



MBS Review Advisory Committee

Communique – May 2023

The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) Review Advisory Committee (MRAC) supports the MBS Continuous Review to ensure the MBS is contemporary, sustainable, evidence based, and supports universal access to high value care for all Australians.

The MRAC meets quarterly, and most recently met on the land of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people on 10 May 2023.

Current MRAC membership

The MRAC is comprised of practising clinicians, academics, health system experts and consumers. Its Terms of Reference are available on the Department of Health and Aged Care [MRAC webpage](#).

Professor Anthony Lawler attended his final MRAC meeting as member on 10 May 2023 and his membership will formally conclude on 25 June 2023 prior to his appointment as Deputy Secretary, Health Products and Regulations Group at the Department of Health and Aged Care. The committee would like to congratulate Professor Lawler on his appointment and thank him for his valuable contribution to the MRAC over the last two years.

MRAC Reviews

MRAC working groups may be established to conduct reviews and typically consist of a subset of MRAC members and external subject matter experts as required.

Findings and recommendations from MRAC working groups are subject to extensive consultation processes prior to MRAC consideration, finalisation, and submission to Government.

Updates on completed reviews

Final reports from the [Surgical Assistant Working Group](#) and [Genetic Counselling Working Group](#) were endorsed by the MRAC on 6 December 2022 and presented to the Minister for Health and Aged Care for consideration. Both reports have now been published on the [MRAC webpage](#), where you can also find some further information about the process following completion of a review.

Updates on current reviews

Electrocardiogram (ECG) Services Post Implementation Review

The ECG Working Group was established to conduct a post-implementation review of 1 August 2020 changes to MBS ECG items. These changes were recommended by the MBS

Review Taskforce and intended to promote high-value care and address inadvertent misuse of MBS items.

This post implementation review was referred to the MRAC by the former Minister for Health.

The ECG Working Group will seek to identify any impacts to patient access and health outcomes following the 1 August 2020 changes and whether these changes led to their intended outcomes. Through a review of data and engagement with stakeholders, this review will aim to ensure appropriate access for patients is maintained for ECG MBS items.

The first meeting of the ECG Working Group will occur in the coming months.

MRAC meeting 7 – 10 May 2023

The committee was briefed on the progress of current reviews

Colonoscopy Post Implementation Review

The Colonoscopy Working Group was established to conduct a post implementation review of the introduction of a new schedule of colonoscopy items in November 2019. These changes were recommended by the MBS Review Taskforce and intended to better define clinical indications and surveillance intervals for colonoscopy, and to align the MBS with National Health and Medical Research Council Clinical Practice Guidelines for Surveillance Colonoscopy.

The Department of Health and Aged Care referred this post implementation review to the MRAC following an initial review of data, and feedback from the sector.

This review aims to identify any impacts to patient access and health outcomes following the November 2019 changes, and whether these changes led to their intended outcomes. Through a review of data and engagement with the sector, the review will consider whether the current structure of colonoscopy MBS items supports equitable access to colonoscopy and promotes high value care.

The Colonoscopy Working Group has met three times and is in the process of drafting a report, which will be published online for a public consultation period later this year in order to inform the finalisation of recommendations.

Vascular Interventional Radiology Services

The Vascular Interventional Radiology (VIR) Working Group was established to conduct a review of vascular interventional radiology services.

The Department of Health and Aged Care referred this review to the MRAC following the MBS Review Taskforce's review of vascular services and further consultation with the sector.

This review aims to align the MBS with established, current, and evidence-based clinical use of interventional radiology and interventional neuroradiology.

The VIR Working Group has met twice and is currently considering proposed MBS item changes, for inclusion in a findings report. This report will be subject to a targeted consultation process which will then inform the development of a draft final report. This

second report will then be published for a public consultation period expected to take place in 2024, prior to finalisation of recommendations.

Telehealth services Post Implementation Review

Following a formal request from the Minister for Health and Aged Care, the MRAC commenced monitoring of MBS telehealth services in 2022, and formally commenced a post implementation review of these services at its meeting on 1 March 2023.

The Telehealth post implementation review will complement the work of the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce, provide advice on the MBS Taskforce Telehealth Principles, and propose a framework for future consideration of MBS funded telehealth services. While taking into consideration the telehealth guiding principles as developed by the MBS Review Taskforce in 2020, the MRAC will provide advice on the appropriateness of current settings for video and telephone consultations, and current patient eligibility settings and related exemptions within the MBS.

In undertaking this review, the committee will engage with and seek feedback from stakeholders to inform its recommendations, through both an initial targeted consultation process commencing in June 2023, and public consultation of its findings and recommendations later this year.