



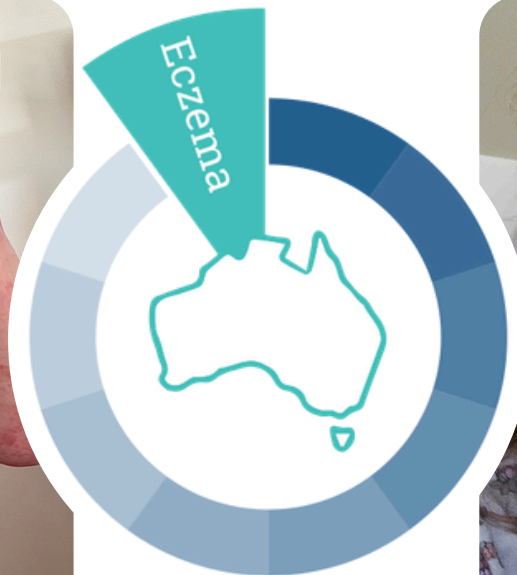
**Eczema Support**  
A U S T R A L I A

# Children with Severe Eczema are Still Waiting

**Federal Policy Priorities  
for Equitable Access  
to Care and Treatment**

Prepared by Eczema Support Australia for  
meetings with federal parliamentarians in 2026





### Why this matters:

Severe eczema causes relentless itch, sleep loss, infections, mental health impacts and major strain on families.

### What is happening now:

Many children face delayed specialist care, inconsistent frontline support and inequitable access to advanced treatment options.

### What we are asking:

Support practical federal action to improve treatment access, strengthen the dermatology workforce and back better national coordination.

## Australian children are still waiting for treatment access

- PBAC recommended paediatric access to dupilumab in 2022 – but not yet PBS listed
- Many children with severe eczema still cannot access subsidised effective treatment for severe eczema
- Delayed access prolongs suffering and may contribute to lifelong disease burden.
- Inadequate disease control
- Frequent infections, flares and hospitalisations
- Repeated oral steroids and antibiotics
- Major impacts on sleep, schooling and mental wellbeing

Too often, families must navigate long public waitlists, fragmented care pathways, inconsistent eczema advice and treatment options that depend on age, postcode and ability to pay.

Some families are currently relying on uncertain compassionate access arrangements that are not a sustainable long-term solution.

**Federal leadership can help close these gaps and improve equitable access to care for children with severe eczema.**

## The Case for Action

Affects nearly  
**3 million**  
Australians



**1 in 3**  
children  
aged 6 or under  
have eczema



Severe  
sleep disturbances cause:



### Why children are missing out

#### Delayed access to effective treatment

While newer medicines have transformed outcomes for many patients with severe eczema internationally, access remains limited for many Australian children despite a PBAC recommendation in 2022.



**\$4 billion**  
in lost  
productivity  
each year

**\$1.2 billion**  
for medications,  
emollients, special  
food & clothing  
to manage  
eczema

Australians  
with severe  
eczema miss  
1 day a week of  
work plus 2+ days  
of reduced  
productivity

**\$336 million**  
out-of-pocket  
costs  
for medical  
visits

**75% said  
eczema placed  
a financial  
burden on  
their family**

Many used  
savings, borrowed  
money, and spent  
less on food and  
essentials to pay for  
eczema  
management

### Limited access to specialist care

Australia has a significant shortage of dermatologists, driven by longstanding, multi-jurisdictional underinvestment in public dermatology services and specialist training. This contributes to long waitlists, delayed access to specialist care and treatment, inequitable access for regional and rural families, and increased pressure on GPs managing complex disease.

**Delays in specialist assessment can prolong suffering and delay access to appropriate treatment.**

### Inconsistent support across the healthcare system

Many families report receiving conflicting advice about eczema management and experiencing fragmented care pathways. Improved support for primary healthcare professionals could help reduce undertreatment, improve confidence in eczema management and support earlier intervention.

# What we are asking the Australian Government to do

## Immediate Priority

1. Urgently progress PBS access to evidence-based advanced therapies for eligible children with severe eczema.

Children under 12 have already waited years for equitable access despite recognised clinical need and PBAC recommendation.

## Supporting System Priorities

1. Strengthen dermatology workforce and specialist access
2. Improve frontline eczema education and coordinated care

## Why this matters to Australia

No child should miss out on timely eczema care because of where they live, their age, or the limits of the current system. Severe eczema is a recognised chronic disease burden that affects health, education, workforce participation and household finances.

Practical federal action would help:

- Reduce hospitalisations and complications
- Improve sleep, mental health and quality of life
- Reduce long-term healthcare burden
- Improve school participation and family wellbeing
- Reduce economic impacts on Australian families and the healthcare system

## For further information

Source: *Eczema Support Australia, The Burden of Eczema—Evidence for a National Strategy (Eczema Support Australia, 2023).*

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