

**PRESS STATEMENT**  
**MALCOLM MULHOLLAND**

I am deeply saddened by today's decision by Labour not to support an inquiry into PHARMAC.

The result of this decision is that people with advanced cancer including breast cancer, will die sooner than they should. Why? Because the New Zealand system of funding drugs is broken in this country.

This inquiry was called for by the people, for the people. We have had two hundred inquiries or reviews under this Government, and yet the one that the people wanted was not supported by Labour.

I thought Labour was for the poor and working class – how wrong have we been.

There is nothing kind or compassionate about this decision.

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October at the launch of the publication, 'Tutu Te Puehu' at Bowen House, I discussed the call for an inquiry with the Chair of the Health Select Committee, Louisa Wall. She told me that one would be launched before Christmas last year and that all Labour members of the Health Select Committee were in support. This was confirmed by a member of the Labour Maori Caucus, as Ms Wall announced that an inquiry would be launched at their meeting that same day.

At the Cancer at the Crossroads Conference on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February I again spoke with Ms Wall and asked where the inquiry was at. She then told me that the inquiry was being blocked by Dr Clark and at a level, higher than him.

Dr Clark has repeatedly said that PHARMAC is a great model, that there should be no inquiry despite members of his own party, who have heard first hand the

compelling evidence in support of an inquiry into PHARMAC, disagreeing with his position.

The decision today clearly demonstrates political interference at the highest level into a parliamentary process that, in Dr Clark's own words, should act as a 'watchdog' when it comes to his actions and those of PHARMAC.

We ask that either Dr Clark resign from office based on his actions regarding an inquiry into PHARMAC or that the Prime Minister intervene and sack him from his health portfolio.

Clearly the strategy for Labour in dealing with his issue is to simply wait for people with advanced breast cancer to die and then the problem will go away.

Through this journey, members of our families have pledged to keep fighting for those with no voice, who do lose their lives because they cannot access the drugs they so desperately need to stay alive.

We have a number of options that we are currently pursuing and the fight for an inquiry into PHARMAC is by no means over.

My final message is to Jacinda. You know us personally, you have my cell. I am more than happy to meet with you so that you understand why we want an inquiry into PHARMAC.