Agenda Item 13.3 Expanding access to effective treatments for cancer and rare and orphan diseases, including medicines, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostics, assistive products, cell- and gene-based therapies and other health technologies; and improving the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines, and other health products

Australia thanks the Secretariat for the update on expanding access to effective treatments for cancer, rare and orphan diseases, and its work to improve the transparency of markets for medicines, vaccines and other health products.

Australia sees access to safe, appropriate and affordable medicines, medical devices and equipment and its positive impact on health outcomes for individuals affected by rare diseases as highly important. We also note the significance of both collaboration and regulatory cooperation.

Australia has developed a National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA), which enables all Australian governments (national and sub-national) to work together to streamline evidence-based assessment and availability of new highly-specialised health technologies. Some novel cancer treatments (e.g. CAR-T cell therapy for lymphoma) have already been considered through this improved process.

The NHRA provides greater transparency and improved consultation processes so all jurisdictions can engage in and be informed of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) and Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) decision making process for new highly-specialised therapies.

Australia looks forward to collaborating internationally and contributing to a global strategy for facilitating efficient and cost-effective access to emerging therapies for the treatment of rare and orphan diseases.