Macular Disease Foundation Australia welcomes Federal Government's decision to keep sight-saving eye injections accessible on private health insurance

Macular Disease Foundation Australia is heartened by the Federal Government's decision not to proceed with the proposed Medicare reclassification which would have prevented people from using their private health insurance to pay for sight-saving eye injections.

This means that people with macular disease who currently receive eye-injection treatment in private hospitals or day surgery settings will still be able to claim this procedure through their private health insurance.

This reclassification was originally recommended by the Medicare Review Taskforce in 2020, with initial implementation scheduled to begin on 1 July 2025. Following Macular Disease Foundation's recommendation for this reclassification to be paused and reviewed, the Federal Government delayed the implementation to 1 July 2026 and announced further consultations. Our advocacy efforts played a key role in securing the positive outcome, with more than 500 letters from community supporters demonstrating how the change would affect their ability to continue receiving treatment.

"As the representative organisation for the macular disease community, we strongly advocated for the government to look at ways to ensure sight-saving treatment is affordable and ccessible,"

says Dr Kathy Chapman, CEO of Macular Disease Foundation. “While we welcome the decision not to proceed with reclassification, it remains critical to address the broader challenges of affordability faced by the majority of people who rely on sight-saving eye injections.”

Macular Disease Foundation will continue working with the Federal Government to improve the affordability of treatment and expand access to public eye injection services. Our key recommendations include:

- Reforming the Extended Medicare Safety Net so it does not reset at the start of the calendar year for pension card holders receiving ongoing eye injection treatment for neovascular AMD, from the second calendar year after starting treatment.
- Establishing a Neovascular AMD Treatment Incentive Program to encourage ophthalmologists to bulk-bill pension card holders having eye injections for neovascular AMD, supporting the most financially vulnerable patients who are most at risk of stopping treatment due to burden of cost.

About macular degeneration

Macular disease is the leadingcause of blindness and severe vision loss in Australia, affecting the macula at the back of theeye which is responsible for central vision. Approximately 1.9 million Australians live with some evidence of macular disease, with age-related macular degeneration (AMD) accounting for 50% of blindness in the country.

About Macular Disease Foundation Australia

Macular Disease Foundation Australia is the peaknational body representing the macular disease community since 2001. The Foundation’smission is to reduce the impact of macular disease through support and information for thoseliving with the condition, advocacy, education, and supporting research.