A Patient's Story

Visanne has been life-changing for Tanya Mhlanga after more than a decade suffering from severe endometriosis symptoms and having limited treatment options. Tanya has Stage 3 endometriosis, adenomyosis and congested pelvic syndrome, and says Visanne is the first treatment that has given her consistent relief and a sense of normality.

Before starting Visanne, Tanya's daily life was dominated by pain and exhaustion. Sitting, standing, walking, cleaning and working full time all came with significant physical cost. She lived with constant lower back pain, nausea, fatigue and brain fog, while trying to minimise time off work. Over more than ten years, she tried surgery, multiple hormonal therapies, Botox, physiotherapy, and meditation and mindfulness, with little lasting benefit.

"Visanne was the first treatment that allowed me to function day to day without constant pain management," she says.

Tanya, who is a New Zealand citizen, was prescribed Visanne by a specialist in South Africa in 2025, after more than 10 years of trying different treatments without success in New Zealand. Access to Visanne in South Africa was straightforward – a prescription was written and completed at a local pharmacy.

"Since starting Visanne, I have been able to take the medication consistently and it has helped manage mysymptoms in a way no previous treatment allowed," Tanya says. "Heavy, prolonged bleeding has reduced significantly, with long stretches without bleeding and manageable pain when spotting occurs."

Tanya can now get through a full workday without relying on pain medication or heat therapy, and without feeling physically broken. While she still has difficult days, she is able to work, run errands and manage everyday life with far greater stability.

While not cheap (around NZ$400 for a six-month supply), the ease of availability is a stark contrast to Tanya's experience in New Zealand.

In New Zealand, she says access barriers have been profound. Visanne is not available through the normal channels and was never offered by specialists she saw. When Tanya raised the possibility of accessing it after starting the medication overseas, she encountered uncertainty and reluctance. One specialist indicated it might be possible to get hold of it it, but described it as difficult and expensive to arrange, and ultimately did not support her to do so.

The cost is something Tanya considers completely worthwhile given the impact on her quality of life.

She says Pharmac funding of Visanne would be life-changing. For the first time in more than ten years, she feels like herself again and is able to live and enjoy life, not just feel as though she is surviving. She believes access to effective endometriosis care should not depend on geography, privilege or luck.

"Funded access in New Zealand would mean people don't have to travel to receive the treatment they deserve or spend thousands of dollars each year just to feel well. Everyone deserves the chance to find what works for them," Tanya says.