### TRANSITIONING OF HERCEPTIN SUBSIDY TO THE PHARMACEUTICAL BENEFITS SCHEME (PBS)

### Frequently asked questions (FAQ)

1. **What is Herceptin® used for?**

* Herceptin® (trastuzumab) is used for the treatment of HER2 positive breast cancer.
* Herceptin belongs to a class of anti-cancer drugs called anti-Human Epidermal growth factor Receptor 2 (anti-HER2) monoclonal antibodies, also known as anti-HER2 drugs.

1. **How is Herceptin supplied?**

* Herceptin is currently subsidised for early stage and locally advanced HER2 positive breast cancer through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).
* From 1 July 2015, the Herceptin PBS listing will be extended to include treatment for Metastatic (Stage IV – also called secondary or advanced) HER2 positive breast cancer.

1. **How was Herceptin supplied prior to the extended listing of Herceptin on the PBS?**

* Prior to 1 July 2015, non-PBS-subsidised Herceptin was subsidised by the Australian Government free-of-charge to eligible patients for late stage metastatic breast cancer through the special Herceptin programme that was administered by the Department of Human Services outside the PBS.

1. **What impact does transitioning of Herceptin subsidy have on existing patients?**

* From 1 July 2015, existing patients will be transitioned to receive treatment with PBS-subsidised Herceptin via a “grandfather” restriction. As a result, the Herceptin Programme is no longer needed and will then be closed.
* From 1 July 2015, existing patients who have received less than 12 months of Herceptin will have the option to also receive PBS-subsidised treatment with pertuzumab (Perjeta) in addition to Herceptin.

1. **What impact does transitioning of Herceptin subsidy have on new patients?**

* From 1 July 2015, eligible patients with metastatic (stage IV) HER2 positive breast cancer can access PBS-subsidised Herceptin.
* All patients who are newly diagnosed with metastatic HER2 positive breast cancer will be able to access PBS-subsidised Herceptin.

1. **Who made the decision to extend the listing of Herceptin on the PBS?**

* The listing of medicines on the PBS is based on the advice of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC), an independent, expert advisory body comprising doctors, other health professionals and a consumer representative.
* The established Government policy with respect to medicines is to list cost-effective, innovative and clinically effective medicines on the PBS.
* Following a positive PBAC recommendation in November 2014, the Australian Government agreed to extend the listing of Herceptin on the PBS to include treatment for Metastatic (Stage IV) HER2 positive breast cancer.
* Further information is available on www.pbs.gov.au

1. **What are the benefits of extending the listing of Herceptin on the PBS?**

* The PBS restrictions for Herceptin for the treatment of Metastatic (Stage IV) HER2 positive breast cancer are consistent with the most robust evidence and will facilitate best clinical practice.

1. **What patient co-payment arrangements will apply?**

* Patients will pay the PBS co-payment ($6.10 Concessional or $37.70 General) the first time a prescription is dispensed. Repeat prescriptions will be dispensed free of charge (i.e. a patient will pay either $6.10 or $37.70 for the first injection/infusion on each script only). When a new prescription is written, the co-payment will again be payable the first time the script is dispensed.

1. **Why do patients need to make a co-payment towards Herceptin when it was provided free-of-charge through the Herceptin programme?**

* All PBS subsidised medicines require a patient co-payment.
* For example, from 1 July 2015, two new anti-HER2 drugs, Perjeta® (pertuzumab) and Kadcyla® (trastuzumab emtansine) will be listed on the PBS for metastatic (stage IV) HER2 positive breast cancer. A co-payment will also apply to them.