



Why Australians need faster access to new medicines

Did you know? Even though Australia has one of the best health systems in the world, Australian patients wait longer to get new medicines than patients in 16 other countriesⁱ.

By working together, our government, health industry, and patients can build on Australia's legacy of giving the best possible health coverage to Australian patients. As a patient,

you can help to ensure that decisions about healthcare in Australia are better informed by having your voice heard and sharing the information you have about a condition.

How do Australians get new medicines under the current system?

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) is a government program that subsidises (pays some of the cost for) medicines to make them more affordable. This means you can get innovative medicines when you need them most.

Before patients can get a new medicine, the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) needs to approve it. The TGA is a government agency that makes sure medicines and other treatments are

safe to use. Even though Australia has one of the world's best registration schemes for new medicines, it can take more than a year for new medicines to be added to the PBSⁱⁱ.



Did you know?

With new medicines added to the PBS faster, 800 more cancer patients could be treated per year with immuno-oncology medicines, which are treatments that work with the body's immune system to fight cancer.

Figure 1: Sabbah et al. Modelling the health outcomes of immuno-oncology therapies in cancer care in Australia - Reimbursement scenario analysis. COSA (In Press).

What are the benefits of getting new medicines on the PBS faster?

Improved patient well-being and quality of life

Delaying new medicines on the PBS affects the well-being of Australian patients and their families.

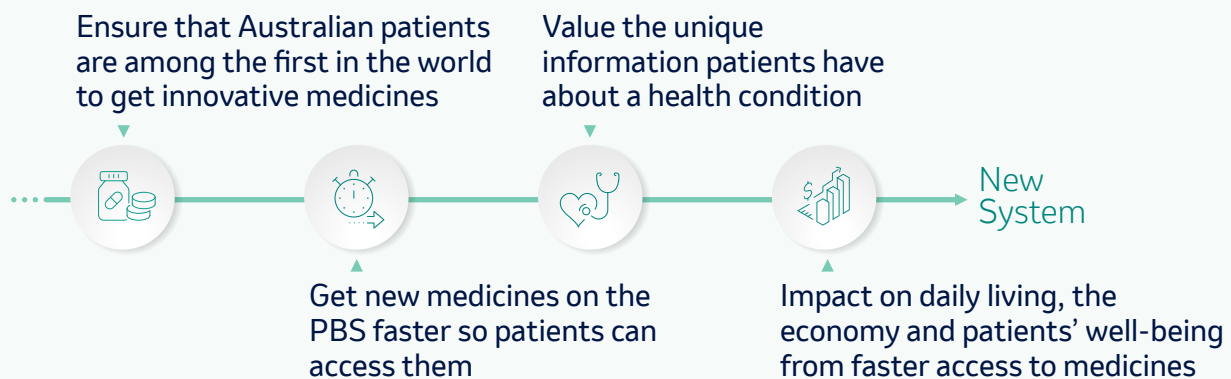
Improved economy

Getting medicines on the PBS faster helps the Australian economy to:

- Lower hospital costs
- Improve our overall economic productivity because people take less sick time and spend less time in hospitals

How does the current system need to change?

The current system needs to be brought into the 21st century by changing to:



Did you know?

Between 1986 - 2000, new medicines lowered the number of days Australians spent in hospital by 7%, which is about 1.71 million hospital days – that's more than 4,600 years.

Figure 2: Medicines Australia. (2019) Measuring the Impact of Pharmaceutical Innovation in Australia 1998-2018.

What can you do to help?

We need your help and your voice to change the system for the better. Together we can make a difference for the health of Australians now and into the future. To help:

- 1 Contact your **Member of Parliament** and ask for faster access to new Contact medicines. You can find out who your local member is by clicking on this [link](#).
- 2 Learn about and take part in the **Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport Inquiry into approval process for new drugs and novel medical technologies in Australia**. You can access this inquiry [here](#) where you will find information on how to make a submission as well as other information about the inquiry that may be helpful.