

The Hon Mark Butler MP
Minister for Health and Ageing
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I am pleased to present the Health Technology Assessment Review Implementation Advisory Group's (IAG's) Interim Report.

This Interim Report is the culmination of the IAG's work to date and demonstrates the ongoing commitment of all members to deliver high quality advice that speaks to the priorities you identified in your letter of 27 February 2025. It delivers early insights across five focus areas identified by the IAG.

Recognising the high-profile nature of Health Technology Assessment (HTA) reform, I have requested that the Interim Report be written in a manner suitable for public release. I understand that stakeholders remain actively engaged in the IAG's work and are keen to have visibility of the Interim Report.

However, I wish to separately highlight several key actions in this letter that, with appropriate resourcing, could be progressed by Government ahead of its final advice, should you choose to do so.

These actions, aligned with the priority areas outlined in your February letter, have been identified by the IAG as meaningful first steps in HTA reform and suitable for immediate commencement by Government.

1. Process changes to support more streamlined HTA

- Development and piloting of pathways for the streamlined assessment of medicines requiring co-dependent health technologies.
- Design of new cost-minimisation pathways for piloting, in consultation with industry stakeholders.
- Progressing priority updates to the PBAC Guidelines, including in relation to comparator selection and discount rate.

2. More equitable access for patients

- The concept of high unmet clinical need and high added therapeutic value are used in current PBAC guidelines and referred to in several recommendations. However, Australia does not have an agreed definition of either of these concepts. Work could be commenced in developing Australian definitions relevant to HTA in consultation with relevant stakeholders. This could involve:
 1. A rapid review of definitions used in countries with comparable health systems, and,
 2. An assessment of the understanding of these concepts among consumers and clinicians in Australia.

- Co-developing Terms of Reference for a Health Technology Assessment First Nations Advisory Committee with relevant stakeholders.

The IAG has ascertained that there is no existing group providing this support to any of the HTA committees of the Australian government.

The next step should involve the development of terms of reference for the committee including how this committee would interact with the existing HTA committees. While the IAG could progress further consultation with First Nations stakeholders for this purpose, it would be inappropriate to progress this without in principle support for the establishment of such a Health Technology Assessment First Nations Advisory Committee.

3. Improved stakeholder engagement in HTA

Several recommendations refer to or are dependent on a more informed, engaged and empowered consumer (patient) voice in HTA including in prioritisation and decision making. The recommendations of both the HTA policy and process review and the Enhanced HTA report support that a key element to this is the co-design of a stakeholder engagement framework to inform and guide better consumer engagement. The IAG therefore sees this as an important first step to progress and suggest early consideration.

This could involve, under the guidance of the Consumer Consultative Committee,

- That the Consumer, Engagement and Evidence Unit (CEEU) be supported to commence co-design of the stakeholder engagement framework.
- That appropriate expert support be contracted to assist the CEEU in undertaking the co-design
- That resourcing includes funding to support the involvement of stakeholder representatives in the codesign.

It is anticipated this co-design would take 12 months.

The IAG will commence the prioritisation of recommendations in detail for the roadmap at its meeting on 14 August 2025 and I will provide you with a further update post this meeting.

I appreciate your continued commitment to the IAG's process and am confident that the early commencement of some, or all, of these actions would leave the Government well-placed to respond to the IAG's final advice in early 2026.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and your team.

Yours sincerely



Professor Andrew Wilson AO
IAG Chair

12/08/ 2025