



## Proposal to fund immunotherapy for stage 4 lung cancer is a GIANT step forward

Philip Hope, Chief Executive, Lung Foundation New Zealand “This funding proposal meets the greatest treatment need right now with the gold standard for lung cancer and it will be life changing for stage 4 non-small cell lung cancer patients (approx. 1200 per year).”

“We are ever grateful to the huge number of brave patients and their family’s who have added impact to our collective advocacy by sharing their story. We also remember with admiration and utmost respect so many patients no longer with us. We will never forget them.”

The patients and carers throughout New Zealand we are in contact with, are thrilled and heartened with this news, most ask, why did it take so long?

This reimbursement proposal follows a very robust process led by Pharmac, during which they consulted with; industry, specialists, HCP’s, patients and community, including our cause, which provides an authentic voice for patients diagnosed with lung cancer.

We acknowledge the professionalism of the team at Pharmac, the key people at Merck Sharp & Dohme New Zealand and Roche New Zealand, the specialists, health leaders and advocates who have worked together to deliver this funding proposal.

- Pembrolizumab (brand name Keytruda by Merck Sharp & Dohme New Zealand) would be funded for the first line treatment of advanced non-small cell lung cancer.
- Atezolizumab (brand name Tecentriq by Roche New Zealand) would be funded for the second line treatment of advanced non-small cell lung cancer.

How does immunotherapy work?

Immunotherapy treatment helps your body's immune system to find and destroy cancerous cells.

Our philosophy is leave no one behind - there are other cohorts of vulnerable patients diagnosed with lung cancer in need of access to targeted therapies. Not a day goes by we do not think of these patients and push for them.

However, it is really important we acknowledge what is a giant step forward for treating advanced lung cancer in New Zealand.

Modern medicines such as immunotherapy are an important part of our health system that keep patients well longer (out of hospital and with their family’s) saving healthcare costs in our overburdened health system.

With a commitment to early detection and funding medicines in line with comparable countries, we really can transform patients diagnosed with lung cancer into lung cancer survivors.

45% of patients across NZ are diagnosed with lung cancer following presentation to an emergency department. These patients are more likely to have advanced, incurable disease (stage 4) compared to those diagnosed through clinic. Māori and Pacifica patients are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced or metastatic lung cancer



While this funding proposal is great news, New Zealand really must improve early detection of lung cancer. Doctors MUST investigate symptoms, rather than take a wait and see approach.

The symptoms of lung cancer include, but are not limited to, shortness of breath, chest pains, an unexplained/persistent cough and noisy breathing.

Lung Foundation New Zealand is a non-government organisation dedicated to increasing survival for lung cancer.

Access to treatment is access to life and all patients diagnosed with Lung Cancer deserve to thrive.

### **What we want you to know about the burden of lung cancer in Aotearoa**

- Cancer is the leading cause of death in New Zealand and lung cancer is the BIGGEST cancer killer.
- Lung cancer kills more people in NZ every year, than breast cancer, prostate cancer and melanoma cancer combined.
- Every day 5 people die of lung cancer and a further 6 people are diagnosed with lung cancer.
- More than 1800 kiwis die from lung cancer every year - this is 5 times the national road toll.
- There is a major intersection with other determinants of health, including a quadrupled risk of suicide for lung cancer patients compared to the general population.
- ANYONE can get lung cancer!
- New Zealand is twice as slow to publicly fund medicines as comparable OECD countries (38 Countries)

### **Lung cancer causes extreme inequity for Māori**

- Lung cancer registrations and mortality rates are 4 times higher in Māori women and nearly 3 times higher in Māori men.
- One Māori dies of lung cancer every day in New Zealand.
- Lung cancer is the leading and second highest cause of death in Māori females and males respectively.

### **Lung cancer screening**

Despite, lung cancer being New Zealand's biggest cancer killer, we DO NOT yet have a national lung cancer screening programme in place...

### **Who we are - Our Mission / Our Kaupapa**

Lung Foundation New Zealand (LFNZ) is a non-government organisation (patient advocacy group) dedicated to increasing survival for lung cancer.

**Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takimano**

**My strength is not that of an individual but that of the collective**

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