

Reviewing the National Medicines Policy: An opportunity to aim high for the future

Since the National Medicines Policy (NMP) was first published over twenty years ago, patient expectations of our health system have risen, in parallel with rapid advances in medicines technology.

Medicines Australia recommends that the NMP should **incorporate a vision** to deliver the World's best outcomes for access and utilisation of medicines, biotherapeutics and vaccines to Australia's patients. To ensure the achievement of this vision, the revised NMP should include agreed measurement, monitoring, review, reporting and **shared oversight of the outcomes** to hold all partners to the NMP to account.

There has been a significant community response to the NMP Review, and Medicines Australia analysed 43 submissions that were provided by industry, patient groups and individual patients.

Common Opportunities Raised Across Submissions

All Australian patients should have **access to medicines** when they need them

The **definition of medicines** should be expanded to account for new and emerging innovations

Consumers should be central to the NMP at all stages

The value of medicines should reflect their **health, social and economic impact**

Governance is key to the successful implementation of the NMP

The NMP should acknowledge the **global context** of the medicines supply chain

Reforms

1. The NMP should ensure **timely and equitable access to medicines** to all populations including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, remote and rural populations and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
2. **Consumer engagement** is important through all touchpoints in the medicine's life cycle, from research and development, to clinical trial design, through to regulatory and reimbursement decision making and real world use. The development of an Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process as part of the new Strategic Agreement is an important step in this direction..
3. To ensure that the NMP delivers on its aims, a dedicated NMP **governance** committee should be established. The committee should publish an annual report on the progress of the NMP implementation against key metrics. The NMP should be reviewed every five years to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose.
4. **The definition of medicines should be expanded** to include all chemical or biological therapies, designed to be introduced or applied to the human body to achieve a therapeutic effect, including related technologies such as companion diagnostics, devices and software that directly assist in the delivery or outcome of the therapy.
5. Medicines can help ensure our population remains healthy and productive. The **valuation of medicines** should consider their impact on health, social and economic contributions.
6. Many NMP submissions from patient advocacy groups raised concerns about medicine shortages. Medicines Australia Strategic Agreement with the Federal Government includes measures to help manage the **global supply chain**.

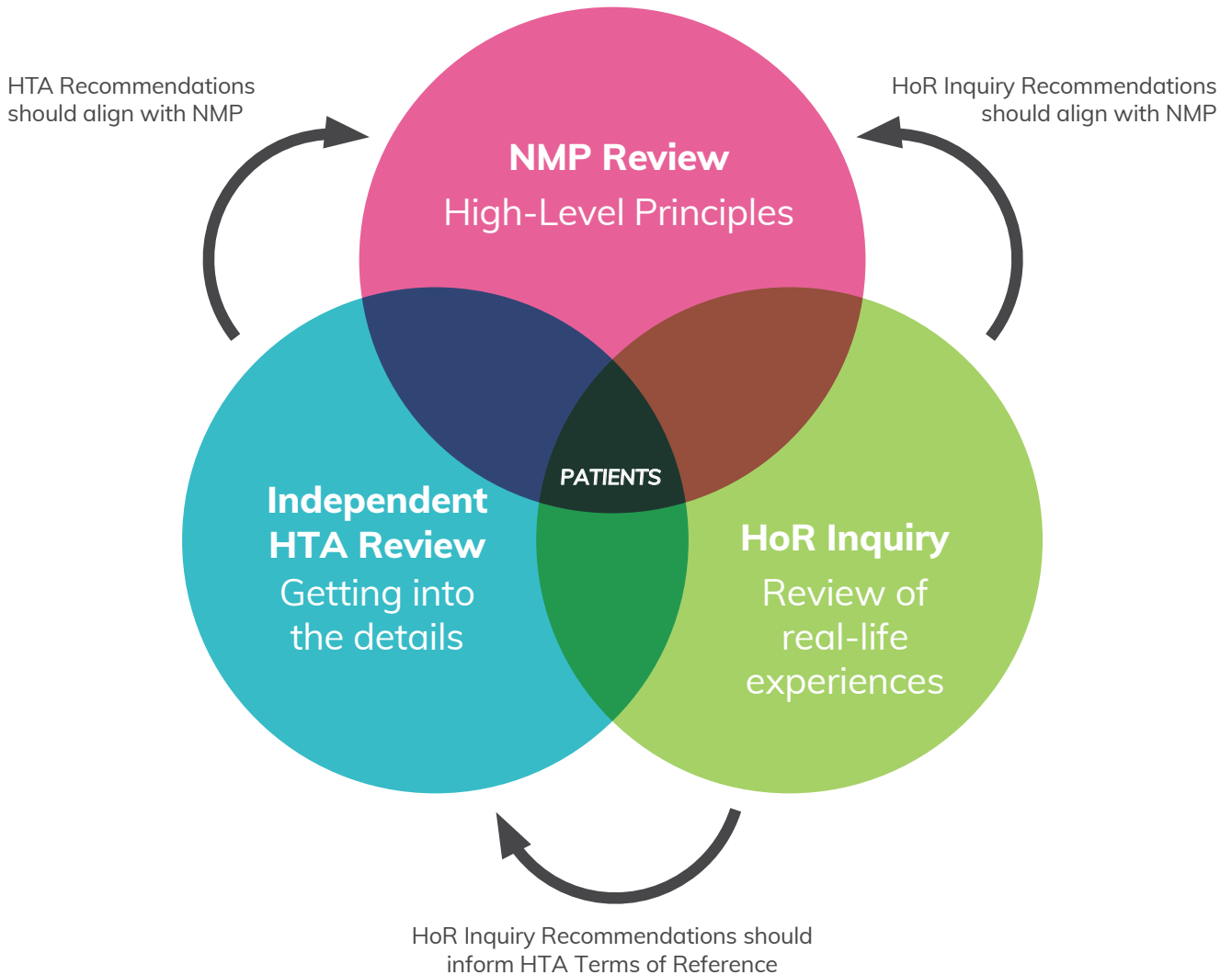
What is the NMP?

The NMP is a policy framework that is based on productive partnerships between Australian governments, health practitioners and providers, medicines industry, healthcare consumers and the media.

It aims to improve health outcomes for all Australians with a focus on access and quality use of medicines.

How does the NMP Review relate to the Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Review and the House of Representatives (HoR) Inquiry?

These three reviews/inquiries are all important in ensuring Australia's medicines policy is fit-for-future. They all have a different focus but should be fully aligned.



NMP Review

High-level policy review that will set the objectives for access to and use of medicines.

HoR Inquiry

Broad Parliamentary Inquiry into approval processes for new drugs and medical technologies.

Independent HTA Policy and Methods Review

Focused review of HTA methods and policies for medicines.

It is a critical time for industry to work together in close partnership with the patient community and Government, to achieve the best possible health outcomes for Australian patients.