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## **FEDERAL BUDGET IGNORES THE MAJORITY OF AUSTRALIANS STRUGGLING TO AFFORD THEIR MEDICINES**

*The Government's announcement of a repeat of its 2019 election PBS safety net measure shows its lack of understanding of the true cost of medicines.*

*Families earning no more than \$70,000 a year face the ongoing choice of food on the table or medicines for themselves or their kids.*

“Repeating its 2019 election measure that has already been devoured by the annual inflationary increase in co-payments simply fails to address the weekly medicines affordability challenge for millions of Australians, Better Access Australia Chair Felicity McNeill said

“Reducing safety nets thresholds for concessional patients is always welcomed.

“However, the Government has previously admitted that the vast majority of Australians will not benefit. This is because reducing the safety net from 48 to 36 scripts still means most patients stay below the threshold because concessional patients using on average 17 scripts a year and those over 65 around 43<sup>1</sup>.

“It also does nothing for the day-to-day affordability of medicines for the majority of Australians whether individuals, couples or families, who are classified as general patients. Whether they earn \$70,000 or \$270,000, they are being asked to pay \$42.50 for every script they fill.

“It's not fair.

“With Treasury still expecting inflation to be 3% in 2022-23, that's a co-payment increase of around \$1.30 coming for the majority of Australians on 1 January 2023, Ms McNeill added.

“That's why this measure will do nothing to protect the majority of Australians from the increasing weekly unaffordability of medicines. Waiting to fill 34 scripts for medicine cost relief is not a luxury most families can afford.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/chamber/hansards/d84cb563-e19e-47f8-bc38-d5a6192fd91f/0154/hansard\\_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf](https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/genpdf/chamber/hansards/d84cb563-e19e-47f8-bc38-d5a6192fd91f/0154/hansard_frag.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf)

“The Government’s failure to reduce the cost of co-payments for general patients is made worse by their decision last year to increase the cost of over 1,750 low-cost medicines on 1 October 2022 by as much as \$2.07 per script.

“Our PBS lacks nuance and understanding of a patient’s capacity to pay.

“Better Access Australia renews its call for the introduction of a mid-tier co-payment of \$20, aligned to the Family Tax Benefit A threshold, and a five year freeze on indexation increases for the PBS co-payments and safety-nets to genuinely ease the cost of living pressures for all Australians.”

*For more information read our 2022-23 Pre-Budget Submission and medicine cost analysis in full [here](#).*

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*Better health, disability and social services.*

**Better Access Australia.**