



MEDIA RELEASE

Pfizer Invites Election 2025 Fireside Chat with Shadow Minister for Health & Aged Care, Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, puts patients' access to medicines in the spotlight

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, 7 April 2025: Pfizer Australia welcomed the Shadow Minister for Health & Aged Care, Senator the Hon. Anne Ruston, for a special Election 2025 *Pfizer Invites* event: a Fireside Chat with Anne Harris, Managing Director, Pfizer Australia & New Zealand.

Pfizer Invites is a thought leadership event that brings together patient advocacy groups, industry members, and government stakeholders to inspire policy discussion on a wide range of issues affecting the life sciences industry, including patient access to innovative medicines.

The Fireside Chat followed a panel discussion with Liz de Somer, Medicines Australia CEO and Richard Vines, Founder and Chair of Rare Cancers Australia.

Ahead of the Federal Election to be held on 3 May, this was an important opportunity to hear about Senator Ruston's policies and priorities for the federal health portfolio – in particular the Coalition's approach to medicines and vaccines access, and the broader life sciences sector.

Responding to questions from a broad range of patient advocates and industry representatives, Senator Ruston outlined her vision for the next three years of health policy, including patients' access to the medicines and vaccines they need when they need them.

"It's time for a mature approach to put patients at the centre of our health decision-making. We need to move past the short-term, and the cheap political point scoring, and tangibly work towards the long-term goal of a healthier Australia," Senator Ruston said, adding that the Coalition will invest \$9.4 million to boost Australians' access to primary healthcare, including critical mental health support.

According to Ms Harris, there has never been a more critical time to discuss the healthcare issues facing Australians.

"As a leader in the pharmaceutical industry, Pfizer is committed to collaborating with stakeholders to achieve a stronger PBS, which reduces the time to access innovative medicines and vaccines."

Patients currently wait an average of 466 days to access a medicine that has been deemed safe and effective by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) to be funded on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) – that is 100 days slower than the OECD average and 300 days slower than countries, such as Japan, Germany and the UK.¹

"Time is life and patients deserve faster access. To do this, we must take the opportunity to re-imagine Australia's PBS for the benefit of patients now and into the future," Ms Harris said.

"By making changes to the Government's policies that affect access to medicines, we can ensure that it keeps pace with the rapid scientific advancements we are seeing, that Australia remains a wave-one launch country, and recognises the full value of innovative medicines."



Pfizer Invites have been held over the past eight years and regularly features eminent representatives from both sides of government, as well as key health stakeholders. Pfizer is in discussions to secure the Minister for Health & Aged Care, the Hon. Mark Butler, to appear at a similar Pfizer Invites event during the election campaign.

For Media enquiries, contact:

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References:

1. Medicines Australia, 2023, "Medicines Matter 2022: Australia's access to medicines 2016-2021", <http://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/65/2023/04/Medicines-Matter-2022-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed April 2025.