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Australia's moment to act: Bristol Myers Squibb's 5th annual Patient & Parliament Summit calls for urgent reform to secure access to innovative medicines

- *Australia funds just 26% of new medicines available in comparable OECD countries¹, threatening to leave Australian patients behind.*
- *Australian patient advocacy groups agree that Australia's assessment and reimbursement processes delay access to life-saving treatments, driving severe financial strain and emotional distress.*
- *This 5th annual Summit brings together patients, parliamentarians, and health sector leaders to call for increased investment and systemic Health Technology Assessment (HTA) reform.*

(CANBERRA, Australia, 8 September 2026) - Over 40 patients, patient organisations, and policy makers will gather in Canberra for the 5th Annual Patient & Parliament Summit supported by Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS) Australia.

This year's Summit takes place against the backdrop of an intensifying national debate on medicines access and growing concerns that Australia's healthcare policies are not keeping pace with scientific advances, delaying patient access to innovative therapies.

Recent data highlights a stark gap in access for Australians: only 26 per cent of new medicines available in comparable OECD nations are currently funded on the PBS in Australia¹. This gap is creating an unsustainable strain on patients and their families and is likely to worsen after a decade of declining PBS investment, an outdated HTA system, and a global pricing environment that is making it increasingly difficult for new medicines to be funded in Australia.

New research amongst those patient organisations attending at the Summit show 88 per cent of groups warn that Australia's health system is at risk of sliding into a model where equitable access is compromised, and only those who can afford to self-fund receive the latest standards of care². Patient organisations don't just believe medicines are arriving later. They are already seeing patients delay treatment, drain savings and miss out on care. They are delivering a stark warning that access delays today are laying the foundations for tomorrow's inequity.

Key insights from the survey with patient organisations in attendance at the Summit show:

- All respondents agree that Australia's medicine assessment and reimbursement processes directly impact the timing of patient access to new treatments².
- All respondents report severe psychological and emotional impacts on patients living with serious illnesses due to treatment delays and access barriers².
- 70% of respondents report that patients have delayed necessary treatment due to cost², while 60% say patients have gone without basic essentials², 50% have drawn on their superannuation², and 30% have seen patients re-mortgage property to afford un-subsidised medications².

"Now in its fifth year, the Patient & Parliament Summit provides an essential platform to bring the patient voice directly to the heart of decision-making in Canberra. With medical innovation advancing at a rapid pace globally, Australia cannot afford to fall behind," said Owen Smith, General Manager of Bristol Myers Squibb Australia and New Zealand.

Securing timely access to life-saving treatments requires a modernised HTA framework and a commitment to investing in medicines as a fundamental driver of national health and economic productivity. At the heart of this discussion is a genuine concern from patients in Australia who are fearful they won't survive long enough for medicines to come to Australia and we need to act now."

This year's panel discussion *Australia's Moment to Act: What Will It Take?* will deliver a candid assessment of the systemic changes required within Australia's HTA and reimbursement frameworks.

Summit Program Highlights

- **Patient-MP Meetings:** Patients and advocates meet directly with Federal Members of Parliament to share lived experiences and advocate for faster, fairer access to medicines.
- **Panel Discussion - *Australia's Moment to Act: What Will It Take?*** Featuring a leading health journalist, parliamentarians, and patient leaders on reforming Australia's HTA pipeline in the face of shifting global economic and policy dynamics.

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About BMSA's Patient and Parliament Summit Survey with PAGs

Bristol Myers Squibb conducted a short survey as part of the Patient & Parliament Summit held in Canberra on the 8th of September 2026. The purpose of the survey, conducted ahead of the Summit, was to better understand the experiences and views of Patient Organisations regarding medicines access, affordability, and Australia's health system. Representatives from 10 Patient Organisations completed the survey.

About Bristol Myers Squibb: Transforming Patients' Lives Through Science

At Bristol Myers Squibb, our mission is to discover, develop and deliver innovative medicines that help patients prevail over serious diseases. We are pursuing bold science to define what's possible for the future of medicine and the patients we serve. For more information, visit us at [BMS.com](https://www.bms.com) and follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [X](#), [YouTube](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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If you would like any further information, or to arrange an interview please contact:

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References

1. Medicines Australia. Access Denied: The twin threat to innovative medicines availability in Australia and the impact on patient access. May 2026. Available: New Report: Waitlist for life-saving medicines extends to years for Australian consumers and patients - Medicines Australia. Accessed August 2026.
2. Internal BMS survey of Patient Advocacy Groups attending the Patient and Parliament Summit who responded to the survey. Conducted August 2026.