

The Government's administration of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS),

Submission from Geraldine Robertson

I wish to make a submission with particular reference to: the deferral of listing medicines on the PBS that have been recommended by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee.

Politicians and especially those in Cabinet cannot be experts in all aspects of policy and administration. They rely on expert advice. This is true in the listing of medicines on the PBS.

The Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee was established to make informed decisions about such listings, taking into account associated costs and benefits. Members are chosen for their expertise.

The recent rejection of some recommendations from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, fails to recognise this expertise.

It is necessary for the Government to consider the escalating cost of health care. However they should follow due process (in this case accept the recommendations of PBAC). Failure to do so leads to unforeseen negative consequences (and a huge waste of time for many people- the Senate committee and all those writing submissions).

This is another Cabinet/Government decision made in apparent haste without analysis of the likely outcomes. They need to accept the advice of their expert committees- in this instance the PBAC.

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