



Health Technology Assessment Policy and Methods Review Reference Committee

Communique – 24 March and 6 April 2023 meetings

The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) Policy and Methods Review (Review) Reference Committee (Committee) met by video conference on 24 March 2023 and 6 April 2023.

24 March meeting

All Committee members and support staff from the Review Secretariat in the Department of Health and Aged Care (Department) and the probity adviser attended. Representatives from Rare Voices Australia (RVA) and a representative from the Consumer Evidence and Engagement Unit (CEEU) were invited to speak to the Committee.

What did the Committee discuss?

Discussion with Rare Voices Australia

The Committee invited Ms Nicole Millis, the CEO of RVA, and Ms Louise Healy, the Education and Advocacy Manager of RVA, to have a discussion regarding RVA's interest in the co-design of an Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process under the 2022-27 Strategic Agreement between the Commonwealth and Medicines Australia. The Committee also invited a representative from the Department's CEEU to join the discussion. The discussion was in response to a letter from RVA requesting that the co-design of the Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process should be led by consumers, and that an existing group of consumer organisations that have been working closely with the HTA Consumer Consultative Committee are well-positioned to lead the work. The representatives from RVA emphasised the importance of alignment between the various pieces of work in the HTA consumer engagement space and the matter for the HTA Review not to duplicate any work already being undertaken. The Committee highlighted that its Terms of Reference states that it will ensure it is informed by what is learnt through concurrent processes, such as these, and that the HTA Review recommendations are aligned to the outcomes of, those processes. Additionally, it reaffirmed its view from its 13 February 2023 meeting that it would work with the HTA Consumer Consultative Committee and the CEEU throughout the HTA Review to seek support during consultations to inform the Committee of key HTA issues for consumers.

National Health Reform Agreement Addendum 2020-25

The Committee noted the invitation to provide a written submission to the Mid-term review of the National Health Reform Agreement Addendum 2020-25 (NHRA Review). The Committee agreed to invite the co-leads of the NHRA Review, Ms Rosemary Huxtable PSM and Mr Michael Walsh PSM, to provide a briefing to the Committee.

HTA Review Work Plan

The Committee considered the draft Work Plan, which had been revised following the Committee's consideration of the initial draft at its 14 March 2023 meeting. The Committee noted that key revisions include updated risks, additional meeting dates and the addition of Committee member roles and responsibilities. The Committee agreed to provide further feedback out-of-session to the Secretariat for finalising the Work Plan. The Committee agreed to endorse the Work Plan before its publication scheduled for 11 April 2023.

HTA Review Consultation Plan

The Committee considered the draft Consultation Plan, which had been revised following the Committee's consideration of the initial draft at its 14 March 2023 meeting. The Committee noted that key revisions include the opportunity for face-to-face discussions, adjustment of timeframes to allow consultation on HTA expert papers and updates to probing questions for consultation. The Committee agreed to endorse the Consultation Plan before its publication scheduled for 11 April 2023.

6 April 2023

Support staff from the Review Secretariat in the Department of Health and Aged Care (Department) and the probity adviser attended. All committee members except Dr Dawn Casey were present.

What did the Committee discuss?

Conference attendance

The Committee noted that several HTA-related conferences and forums are being held in Australia this year that are highly relevant to the HTA Review. The Committee also noted that several members had been invited to attend and participate in these conferences. The Committee agreed that the participation of Committee members in these conferences would provide valuable insight for the HTA Review.

The Committee noted that, in these forums, members may be asked to express views on matters that the Reference Committee is discussing and/or may be the subject of recommendations from the HTA Review. The Committee noted that several of its members have, and continue to work, in organisations that have developed policy positions on matters relevant to the HTA Review and have expressed their views publicly.

The Committee agreed that members would continue to be permitted to express personal positions, or the positions of their organisations, on matters relevant to the Review but be clear that these are not those of the Reference Committee when doing so. The Committee agreed that irrespective of making this disclaimer, comments from its members may still be interpreted as positions decided by the Committee. The Committee agreed that this risk would need to be managed on an ongoing basis, with the support of the probity adviser.

The Committee agreed that members should avoid, any actual or perception of receipt of any financial or non-financial benefit from stakeholders who may be interested in the HTA Review's outcomes.

The Committee agreed that members should report to the Committee after participating in these forums. The Committee agreed to publish its principles for conference attendance.

Balancing transparency and confidentiality

The Committee noted significant interest in its discussions and the outcomes of its meetings. The Committee agreed that the key avenue for transparency would be its communiques, which are published after each meeting. The Committee agreed that the preparation of communiques should be a priority after each meeting and that inconsistent release of information should be avoided as it risks some stakeholders receiving information before others and potentially releasing incorrect information.

The Committee agreed to publish its principles for balancing transparency and confidentiality.

Opening of the first consultation on 11 April 2023

The Committee agreed on the materials to be published with the opening of the first consultation on 11 April 2023 including the one-page 'Work and Consultation Plans', frequently asked questions, glossary and consultation pages. The Committee agreed that these would be living documents that would be updated as the Review progresses. The Committee agreed that it would publish a more detailed plan on a page for research and analysis to be undertaken to support the Review once arrangements with the HTA expert were finalised.