



# MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

## Tony Abbott MHR

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### **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme listings extended**

As of today, the Commonwealth Government will provide swifter and wider access to drugs for brain tumours and rheumatoid arthritis.

Temodal® (temozolomide) is used to treat different types of brain tumours. Previously, the drug was only available on the PBS after the patient had already had surgery and/or radiotherapy and had relapsed following this treatment. Treatment with this drug can now commence at the same time as radiotherapy.

An additional 500 patients will now be able to access Temodal® on the PBS. The cost of treatment with this drug is around \$11,000 per patient per year.

Several high cost drugs for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis have been listed on the PBS in the past few years. These include Humira®, Kineret®, Enbrel® and Remicade®. These medicines can cost up to \$25,000 per patient per year. Previously, these drugs were only available through the PBS to patients with rheumatoid factor positive status (this covered about 75 per cent of patients).

As of today, this will no longer be required. This change is expected to help between 500 and 600 people per year.

Patients who feel they may now qualify for treatment should discuss this with their doctor. The PBS ensures that all Australians have affordable access to necessary medicines. General patients only have to pay \$28.60 per prescription and concession card holders \$4.60 until they reach the safety net threshold.

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