



# MBS Review Advisory Committee

## Communique – August 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.

### Current MRAC Membership

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

The committee would like to acknowledge outgoing members Professor Christopher Vertullo and Associate Professor Angus Turner and thank them for their contributions to the MRAC over the last two years.



Members L-R: Adjunct Associate Professor Chris Helms, Professor Ken Sikaris, Associate Professor Andrew Singer, Professor Wendy Brown, Ms Jo Watson (Deputy Chair), Ms Robyn Stephen, Ms Margaret Foulds, Professor John Atherton, Conjoint Professor Anne Duggan (Chair), Professor Harriet Hiscock, Dr Sue Masel, Professor Adam Elshaug, Dr Jason Agostino, Associate Professor Elizabeth Marles, Dr Matthew Andrews, Ms Alison Marcus. Not pictured: Professor Sally Green and Professor Christobel Saunders.

## MRAC Reviews

MRAC working groups may be established to support a review 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 consultation processes prior to MRAC consideration, finalisation, and submission to Government.

## MRAC Consultation

The diverse perspectives, experience and knowledge of stakeholders are valued by the MRAC in undertaking its assessments. Throughout the course of a review, the MRAC and its working groups engage with stakeholders through:

### **Involvement in working groups**

Subject matter experts may be invited to provide advice to working groups to inform their understanding of current practices and models of care, and gain insights into any current and anticipated challenges.

**Targeted consultation** involves seeking feedback from identified stakeholders on a particular element of a review, or on draft findings and recommendations. Such stakeholders may include but are not limited to relevant peak bodies, medical colleges, state and territory governments and consumer representative groups.

### **Public consultation**

Draft MRAC reports may be published on the Department of Health and Aged Care's [Consultation Hub](#) for a six-week public consultation process.

**Hybrid consultation** is a process of undertaking both targeted and public consultation activities simultaneously.

Feedback provided by stakeholders throughout the course of a review is considered by the MRAC and informs its final recommendations to government.

## Meeting Outcomes

The MRAC meets quarterly, and most recently held its eighth meeting on the land of the Ngannawal and Ngambri peoples on 8 and 9 August 2023.

### **The committee was briefed on the progress of current reviews**

#### **Post-implementation review of changes to Electrocardiogram (ECG) MBS items**

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.

The ECG Working Group held its first meeting in July 2023 and is currently collecting data for consideration at its second meeting due to be held in September 2023.

## **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.

The VIR Working Group has met twice and is currently developing proposed MBS item changes with a view to aligning the MBS with established, current, and evidence-based clinical use of interventional radiology and interventional neuroradiology.

The VIR Working Group is scheduled to meet next in September 2023 to consolidate its proposed changes for inclusion in a draft report which will be subject to a targeted consultation process. The VIR Working Group will consider the feedback received through this process to inform the development of a draft final report which will be published for a public consultation process expected to take place in 2024, prior to finalisation of recommendations to government.

## **The committee considered a draft findings report from the Colonoscopy Working Group**

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. [Read more](#) about the November 2019 changes to colonoscopy items.

The Colonoscopy Working Group met four times throughout 2023 and engaged with a range of stakeholders and subject matter experts to inform its review.

The committee endorsed the Colonoscopy Working Group's draft findings and recommendations for an open consultation period of six weeks, which is currently open until Friday 29 September 2023. Stakeholders interested in providing feedback are encouraged to participate via the Department of Health and Aged Care's [Consultation Hub](#).

Once consultation concludes, the working group and committee will consider the feedback received and finalise its recommendations for endorsement at the November 2023 MRAC meeting.

## **The committee progressed its post-implementation review of MBS telehealth services**

Following a formal request from the Hon Mark Butler, Minister for Health and Aged Care, the MRAC commenced a post implementation review of MBS funded telehealth services at its meeting on 1 March 2023.

In conducting its review, the MRAC is considering current evidence and will provide clinically relevant advice. Some key components for the MRAC's consideration include:

- reviewing and updating, if necessary, the MBS Review Taskforce Telehealth Principles to provide a framework for future consideration of MBS funded telehealth services;

- reviewing the appropriateness of current settings for video and telephone consultations to ensure the right balance between access, quality, and safety; and
- current patient eligibility settings and related exemptions.

Consultation on a draft report will commence in the coming months and will occur over a six-week period. Feedback received through this process will be considered by the committee in finalising its recommendations, which are due to government by the end of 2023.