



14 February 2020

Senator the Hon Marise Payne  
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Women  
Hon Alex Hawke MP  
Assistant Defence Minister and Minister for International Development and the Pacific  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Ministers,

Sanofi welcomed your call for public submissions, on 10 December 2019, to assist the Government in formulating a new Australian development policy that will drive the Government's international development efforts in support of security, stability, prosperity and resilience in the Indo-Pacific.

Sanofi, a leading global biopharmaceutical company focused on human health, is dedicated to supporting people through their health challenges. We prevent illness with a large portfolio of paediatric, adult and travel vaccines. We also support patients to treat and manage disease by developing innovative treatments across a range of therapeutic areas including: oncology, immunology, speciality care, rare diseases and blood disorders.

In partnership with the public health community, Sanofi Pasteur, our vaccines division, is actively involved in addressing funding, access and distribution challenges that inhibit vaccinations in countries with underdeveloped infrastructure in every continent. Specifically, Sanofi Pasteur, has been an important industry partner with WHO, UNICEF, Centre for Disease Control and Prevention in the US, Rotary International and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in helping to achieve the goal of worldwide polio eradication.

Given our expertise in the development and medical innovation of vaccines and pharmaceuticals, Sanofi is well placed to share our insights into how the Government, through its international development policy, can assist countries in the Indo-Pacific to improve the health outcomes for their citizens.

We would welcome the opportunity to explore ways in which we could support the Australian Government to assist Indo-Pacific countries with respect to the supply of vaccines, distribution, surveillance, as well as training and education to medical staff and local communities.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen Hood".

**Karen Hood**  
Country Chair, Sanofi ANZ

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Russell Jacobson".

**Russell Jacobson**  
General Manager, Sanofi Pasteur



## **INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY PROPOSAL:**

Sanofi Pasteur has deep expertise in the development and medical innovation of vaccines and a strong track-record of public health partnerships. We want everyone to have access to our vaccines — no matter where they live. To help achieve this, we work in partnership with the immunisation community, including policy makers, donors, and NGOs. Globally, we have ongoing partnerships with several international organisations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), Gavi (the Vaccine Alliance), and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). In Australia, our team is at the forefront of local access. As a health journey partner, we work with federal and state health authorities, and with healthcare professionals to encourage equitable community-wide access to immunisation.

We know preventing and reducing the occurrence of major disease outbreaks provides a range of benefits, including protecting human health; protecting the environment; and preventing serious negative impacts on Australia’s and regional economies. However, despite continuous progress in vaccine development for life-threatening diseases, ensuring access to these vaccines for the world’s most disadvantaged populations remains a major challenge for health systems throughout the world.

### Ask to Government:

Sanofi Pasteur would welcome the opportunity to discuss options for how the Australian Government could deploy some of its development budget to reduce the impact of vaccine-preventable diseases across the Indo-Pacific region. Any activities would complement the work being undertaken by the Australian Government through the Indo-Pacific Centre Health Security Initiative.

As outlined in the Initiative’s Strategic Framework, 2019-22, “our region is a hotspot for emerging infectious diseases. Many countries have weak surveillance and containment systems for human and animal health diseases and are therefore vulnerable to highly pathogenic infectious diseases. A major disease outbreak could have severe health and economic implications with loss of life and disruption to regional trade, tourism and development<sup>1</sup>.” Sanofi Pasteur is well-positioned to help the Australian Government minimise such risks.

Options the Australian Government may consider allocating funding to from the development budget may include the following:

- Procurement and supply of vaccines;
- Vaccine distribution, including cold-chain management;
- Implementing surveillance programs;
- Education and training for medical representatives and the general public; and
- Public and preventative health education for local communities.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION:**

### 1. Vaccination saves lives:

At the dawn of the 20th century, the major health threats were infectious and parasitic diseases that most often claimed the lives of infants and children. Today, vaccination can prevent several infectious



diseases, such as pertussis and hepatitis A, and there are new vaccines on the horizon with the potential to prevent even more.

Vaccination also provides benefit via 'herd immunity' or 'community immunity' to vulnerable people, such as newborn babies, elderly people and those too sick to be vaccinated. For example, when a high percentage of the population is vaccinated, it is difficult for infectious diseases to spread, because there are not many people who can be infected.

Mass immunisation programs have proven successful in controlling or even eliminating disease. Indeed, apart from clean, safe drinking water, no human endeavour rival's immunisation in combating infectious diseases, preventing suffering and reducing mortality rates. However, while vaccination saves up to 3 million lives every year, an additional 1.5 million deaths could be avoided with improved vaccination coverage<sup>2</sup>.

In the Indo-Pacific communicable diseases continue to add to the burden of disease, disability and disadvantage in many countries. While major progress has been made in eliminating some infectious diseases, more needs to be done to prevent and mitigate communicable diseases across this geographic area.

## 2. Health-economic benefits of vaccination:

### **Measles outbreak case study:**

Even though a safe and cost-effective vaccine is available, in 2018, there were more than 140 000 measles deaths globally, mostly among children under the age of five; signalling a resurgence of the disease around the world.

In November 2019, a measles outbreak in Samoa prompted the government there to declare a 30-day state of emergency in response to the crisis, which claimed 15 lives, including two children under two years of age<sup>3</sup>. However, the re-emergence of measles has not been confined to the Pacific.

Cases of measles have been rising in developed nations, such as the United States and Germany, where some parents shun vaccines for philosophical or religious reasons, or concerns, debunked by medical science, that the vaccine can cause autism<sup>5</sup>. Nor has Australia escaped the re-emergence of measles. Last year saw Western Australia experience one of its worst measles outbreaks in years, which, like the outbreak in Samoa, was believed to have been triggered by a New Zealand traveller. In Queensland 24 cases were recorded on Brisbane's southside, Logan and Redland Coast areas<sup>3</sup>.

As more Australians travel to our regional neighbours, it becomes even more important to ensure the benefits of vaccination are shared across the region to improve the health outcomes for the local populations, but also to protect Australians back home from disease transmission.

Vaccines are one of the most cost-effective health-care investments available. By preventing illness which saves lives and reduces disability, vaccination can: ease the pressure on healthcare systems due to fewer doctor visits and hospitalisations; and reduce time off work and lost productivity costs caused by illness.



As the authors of the 2015 article, Role of vaccination in economic growth, published in the Journal of Market Access & Health Policy conclude: “Health is a key factor for the promotion of economic growth at the national, regional, and global levels. The vaccine industry and vaccination programmes targeted at populations of different ages can contribute substantially to economic growth by keeping people healthy throughout their lives, with continuous investment in research & development to protect populations against an increasing number of existing or new vaccine-preventable diseases. There is a clear need for a commitment to vaccination not only from health authorities but also from governments<sup>4</sup>.”

### 3. Vaccine-related disease reduction:

History shows that a decrease in immunisation coverage sets the stage for the reappearance of disease in previously protected populations. However, with stable and high vaccination coverage, disease declines and, for some diseases, may be eliminated. For example, polio cases have decreased by over 99% since 1988, from an estimated 350 000 cases then, to 33 reported cases in 2018.

Sanofi Pasteur has played an important role in providing the polio vaccine to millions of the world’s most disadvantaged populations. We have been actively building partnerships to strengthen health systems, especially in the most deprived regions of the world for decades.

As a result of the global effort to eradicate polio, more than 16 million people have been saved from paralysis<sup>6</sup>. According to WHO, as long as a single child remains infected, children in all countries are at risk of contracting polio. Failure to eradicate polio from these last remaining strongholds could result in as many as 200,000 new cases every year, within 10 years, all over the world<sup>5</sup>.

### 4. About Sanofi Pasteur:

For over 100 years, Sanofi Pasteur has been committed to extending the life-saving power of vaccination as broadly as possible. Our history is grounded in life science pioneers who discovered how infectious diseases work. They unlocked the public health potential of vaccination and developed efficient mass production methods to ensure the broadest access to vaccines.

Today, Sanofi Pasteur spends more than €500 million a year on researching and developing new vaccines. Our current portfolio of vaccines offers protection for people around the world against a wide range of infectious diseases, including: cholera, dengue fever, diphtheria, haemophilus influenzae type b, polio, pertussis, tetanus, Hepatitis A and B, meningitis, and influenza.

Sanofi Pasteur partners with the public health, medical and scientific communities to improve access to life-protecting vaccines and increase vaccination coverage. Each year, we supply more than one billion doses to people around the world and seek, relentlessly, to extend the benefits of vaccination to new infectious diseases, while improving existing vaccines to enhance health and wellbeing.

Globally, the increasing population, efforts to improve health worldwide and emergence of new diseases all contribute to the mounting need for vaccines. Sanofi Pasteur is continuously investing in state-of-the-art technologies to meet this growing demand.



References:

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