



Chair and Deputy Chair appointments for health technology assessment committees

21 March 2024

About health technology assessment committees

In Australia, the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee \(PBAC\)](#), the [Medical Services Advisory Committee \(MSAC\)](#), and the Medical Devices and Human Tissue Advisory Committee (MDHTAC) perform health technology assessments (HTA) processes. Each committee provides advice to the Australian Government.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC)

PBAC is an independent, statutory, expert body appointed by the Australian Government. Its main role is to recommend new medicines for listing on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). No new medicine is listed on the PBS unless the committee recommends it.

Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)

MSAC is an independent, expert non-statutory committee. MSAC appraises medical services, health technologies, and health programs proposed for public funding and provides advice to the Australian Government on whether a new medical service, health technology or health program should be publicly funded. Using the best available evidence MSAC assesses its:

- comparative safety
- clinical effectiveness
- cost-effectiveness
- total cost.

Medical Devices and Human Tissue Advisory Committee (MDHTAC)

MDHTAC's main role is to make recommendations about the suitability of medical devices and human tissues products (products) for listing on the Prescribed List of Benefits for Medical Devices and Human Tissue Products (Prescribed List). The MDHTAC considers:

- associated benefits

- amending the details of the existing billing codes (for the products already listed)
- any other post-listing activities, as required.

The Prescribed List identifies the minimum amount payable by private health insurers for medical devices and products.

About the new appointments

PBAC appointments

Professor Robyn Ward AM

From 5 May 2024, Professor Robyn Ward AM will be appointed as the Chair of PBAC.

Professor Ward is currently the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health, University of Sydney.

Professor Ward graduated from the University New South Wales (UNSW) with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (Hons 1) in 1984. She then trained as a physician and a scientist, gaining fellowship of the Royal Australian College of Physicians in 1991 and a PhD in Medicine at UNSW in 1994.

Professor Ward has also been:

- Professor of Medicine at the University of New South Wales
- Clinical Associate Dean at the Prince of Wales Clinical School (UNSW)
- Head of the Adult Cancer Program at the Lowy Cancer Research Centre
- Director of the Comprehensive Cancer Centre at the Prince of Wales Hospital in Sydney
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) at the University of Queensland
- Executive Dean (Acting) of the Faculty of Medicine at University of Queensland.

Professor Ward has published over 260 articles, books, and chapters in several publications, including:

- British Medical Journal
- Journal of the National Cancer Institute
- Nature Genetics
- The New England Journal of Medicine.

Professor Ward's contributions to medical research were acknowledged through the:

- Commonwealth Health Minister's Award for Excellence in Health and Medical Research in 2004
- NSW Premier's Award for Outstanding Cancer Researcher of the Year in 2007
- Member of the Order of Australia in 2013.

Until 2019, Professor Ward was co-Chair for Global Genomics Medicine Collaborative, hosted by the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies in Washington. She has been a member of the Australian Academy of Health and Medical Sciences since its inception in 2013, serving on its Board and Council. Professor Ward has extensive experience in health technology assessment through her role as Chair of MSAC since 2009.

MSAC appointments

Professor Jonathan Craig

From 1 April 2024, Professor Jonathan Craig will be appointed as the Chair of MSAC.

Professor Craig is Vice-President and Executive Dean of the College of Medicine and Public Health at Flinders University.

Professor Craig is a paediatric nephrologist and clinical epidemiologist. His research has focused on improving the health of people with chronic kidney disease, children, and the health and well-being of Indigenous people.

He has published more than 750 papers, has an h-index of 83, with more than 35,000 citations (Scopus). Professor Craig is also the Coordinating Editor of the Cochrane Kidney and Transplant Group.

Professor Craig's awards include:

- International Distinguished Medal of the National (US) Kidney Foundation
- TJ Neale Award for Outstanding Contribution to Nephrological Science.

Professor Craig is a member of the:

- Australian Academy of Health and Medical Science
- National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Advisory Group on the Synthesis and Translation of Research Evidence
- NHMRC Health Translation Advisory Committee
- PBAC
- MSAC
- Life Saving Drugs Program Expert Panel.

Professor Craig has also been:

- President of the Australia-New Zealand Society of Nephrology.
- Chair of the Steering Group of Cochrane
- member of the Expert Advisory Group for the Structural Review of NHMRC's Grant Program
- non-executive board member of Kidney Health Australia
- member of the World Health Organisation expert review panel for global strategy and plan of action on public health, innovation, and intellectual property.

Professor Kwun Fong

From 1 April 2024, Professor Kwun Fong will be appointed as the Co-Deputy Chair of MSAC.

Professor Kwun Fong is a thoracic and sleep physician at The Prince Charles Hospital (TPCH), and professor with the University of Queensland (UQ) School of Medicine. He is the Clinical Manager of the Pulmonary Malignancy Unit at TPCH. Professor Fong is also the Director of the UQ Thoracic Research Centre, which undertakes molecular, genomic, and translational research in lung diseases.

He was inaugural Chair of the Australasian Lung Cancer Trials Group and serves as Chair of the Australian Lung Foundation's Lung Cancer Consultative Group, Co-Editor of the Cochrane Lung Cancer Review Group and is a Co-Deputy Editor for the Journal of Thoracic Diseases.

Professor Fong is an internationally respected clinician and researcher in thoracic and sleep medicine. His skills in lung disease are important given the number of co-dependent applications to MSAC and PBAC, particularly for non-small cell lung cancer.

Professor Fong is the Chair of the MSAC's Evaluation Sub-Committee (ESC) and has served on the MSAC ESC since 2015.

Associate Professor Sarah Norris

From 1 July 2024, Associate Professor Sarah Norris will be appointed as the Co-Deputy Chair of MSAC.

Associate Professor Sarah Norris is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She has more than 23 years' experience in medical research and health technology assessments.

Associate Professor Norris holds a:

- Bachelor of Science (Honours) in physiology from Victoria University, New Zealand
- PhD in Pharmacology from Cambridge University, UK
- Certificate in Health Economics from Monash University, Australia.

Associate Professor Sarah Norris was the founding Director of Health Technology Analysts Pty Ltd and a Director of the Health Services Assessment Collaboration.

She has been involved with more than 200 assessments in Australia and New Zealand, across a range pharmaceuticals, vaccines, medical devices, diagnostic tests, and public health programs.

Associate Professor Norris is experienced in the development of NHMRC evidence-based treatment guidelines for several peak health organisations.

Associate Professor Norris is a current member of MSAC, and she is also the current Deputy Chair of MSAC Evaluation Sub-Committee (ESC), with membership due to expire 31 March 2024. Associate Professor Norris has served on MSAC since 2018 and MSAC ESC since 2013.

Outgoing committee members

Thank you to outgoing PBAC and MSAC committee members for their leadership, including:

- PBAC Chair Professor Andrew Wilson (retiring from the role in May 2024)
- MSAC Chair Professor Robyn Ward (outgoing from the role in in March 2024)
- MSAC Deputy Chair Professor Timothy Davis (outgoing from the role in June 2024).

More information

- More information about the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) is available on the [Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme website](#).
- More information about the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC), is available on the [MSAC website](#).
- Learn [how we use health technology assessments \(HTAs\)](#) to assess the value of medicines, vaccines, medical devices and medical services.