

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**Codeine price hike will create more pain**

Painaustralia is very concerned about reports that codeine-containing medicines have shot up in price since they became prescription only on 1 February 2018.

Minister for Health Greg Hunt has made a request for the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission to investigate this alleged pricing increase.

Painaustralia CEO Carol Bennett says any price increase seems cruel and unjustified.

“People with chronic pain already face enormous pressures. They are often unable to work full time, have numerous expenses due to medical appointments and treatments, and are not in a position to absorb any additional costs.

“We are extremely dismayed to hear of alleged increases in the price of codeine-containing products and we join Minister for Health Greg Hunt in his condemnation of this practice.

“At a time when codeine is less available, industry and pharmacists are reportedly putting the price up. If true, this is unacceptable from government supported health providers.”

One in five Australians lives with chronic pain, which impacts mental health as well as emotional wellbeing, ability to earn an income and overall quality of life.

Chronic pain is the leading cause of forced retirement in people of working age, absenteeism in the workforce and long-term disability.

The decision to make codeine prescription only was based on the recommendation of all state and territory chief medical and pharmacy officers and the Therapeutic Goods Administration.

It followed restrictions in 25 other countries due to concern about harms, inefficacy for chronic pain, dependence and over 100 codeine related overdoses in Australia per year.

“Australians who experience ongoing pain are often struggling to keep working and contributing to their families and communities.

“It’s unfair to suddenly make them pay more for their medications,” said Ms Bennett.

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