



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

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### **New drugs for macular degeneration listed on PBS**

Lucentis® (ranibizumab) will be listed from 1 August 2007 on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) for the treatment of wet, age-related macular degeneration.

As part of the arrangements for listing Lucentis® on the PBS, Visudyne®, which is currently available under a Health Program Grant, will be transferred for listing on the PBS.

The listings of Lucentis® and Visudyne® will add around \$629.5 million to PBS and Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme expenditure between 2007-08 and 2010-11.

Age-related macular degeneration is the name given to a group of degenerative diseases of the retina that cause progressive, painless loss of central vision, affecting the ability to see fine detail, drive, read and recognise faces. In 2006, around 129,000 suffered from this condition. This figure is expected to increase to about 153,000 people by 2011.

Although there is no cure, treatment options such as Lucentis® can slow down or reverse its progression, depending on the stage and type of the disease.

About 11,500 people are expected to begin treatment with Lucentis® in the first full financial year of listing.

**For more information call Mr Abbott's office on ph 02 6277 7220.**