



Fact Sheet: Enhanced Consumer Engagement

The views of patients and consumers will be incorporated into medicine reimbursement decisions through an Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process. The process complements recommendations in the HTA Review and has been developed by a consumer-led Co-Design Working Group comprising patient advocacy groups, patients, industry and the Department.

The Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process is a deliverable in the 2022–2027 Strategic Agreement (clause 6.3.2) between the Commonwealth of Australia and Medicines Australia. It will integrate consumer perspectives into the HTA system to ensure the views of patients and consumers are factored into decisions about subsidising new medicines, particularly those addressing significant unmet clinical needs.

The Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process recognises that patients provide valuable insights into their real-world experiences, needs, and the practical, financial, cultural, and well-being challenges they face. This will inform HTA decision-making and reflect the real impact of treatments on patients.

This work has been led by a Co-Design Working Group (CWG) that included representatives from the patient community, consumers, the pharmaceutical industry, and the Department of Health and Aged Care and chaired by a consumer representative. The CWG conducted extensive consultations with patients, consumers, clinicians, government, and the industry in parallel to the HTA Review consultations.

The CWG acknowledges that aligning with the HTA Review will provide additional guidance on enhancing consumer evidence in HTA deliberations, complementing clinical, technical, and health economic evidence.

The CWG report was submitted to the Minister of Health and Aged Care in June 2024. The vision, themes, recommendations and implementation principles from the report can be found at the end of this fact sheet.



Vision of the Report

"Australians' diverse health care experiences and needs are understood, and consumer engagement is integral in HTA decision-making."

Key Themes in the Recommendations

1. **Partnerships:** Foster collaboration among stakeholders to amplify the consumer voice in HTA processes.
2. **Transparency:** Provide clear, accessible information about HTA processes and proactively notify stakeholders of HTA activities.
3. **Evidence Collection:** Gather consumer input early in the health technology pathway to inform HTA decisions.

Recommendations for Consideration

1. **Transparent Communications:** Ensure timely and clear notifications about HTA processes to enhance consumer engagement.
2. **Centralised Consumer Support:** Expand and coordinate support services to facilitate consumer involvement throughout the health technology pathway.
3. **Diverse Consumer Identification:** Implement processes to engage a diverse range of consumers in HTA.
4. **Accessible Resources and Training:** Provide resources and training to support equitable consumer participation in HTA.
5. **Elevate Consumer Evidence:** Ensure that consumer evidence is a key consideration in HTA decisions.
6. **Early Collaboration:** Establish guidelines for early and ongoing collaboration among stakeholders.
7. **Consumer-Identified Items:** Develop methods for incorporating consumer-identified items (e.g. medicines) into HTA.
8. **Consumer Feedback Loop:** Create a feedback mechanism to show how consumer input has influenced HTA assessments.
9. **Consumer Digital Portal:** Develop a portal to provide consumers with access to relevant information and resources.
10. **Horizon Scanning:** Utilise consumer-focused horizon scanning to inform engagement strategies.

Implementation Principles

- **Collaboration:** Engage continuously with government, clinicians, patients, consumers, and the pharmaceutical industry throughout the implementation phase.
- **Monitoring:** Track and assess outcomes to ensure accountability and measure impact.
- **Investment:** Invest in changes necessary for successful implementation.
- **Consumer Engagement Framework:** Develop a framework to formally incorporate and monitor consumer input early in the health technology pathway.
- **Policy and Methods:** Strengthen and embed consumer evidence within HTA policies and methods.