



MEDIA RELEASE

Minister for Health and Ageing

Tony Abbott MHR

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Appointment of the Convenor of the Independent Review (PBS)

Under the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement (AUSFTA), the Government has established a process for Independent Review of recommendations from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) not to list medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

In February 2005, after consultation with the PBAC and Medicines Australia, the Government announced details on how the Independent Review would operate. Based on the advice from Medicines Australia and the PBAC, it was agreed that a convenor would be appointed to facilitate access to the new review arrangements.

Following a competitive selection process, Ms Linda Webb has been appointed as the Convenor of the Independent Review (PBS). A brief summary of Ms Webb's background and experience is attached.

When an independent review is requested by a pharmaceutical company sponsoring the drug, the Convenor will appoint an independent reviewer and ensure the report is done in a timely way. The report of the independent reviewer will be provided to the PBAC for consideration. Decisions on which drugs are listed will remain in the hands of PBAC and the Government.

For further information on Independent Review (PBS), see <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/content/health-pbs-general-ausfta.htm>

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Ms Linda Webb OAM, BA, MAICD FAIM IPAA

Summary of background and experience

Linda is a highly experienced administrator, having worked at the most senior levels for many years, including a number of jobs with statutory responsibilities. Her public sector career spanned 30 years and she proved herself in a number of roles as varied as the CEO of the ACT bus service, Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration, and Public Service Commissioner for the ACT Government service.

Since 2001 Linda has been working in the private sector as a consultant, and as a board member. She has tackled a range of difficult projects for governments, most recently for the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs, and for the private sector, such as the Royal Australian Institute of Architects.

Linda serves on various boards and committees, including the NSW Legal Aid Commission, the ACT Racing Appeals Tribunal, the ACT Government Procurement Board and the Board of Toora Women Inc, a not-for-profit organisation delivering services to women suffering domestic violence, mental health or drug and alcohol problems.

In 2001 Linda was awarded a medal as a Member of the Order of Australia for services to public administration and to social policy.