Medicines Australia

Reforming Australia's Health Technology Assessment (HTA) System

As part of Medicine Australia's five-year Strategic Agreement with the Federal Government there will be an independent review of Australia's HTA system – the first of its kind in nearly 30 years.

The HTA Reform will ensure Australia's HTA system evolves to keep pace with advancements in medical technologies and delivers faster access to new medicines for patients.

What is HTA and why is it important?

- The purpose of HTA is to provide necessary information to understand the benefits and comparative value of health technologies and procedures. HTA assists and informs government funding decisions.
- HTA is commonly applied to pharmaceuticals including; vaccines, diagnostic tests, medical devices and other public health interventions.
- The main bodies involved include the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC). Some state hospitals also do HTAs.
- The key questions HTA aims to answer for each new health technology in comparison to alternative interventions are:
  - Does it improve health outcomes for a population of patients?
  - Is it cost effective compared to the existing treatment it would be replacing?

The goals of the HTA Reform are:

1. Reduce time to access for Australian patients, so that they can access new health technologies as early as possible.
2. Increase the attractiveness of Australia as a first-launch country for new medicines.
3. Ensure Australia's assessment processes keep pace with rapid advances in health technology.

What needs to be improved?

1. **Patients must be at the centre** of the process, so that reimbursement decisions consider the impact and benefits of medicines from their perspective.
2. **New evaluation and funding pathways** for innovative medicines and treatments are needed to ensure the value of innovation is recognised, and to ensure efficient ways of assessing treatments and therapies that do not fit neatly into the system (such as cell and gene therapies and precision medicines).
3. **Time to access** must be improved. Currently PBAC assessments take on average 33-35 weeks. This is far below international standards and increases the waiting time for patients.

These improvements are consistent with with a 2020 House of Representatives Inquiry which looked at the approval processes for new drugs and novel medical technologies in Australia. The full list of recommendations can be found on the Parliament of Australia website.

HTA Reform timeline

The Reform will run from July 2022 – June 2023, with recommendations to be implemented by July 2024.

Who will benefit

- **Australians** will continue to benefit from access to affordable breakthrough, innovative medicines as early as possible.
- The **medicines industry** will benefit from stability and certainty for investment in new medicines and assessment processes that remain world class and keep pace with rapid advances in medicine enabling them to be marketed and funded in Australia as they emerge.
- The **Australian economy** will benefit from improved health outcomes, and continued investment in research and innovation.

Key players in the HTA Reform

The HTA Reform will be overseen by a Reference Committee that is independently chaired. It will elevate the patient voice by including patient representatives on the Review Committee. This will ensure recommendations are informed by patient perspectives.

The Committee will also include a member nominated by Medicines Australia, a clinical/scientific expert, a Government Nominee and the Chair of the PBAC.

The Chairperson and membership of the HTA Reform Reference Committee will be approved by the Australian Government.

How to get involved

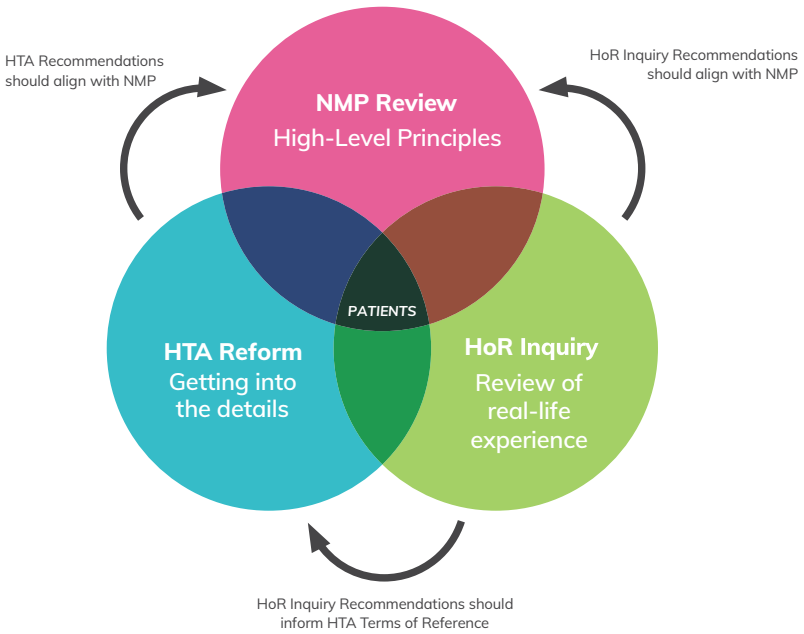
Although the process for the Reform has not yet been determined, it is expected to include public consultations. We would encourage all interested parties to contribute and have your say in any public consultations.

More information is available on the Medicines Australia and PBS website.

Linking the HTA Reform, NMP Review and 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.



National Medicines Policy (NMP) Review

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

House of Representatives (HoR) Inquiry

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

Independent HTA Policy and Methods Reform

Focused review of Health Technology Assessment (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.

Further information and the full Strategic Agreement is available for download on our website.

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