



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 6 March 2023**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (10:47): I rise today to give voice to 15,000 Australians—15,000—and their families, who, only a week ago, were told that an insulin drug that they've become very reliant upon has been taken off the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, the PBS. Fifteen thousand Australians have been using this drug called Fiasp.

Fiasp improves the blood sugar control for people with type 1 diabetes. Not one of these people were told in advance. There was no consultation.

For a family that buys the Fiasp drug today, a script costs \$7. Once it's been taken off the PBS, that script will cost \$280—\$280 per script—putting back everyday Australian families thousands of dollars a year, right now, amidst a cost-of-living crisis. There was no consultation with these people by the government. Despite me writing to the health minister, there has been no explanation from the government. There is no suggestion of a fix from the government.

Now, I only became aware of this because of a girl in my electorate. Her name is Freya Goldston. Freya is a 14-year-old. She is a great swimmer. She uses this Fiasp drug. It keeps her energy up. It allows her to participate, like all of her classmates do, in sport and in school. But Freya and her mum, Jackie, will now have to scramble before 1 April—which is when this becomes effective—to get in to see a doctor, to get scripts, and to go and pay \$280 instead of \$7. What have we heard from the government on this? Zilch. Nothing. It is an absolute disgrace.

Why have I talked about Freya? It's because I met the girl. I met her about six years ago when she first came and saw me, again, about her type 1 diabetes. She was an 11-month-old—a little baby—when she inherited this disease. But she is only one girl. She is one of 15,000 Australians who have been left wondering what to do now that they cannot pay for this drug. The government must answer the questions and they must fix this problem.