



Co-design of an Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process Working Group

Communique – Co-design Workshop #4 – 9 April 2024

The Co-design Working Group (CWG) of the Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process participated in an online workshop on 9 April 2024. The workshop was run by independent facilitators from the Methods and Implementation Support for Clinical and Health (MISCH) Research Hub, Nossal Institute for Global Health, The University of Melbourne, who have been engaged to develop and implement the project.

What did the Working Group discuss?

Chair's update

The Chair noted that the response to the consultation of the proposed recommendations for the Enhanced Consumer Engagement Process had been pleasing, indicating that there is a high level of interest in the work. The Chair advised she had been invited to attend the HTA Policy and Methods Review Reference Committee meeting on 11 April 2024, to share feedback on the consultation and consider where the projects may continue to align as they move into finalising recommendations.

Overview of the co-design consultation responses

The facilitator shared data on the stakeholder groups that completed the online consultation survey. These included: 34 members of a health consumer or patient organisation; 15 individual patients or carers; 10 from the pharmaceutical sector; 2 clinical or health professionals; 2 academics/researchers; and one each from the government sector, consultancy and 'other' classification. Additionally, 12 written submissions were received. The CWG acknowledged that consultation respondents represented a wide range of stakeholder groups.

The facilitator described the methodology applied to the analysis of the consultation responses. The CWG reviewed respondents' rankings of the proposed recommendations from the corresponding survey questions and noted the top 3 recommendations which emerged from these.

- System-wide recommendations:
 - consumer engagement framework
 - plain language communications
 - single digital consumer portal.

- Health technology pathway processes (pre-HTA, HTA, post-HTA):
 - consumer evidence in PBAC submissions
 - consumer evidence in TGA applications
 - consumer evidence in Australian clinical research.

The consultation also invited respondents to rank implementation considerations in order of importance. The CWG reviewed these and noted the top 3 consideration rankings.

- strengthen the use of consumer evidence and experience
- commit to timely consumer-focused reform
- invest in systemic change.

Review of responses to proposed recommendations

The facilitator guided the CWG in more detailed discussion of various proposed recommendations, with consideration to responses received in the consultation. This included feedback on several recommendations which suggested that more clarity was needed on the intended outcome, the wording of the recommendation and/or how these may be implemented without causing delayed access to health technologies.

Trends emerging from the consultation

The facilitator briefly shared some overarching trends that had emerged thus far from the consultation analysis. It was noted that these are still being developed as part of the qualitative analysis but will assist in informing the CWG in finalising the recommendations.

The CWG considered some of the emerging trends, including:

- Prioritise implementations that may produce enhancements in the short-term, to ensure improvements can be initiated in the interim while important but more detailed enhancements are under development.
- Ensure equity of access for diverse and priority populations across all enhancements.
- Enhancements must be supported by methods that are a formal component of the required evidence as part of HTA committee deliberations and decision-making.
- Enhancements should enable continued support of a viable and thriving clinical research sector in Australia.
- Consider explicit inclusion of clinicians/health professionals as stakeholders in the recommendations.
- Appropriate measures will be required to protect sensitive commercial-in-confidence information and that all workable changes adhere to applicable data protection and confidentiality laws.
- Resourcing implications, responsibilities and accountabilities across stakeholder groups should be considered for all recommendations.

Meeting close

The CWG noted that the consultation responses were helpful in informing the refinement and finalisation of the proposed recommendations. It was agreed that the facilitator will develop a draft final report which incorporates the CWG's consideration of the consultation responses. This will be provided for members' input prior to the next CWG meeting on 7 May 2024.