

Fact sheet 4 - Strategic Agreement with Medicines Australia – Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process

Medicines Australia and the Australian Government have committed to co-designing with consumers and patients, and implementing, a new process to elevate the patient and consumer voice in the submission and the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) processes that support the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee's (PBAC) consideration of applications to list new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme.

This **Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process** is intended to facilitate the capture of informed consumer and patient perspectives earlier, to effectively inform the assessment of submissions for reimbursement of innovative medicines and subsequent consideration by the PBAC.

In the first year of the Agreement (2022-23 financial year), the Government will work with consumers, medicines industry, clinicians and other health professionals to co-design the Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process.

Why is this important?

The consumer and patient perspective are important when determining whether access to a new medicine should be subsidised – particularly where a new medicine is a breakthrough technology that promises to address an otherwise high unmet clinical need.

This process will help to ensure that patients will be informed in these circumstances and that their voice will be captured in submissions and considered by the PBAC earlier.

Who will benefit?

Australian patients will benefit from earlier information about the safety and efficacy of potential new therapies, and benefit from a clearer and more defined role in securing access to new and important life-saving and life-changing treatments.

The PBAC will benefit from clear and early comprehension of the patient lived experience with new therapies

Australians and tax-payers will benefit from processes through the Australian Government accessing secure knowledge of the broader value and economic benefit to patients of rapid, early access to life changing medicines

This initiative builds on existing opportunities for patients and their respective groups or organisations to engage in HTA processes supporting the PBAC which currently include:

- Direct input through consumer comments made to the committees.
- Invitations to present in person at specific hearings.
- Representation in expert clinical consultations about specific submission items.
- Representation and input to formal stakeholder meetings and public consultations.

This initiative also builds on recent work to better support consumer representation, and to offer more opportunities for patient involvement in providing consumer evidence and input to HTA committee deliberations. In 2019 the Consumer Evidence and Engagement Unit was established within the Department of Health to coordinate consumer engagement. It has also piloted arrangements to enhance transparency of HTA processes and to better support HTA committee consumer members.