

Media release  
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### **Breast cancer charities overjoyed by new drug funding decision**

Breast Cancer Foundation NZ and the Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition are overjoyed Kiwis with an aggressive form of incurable breast cancer will be able to access a game-changing new drug in the new year, and that proposed eligibility restrictions to certain people have been removed.

Pharmac has today announced Enhertu (also called trastuzumab deruxtecan or T-DXd) will be publicly funded from 1 January 2025 for people with HER2-positive advanced breast cancer.

Following submissions from both Breast Cancer Foundation NZ and the Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition, the drug buying agency has also confirmed people whose cancer has worsened after previously trying another drug called Kadcyra can have Enhertu, and that Kadcyra will still be available for those who can't take Enhertu due to intolerable side effects. Both groups were initially excluded from Pharmac's proposal to fund Enhertu.

Ah-Leen Rayner, chief executive of Breast Cancer Foundation NZ, says today's news will bring immense relief to many Kiwis affected by breast cancer: "Enhertu really is a remarkable drug – rarely have we seen doctors so excited by the potential of a new medicine. Having Enhertu funded will mean women with HER2-positive advanced cancer will get the chance to live longer, happier and healthier lives without the financial strain of figuring out how to pay for it themselves – or go without.

"We're so grateful Pharmac took on board our requests to remove the unfair eligibility restrictions it had originally proposed. Kiwis with advanced breast cancer desperately need more treatment options to give them the best chance of living a good life, and more collaborative working like this will go a long way to improve cancer medicines access in Aotearoa."

Libby Burgess, chair of the Breast Cancer Aotearoa Coalition, says: "We're delighted to see this vital medicine funded, given the outstanding results from clinical trials showing that Enhertu

keeps the cancer stable for four times as long as the previous best treatment and increases length of life.

“We’re very pleased to see that Pharmac has listened to our feedback on its consultation and extended funding to include those whose cancer has already advanced on Kadcyła and to allow those who have unmanageable side effects with Enhertu to be treated with Kadcyła.”

Enhertu is being heralded as the new wonder drug for advanced breast cancer. In clinical trials, patients had their risk of death reduced by 27% and were given 29 months of progression free survival (i.e. the length of time their cancer didn’t get worse) compared to 7.2 months on Kadcyła (the current second-line treatment for this type of breast cancer). Enhertu has become the standard of care internationally as the second-line treatment for HER2-positive advanced breast cancer. It has been funded in the UK since 2021 and Australia since last November.

## **ENDS**

### **For more information please contact:**

Pui-Yi Cheng – [puiyic@bcf.org.nz](mailto:puiyic@bcf.org.nz) / 022 567 4432

**About Breast Cancer Foundation NZ (BCFNZ):** BCFNZ is a not-for-profit, non-government funded organisation that depends on donations and fundraising for its work in breast cancer education and awareness, medical research and training grants, advocacy, and supporting Kiwis with breast cancer. BCFNZ’s programmes are evidence-based, and overseen by its medical advisory committee. The pink ribbon symbol is a trademark of BCFNZ.