



**THE HON PETER DUTTON MP
MINISTER FOR HEALTH
MINISTER FOR SPORT**



Ref No: MC14-002181

Dr Dennis Jensen MP
Chair
Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Jensen

Thank you for your correspondence of 3 March 2014 (ref 875/1343) inviting my response to a petition to the Standing Committee on Petitions about access to Soliris® (eculizumab) through the Life Saving Drugs Program (LSDP).

The Australian Government provides assistance with the cost of prescription pharmaceuticals through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the LSDP.

The LSDP provides subsidised access for eligible patients to expensive and lifesaving drugs for serious and rare medical conditions. The LSDP currently funds ten medicines for seven rare conditions. In 2012-13, 228 patients were treated through the LSDP at a cost of \$79 million.

The sponsor of the drug submitted a new application for eculizumab (under the brand name Soliris) to be subsidised under the PBS or LSDP for the treatment of aHUS, to the March 2014 Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) meeting. The PBAC, an independent, expert advisory body comprising doctors, other health professionals and a consumer representative, makes recommendations to the Australian Government about the effectiveness, safety and cost of medicines proposed to be subsidised.

The opinions and interests of consumers, patients, carers, members of the public, health professionals and members of consumer interest groups on the medicines considered at the March 2014 PBAC meeting are important. This feedback was sought from 6 January 2014 to 12 February 2014, and all feedback provided through this process was taken into consideration by the PBAC.

The Government and my Department do not pre-empt or interfere with the independent process of the PBAC and the outcomes of the March 2014 PBAC meeting will be published on the PBS website on 24 April 2014 at www.pbs.gov.au/info/industry/listing/elements/pbac-meetings/pbac-outcomes.

The Australian Government also provides funds to each state and territory government to assist with the costs of providing public hospital services. Patients' treating doctors may be able to apply to a local public hospital for assistance with the cost of eculizumab.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

26/3/14

PETER DUTTON