

Reforming Australia's Health Technology Assessment (HTA) System



Medicines Australia is advocating for reform of Australia's Health Technology Assessment (HTA) system to give Australians faster access to new Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) medicines once they are approved for use by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, now and into the future.

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 HTA Review

The HTA Review Accelerating Access to the Best Medicines for Australians Now and into the Future, released in September 2024, found Australia's system is out-dated and needs urgent reform, with delays to accessing new medicines through the PBS having a profound impact on individual patients. Prior to this Review, Australia's HTA had not been comprehensively reviewed in more than 30 years.

Implementing the full package of recommended reforms will ensure Australia's HTA system evolves to keep pace with advancements in medical technologies and delivers faster patient access to new medicines.

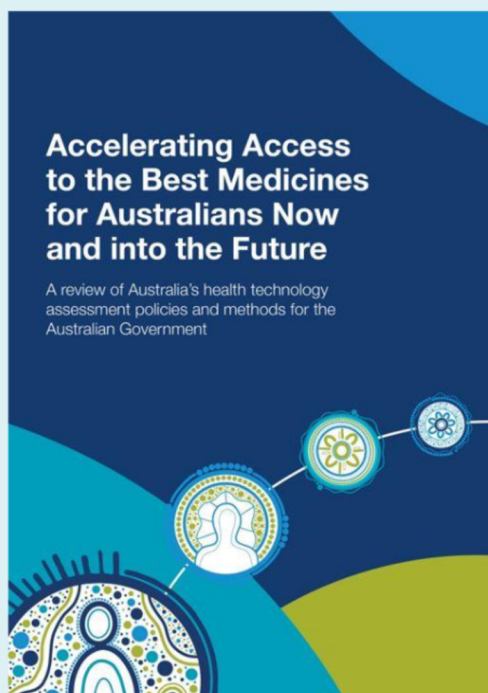
HTA Review findings

The Review made 50 recommendations for reform that will:

1. Address inequities in access.
2. Improve timely access to medicines.
3. Improve engagement.
4. Invest in HTA capability to make it adaptable and future proof.

Some of the areas for improvement in Australia's current HTA process identified through the Review include:

- Health technologies are not funded in the shortest time possible.
- Delays are due to the economic evaluation being used as a proxy for negotiation of the prices paid.
- HTA pathways in Australia are more complex than they need to be.



View the full HTA
Review report here:



Who will benefit

- Australians will benefit from access to affordable breakthrough, innovative medicines as early as possible.
- The medicines industry will benefit from policy stability and certainty of investment in new medicines, and assessment processes that adapt to rapid advances in medicines, enabling them to be funded in Australia as soon as possible.
- The Australian economy will benefit from improved health outcomes, savings generated elsewhere in the health system, and continued investment in research and innovation.

Next steps

Medicines Australia is working with the Government, patient advocacy groups, clinicians, health peak bodies and other stakeholders to progress reforms. An Independent Implementation Group has been established by the Government to guide implementation of the Review and is due to finalise its report in coming months.