

**Open Letter to Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, Minister of Finance Nicola Willis,
and the Associate Minister of Health (Pharmac) David Seymour**

Dear Prime Minister Christopher Luxon, Minister of Finance Nicola Willis, and Associate Minister of Health (Pharmac) David Seymour.

In August last year a promise was made to fund 13 new cancer medicines via a \$280 million ring-fenced fund to Pharmac. According to the National election manifesto, that fund was to start on July 1 this year by reinstating the \$5 prescription fee. As you stated Prime Minister, those 13 medicines are "for lung, bowel, kidney, melanoma, and head and neck cancers that provide significant clinical benefits and are funded in Australia but not in New Zealand. Under National, New Zealanders will not have to leave the country, mortgage their home, or start a Givealittle page to fund potentially lifesaving and life-extending treatments that are proven to work and are readily available across the Tasman."

Cancer patients and advocates sat in disbelief when the budget was announced. We have now learnt that those 13 medicines may not be funded for at least a year. Patients don't have a year to wait and will sadly have to look at all the heartbreaking scenarios your party wanted to put an end to. Bowel cancer patients have already been waiting for 22 years, the last time a new medicine was funded to treat them.

Prime Minister you also stated, "Almost every New Zealander will have some experience with cancer in their lifetime – either personally or through a friend, colleague or loved one." We know many New Zealanders voted for you because you stated you would fund the new cancer medicines. They are devastated that you have not honoured this commitment of all the commitments you made. Unlike other promises, lives will be lost if these medicines are not funded.

We implore you to make good on your commitment to fund these 13 medicines with the utmost urgency. As you may also know, no blood cancers and certain solid tumour cancers like breast and prostate, are not catered for in the list of 13 medicines. We welcome the opportunity to work with you to address New Zealand's medicines crisis that sees hundreds of thousands of kiwis miss out on medicines that are funded in most other developed countries. But for now, let's make a start and see you deliver on your commitment to fund those 13 cancer medicines.

On behalf of the following cancer organisations:

Patient Voice Aotearoa, Breast Cancer Foundation, Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition, Leukemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand, Lung Foundation New Zealand, Melanoma New Zealand, Bowel Cancer New Zealand, Prostate Cancer Foundation New Zealand, Gut Cancer Foundation New Zealand, Brain Tumour Support New Zealand, Head and Neck Cancer Support Network New Zealand, Ovarian Cancer Foundation New Zealand, Myeloma New Zealand, Talk Peach, and Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia Advocates New Zealand.