and the Commonwealth. This Agreement includes significant policy reforms in the national interest such as Health Technology Assessment (HTA) reform.

I would particularly like to thank you and your office for the support and guidance provided as we navigated the HTA Review together. The 50 recommendations in *Accelerating Access to the Best Medicines for Australians Now and into the Future*, provide our HTA reform blueprint and its recommendations were supported by clinicians, patient representatives, industry, the PBAC and your Department. We are pleased a consensus report was the outcome.

As the Federal election draws near, Medicines Australia is seeking the commitment of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) to support our industry's priorities to ensure Australia continues to strive for timely patient access to new medicines.

The addendum to this letter outlines Medicines Australia's policy priorities for your consideration and commitment should the ALP form Government. Medicines Australia commits to continuing to work with you, in partnership, to strengthen Medicare and for a stronger PBS.

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 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

## **ADDENDUM: 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.

Implementation of the Agreement is an industry priority and we ask that the ALP commits to empowering the Access to Medicines Working Group to complete outstanding clauses of this Agreement. In particular, Medicines Australia is seeking from the ALP a commitment to prioritise implementation of the following clauses that have not been fully implemented:

- 5.2 Discount rate
- 6.6 Lowest cost comparator
- 6.8 Exchange and sharing of information
- 6.9 Cost recovery
- 7.2 Risk sharing arrangements
- Appendix 3 Performance Measures for Reporting

### **2. Health Technology Assessment Reform**

Australia's HTA system has not been comprehensively reviewed or reformed in 30 years. We have a once in a generation opportunity to set the PBS up for another 30 years of success. As you have noted, the system is "clunky", it is taking too long for new medicines and treatments to reach patients. The HTA Review is the capstone in a long series of consultations on our HTA system and stakeholders are now rightly expecting their input will be translated into reform.

The work of the HTA Reference Committee and the resulting Review – *Accelerating Access to the Best Medicines for Australians Now and into the Future* – has 50 recommendations that were signed up to by the Department of Health and Aged Care, PBAC, clinicians and patients via the HTA Reference Committee. It is a consensus report, highly negotiated, and we seek the ALP's commitment to implement the Review in full within the next term of Government. System-wide change is required to reap the benefits of reform.

It is understood the Government will guide implementation of the Review through the independent HTA Implementation Advisory Group. We seek the ALP's commitment to ensuring implementation meets the overarching principles set out in Recommendation 3 of the HTA Review, namely that the restructuring and development of HTA funding and assessment pathways and processes should be:

- Proportionate and fit-for-purpose.
- Streamlined and simple.
- Unified and consistent.

We note the Review includes intended outcomes that will be achieved through reform:

- The timeframe for Australians to have subsidised access to these high added therapeutic value therapies would be around 16 months faster.
- By improving the alignment between PBAC and ATAGI pathways, processes and secretariat functions, and utilising the same evaluator group for both, the time to HTA recommendation for vaccines will be reduced by 18-22 weeks, or around 40% of the current time.

- The time for listing on the LSDP will be reduced by around four months, through removing the additional steps in this pathway, and providing additional clarity and certainty to sponsors.

### **3. PBS co-pay**

It is understood that a further reduction in the PBS co-pay may be an attractive cost of living measure for Australians. At the last election, the ALP committed to reducing the co-pay and because of arrangements between the Government and sponsors, industry footed the bill for this election commitment. We seek a commitment from the ALP that should a further reduction in the co-pay be announced, that this will be fully funded by the Government regardless of the administrative burden this will impose on the Department of Health and Aged Care. In addition, we seek your commitment that any changes to deeds will not be used as a way for the Department to renegotiate other elements of the deeds.

### **4. Consultation with Medicines Australia**

Our Strategic Agreement is principally about providing certainty and policy predictability for both industry and government about the operation of the PBS. We seek a commitment from the ALP that there will be genuine consultation with Medicines Australia prior to any changes to the environment that will materially impact sponsors. This includes any changes to the PBAC meeting schedule, changes to pricing policy and changes to methods for calculating price reductions. It must also include consultation on the time to implementation to ensure there is reasonable time for Medicines Australia's members to prepare for change.