



## David Littleproud MP

Federal Member for Maranoa

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# Media Statement

December 19, 2016

### **\$128 million drug subsidy to assist severe asthmatics: David Littleproud MP**

TWO breakthrough medicines to help severe asthmatics breathe easier will be subsidised by the Federal Government through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), Maranoa MP David Littleproud said today.

“When I was 12 years old, I lost a good mate to an asthma attack so this announcement is very close to my heart because this condition can affect anyone at any age,” Mr Littleproud said.

“That’s why this announcement is so important as the Coalition Government will invest \$128 million, over four years, to give severe uncontrolled asthmatics subsidised access to Spiriva Respimat and Nucala from early next year.”

Chances are you’ll know someone who suffers from asthma – a chronic respiratory condition – as it affects more than one in 10 Australians and the funding will be of enormous benefit.

“These medicines will really make a difference for the 20-40% of asthmatics who need extra help and extra medication, for whom the normal daily treatments don’t work very well,” Mr Littleproud said.

“From February 1, Spiriva Respimat will be subsidised on the PBS. This is an important medication for adult patients with severe uncontrolled asthma who, despite taking daily maintenance treatments, continue to experience symptoms like coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath.

“Additionally, Nucala will be made available on the PBS from January 1 for patients with severe eosinophilic asthma. Patients with this ‘sub-type’ of asthma suffer from persistent airway inflammation, despite the use of preventative treatment, which leads to more severe symptoms and a poorer prognosis.”

#### **FACT BOX:**

- **Spiriva Respimat** (\$103 million over four years): Without the subsidy, patients would pay more than \$700 per year for the medicine. About 26,000 patients will benefit in the first year of this listing, increasing to about 67,000 per year over the forward estimates.
- **Nucala** (\$25 million over four years): Expected to benefit more than 370 patients, who would otherwise pay more than \$21,000 annually for this medicine.

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