

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Pain relief – new funding to provide better pain management

Painaustralia has welcomed the \$6.8m announced today by Federal Health Minister the Hon Greg Hunt MP today to fund better pain management in Australia.

In releasing the findings of the Painaustralia report 'The Cost of Pain in Australia' prepared by Deloitte Access Economics at Parliament House Canberra, Minister Hunt committed to funding a package of new measures including:

- \$4.3m for better access to pain management services through the Rural Health Outreach Fund (included in the Federal Budget 2019/20)
- \$7.2m for a PBS subsidised take home naloxone program (included in the Federal Budget 2019/20)
- \$2.5m over four years to fund consumer and health education awareness and education which includes \$1m for Painaustralia, \$1m for health professional education and \$0.5m for an education strategy for pain management and opioid use.

Painaustralia CEO, Carol Bennett, said the new funding could not have come at a better time.

"The report released today highlights just how significant and pervasive chronic pain is across Australia. Pain does not discriminate, it impacts us all either directly or indirectly. Addressing chronic pain will benefit all Australians" Ms Bennett said.

"This funding will allow Painaustralia to raise awareness about pain and best practice management strategies. This will really improve the lives of many Australians. In addition to improved health professional and consumer education, this funding will provide more accessible services in rural and regional Australia where people are more heavily impacted by pain and lack of treatment options. Hopefully we will see less people relying on opioids and more people accessing best practice multidisciplinary care," Ms Bennett said.

#### Key facts about chronic pain in Australia

- 3.24 million Australians lived with chronic pain in 2018
- 68.3% of people living with chronic pain are of working age
- Chronic pain costs the Australian economy over \$73.3 billion a year in health, productivity and related costs and \$66.1 billion a year in wellbeing costs totalling \$139.3 billion a year
- If pain is not addressed, it will cost \$215.6 billion per year by 2050
- 30 – 40% of people with chronic pain also have depression and/or anxiety
- Suicidal behaviour is 2-3 times higher in people with chronic pain
- 40% of forced early retirements from work are because of chronic pain conditions
- 70% of GP consultations for chronic pain result in a prescription
- Increasing opioid misuse is becoming a major issue in Australia (as it is in the US and elsewhere) - largely driven by poor management of chronic pain

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