



**The Hon Greg Hunt MP
Minister for Health**

Ref No: MC18-004402

19 MAR 2018

Senator James Paterson
Senator for Victoria
PO Box 657
SOUTH MELBOURNE VIC 3205

Dear Senator

I refer to your letter of 22 February 2018 on behalf of Ms Christine [redacted] concerning the availability of the cyclin-dependent kinase (CDK) inhibitors palbociclib (marketed as Ibrance[®]) and ribociclib (marketed as Kisqali[®]) through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

I am sorry to learn that Ms [redacted] has breast cancer.

Neither medicine is currently listed on the PBS for the treatment of metastatic breast cancer. Under legislation passed by the Australian Parliament, the Australian Government cannot list a new medicine on the PBS unless the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), an independent group of experts has made a recommendation in favour of the listing.

The Australian Government and I, as the Minister for Health, do not interfere with the decision making process of the independent PBAC.

The pharmaceutical sponsors of Kisqali and Ibrance, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Australia Pty Ltd (Novartis) and Pfizer Australia Pty Ltd (Pfizer) respectively, have resubmitted requests to the PBAC to list their products on the PBS for the treatment of certain advanced or metastatic breast cancer. Both submissions were reviewed by the PBAC at its March 2018 meeting. The outcomes of this meeting will be published on 20 April 2018 on the PBS website at www.pbs.gov.au.

In the interim, there may be other options for patients to access Kisqali or Ibrance at a reduced cost outside of the PBS arrangements. A patient's treating oncologist may wish to contact Novartis or Pfizer to find out if their product can be supplied to a patient through compassionate access or expanded access programs. Decisions to grant individual access through such programs occur at the sole discretion of the sponsor concerned.

Novartis can be contacted on 1800 671 203 (free call) or online at:
www.novartis.com.au/about-us/contact-us.

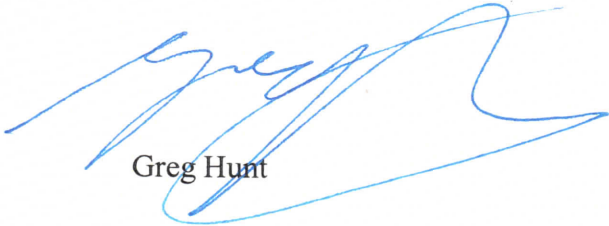
Pfizer can be contacted on 1800 675 229 (free call) or online at: www.pfizer.com.au/contacts.

Additionally, the Australian Government provides funds to the states and territories to assist with the costs of providing public hospital services, which can include assistance with the costs of medicines that patients are unable to afford.

The treating oncologist might consider making an application, on their patient's behalf, to the drug and therapeutics committee of a local public hospital with an oncology unit to request assistance with the cost of treatment.

Thank you for bringing Ms [REDACTED]'s concerns to my attention.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hunt', is written over the typed name. The signature is stylized and fluid.

Greg Hunt