



Health Ministers Meeting (HMM):

Communique

12 December 2025 – Brisbane

Health Ministers met in Brisbane today to discuss priority areas for health system reform including the National Health Reform Agreement, scope of practice priorities, older people experiencing delayed discharge from hospital, 1800MEDICARE, and the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement.

National Health and Disability Reform

Health Ministers discussed the ongoing development of the next Addendum to the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA). Negotiations are progressing.

Delayed Discharge of Older People

Health Ministers agreed to continue development of a nationally consistent definition, classification and approach to data collection of delayed discharges of older people from public hospitals. This will enhance system-wide visibility of discharge barriers and identify solutions for continuous improvement.

Health Ministers received an update from states and territories on data of older people in hospital who are clinically ready for discharge but are unable to transition to community services.

National Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement)

Health and Mental Health Ministers acknowledge and welcome the Productivity Commission (PC)'s Final Review of the National Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Agreement (National Agreement).

Ministers thank the PC for its work in undertaking the Review. Ministers also sincerely thanked the many people from the mental health and suicide prevention sectors and people with lived and living experience, who generously shared their stories, insights and expertise throughout the Review process. Your voices and contributions will help to shape a path forward.

Since its inception in March 2022, the National Agreement has laid a foundation for system integration and reform. Across all jurisdictions, there has been collaboration and a shared commitment to improving mental health outcomes and preventing suicide. Together, Ministers acknowledge there has been meaningful progress, yet there is still much more to do.

Ministers agreed that significant work is needed to realise the goals of the National Agreement and to better meet the needs of individuals, families and communities.

Ministers reaffirmed their collective commitment to working together and with the sector and most importantly, with those who live with mental health challenges and the impacts of suicide, to consider the Review findings and a way forward.

Ministers recognise that this work takes time and care. Ministers welcomed the opportunity to consider extending the current National Agreement by 12 months, to 1 July 2027. This will, allow consideration of the Review and the capacity to undertake meaningful negotiation of future arrangements, and to provide service continuity during the transition period. The Commonwealth has made a formal offer to each state and territory to extend the Agreement by 12 months to ensure service continuity while the next Agreement is negotiated. This extension is currently being considered by each jurisdiction. Health and Mental Health Ministers Meeting will consider further details on the next steps and the process to develop new arrangements in February 2026.

Together, Health and Mental Health Ministers remain steadfast in their commitment to building a mental health and suicide prevention system that is compassionate, connected, and responsive — one that truly meets the needs of all Australians.

Scope of Practice Priority Reforms

Health Ministers continue to progress reforms aligned to recommendations of the *Scope of Practice Review*. This includes the establishment of a national advisory group to lead work on harmonisation of drugs and poisons legislation. Health Ministers requested the Advisory Group report back in early 2026 with a 12-month workplan for the group. Health Ministers asked the group for advice on a nationally consistent approach to the diagnosis and treatment of ADHD by general practitioners. Health Ministers also discussed scope of practice in community pharmacies, and reform is underway to improve consistency and access across Australia.

National Data Linkage Project

Health Ministers endorsed a business case to consider the staged implementation of the National Primary and Acute Care Data Linkage Project. This project will unlock actionable insights across the interface of primary and acute care to improve health outcomes, reduce system inefficiencies, and support evidence-informed policy and planning. The design of this project aligns with national strategic priorities, including the recommendations of the National Health Reform Agreement (NHRA) mid-term review, the Australian Government Primary Care 10 Year Plan, the Strengthening Medicare Taskforce report, Closing the Gap Priority Reform 4, the National Primary Health Care Data Collection and Digital Health Blueprint.

1800MEDICARE

Health Ministers discussed the upcoming launch of 1800MEDICARE, which will be available to all Australians from 1 January 2026. This initiative aims to improve referral pathways across all care settings, support continuity of care, and modernise digital health tools for clinicians and consumers. 1800MEDICARE is expected to assist consumers to access the type of care necessary to address their immediate needs and avoid unnecessary Emergency Department visits.

Newborn Bloodspot Screening Expansion

In December 2024, all Health Ministers supported adding X-ALD to Australia's newborn bloodspot screening programs (NBS), screening male babies.

Today, Ministers agreed to also screen female babies for X-ALD within NBS programs.

This decision was made acknowledging the Medical Services Advisory Committee's advice to screen all newborns. This responds to community advice of the merits of screening and early detection and Ministers acknowledge the contributions of those who participated in recent public consultation, including those with lived and living experience.

National Obesity Strategy and Mandating Health Star Ratings

Health Ministers affirmed their commitment to implementing the National Obesity Strategy to support obesity prevention. Health Ministers discussed a cross-portfolio approach to guide implementation and reporting between food regulation system and agencies involved in implementing these strategies, including the Health Ministers Meeting.

Health Ministers agreed on the importance of addressing obesity. Health Ministers considered opportunities to strengthen action on obesity prevention and treatment through cross jurisdictional approaches to food regulation, including through a mandatory Health Star Rating System.

Clinical Learning Australia

Clinical Learning Australia (CLA) enables a harmonised approach to recording learning outcomes for prevocational doctors, supporting assessments over the PGY1 and PGY2 years and mobility across different health services and states and territories.

All jurisdictions funded the development and implementation of CLA. The Australian Medical Council was appointed to lead the infrastructure build and roll-out of the system.

CLA was launched in March 2025 and progressively rolled out across all states and territories. Over 19,000 users, including prevocational doctors, clinical supervisors, directors of training and medical education managers are now using CLA.

CLA is an online national system that records the development, training and assessment of prevocational doctors across all states and territories in Australia. CLA supports a consistent approach to prevocational training and assessment in line with the Australian Medical Council National Framework for Prevocational Medical Training. Prevocational doctors and their supervisors can complete all assessments in CLA and no longer need to complete paper-based forms. With implementation now complete, ongoing management of the system will transition to the Australian Digital Health Agency in 2026. More information on the system can be found on the CLA website.