



MEDIA RELEASE

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SECRET PRICE HIKE FOR PBS MEDICINES

The ability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme to deliver affordable medicines to sick Australians is being undermined by Tony Abbott and the Howard Government.

The incompetence of the Health Minister and his mismanagement of the PBS have left thousands of Australians paying more for vital medicines.

The price of a number of PBS listed medicines have secretly been increased by the Health Minister in the last two months, including-

Zantac, which treats reflux and ulcers, now has a therapeutic premium of \$4.18;

The cost of Tritace, for blood pressure, has increased by \$3.25;

The cost of Zoton, for reflux, has increased by \$3.63; and

Amoxycillin, a commonly used antibiotic, now costs 58 cents more.

Patients are being asked to pay more for the medicines prescribed to them by their doctor because Tony Abbott has failed to get the manufacturers to agree to his mandatory price cuts.

As Tony Abbott continues to look for short term savings from our PBS, more and more Australians, particularly pensioners, are missing out on their medication.

3 million less PBS scripts were filled in 2005-06 compared to the previous financial year.

The PBS budget was an underspent by almost \$67 million in 2004-05 and \$8 million in 2005-06.

This follows the introduction of the 12.5 per cent price cut, an increase in the price of PBS medicines, the introduction of a Special Patient Contribution and changes to the PBS Safety net.

Tony Abbott has targeted the PBS to deliver budget savings, without considering or explaining the impact these drastic measures will have on sick Australians.

The Health Minister has already ripped \$1.3 billion and \$260 million from the affordable medicines scheme in the last two Budgets.

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