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Media release

**How should PHARMAC's Consumer Advisory Committee ideally work?**

PHARMAC wants to tap into the expertise of consumers and other groups as the first step in a review of its Consumer Advisory Committee.

The consumer committee, established in 2002, provides PHARMAC with input from a patient or consumer point of view. PHARMAC is required to have a consumer committee by its governing legislation, and it is important this committee continues to serve its purpose well.

Some minor changes were made to the committee's Terms of Reference in 2004, making this the first full review of the committee.

Rather than put forward its own proposal, PHARMAC is asking consumer and other groups for their ideas to help shape the review.

The Government's medicines strategy, *Medicines New Zealand*, outlines better engagement with consumers and other stakeholders as one of its aims. The review of CAC's Terms of Reference is an action under the Government's strategy.

More broadly though, Chief Executive Matthew Brougham says PHARMAC wants to better understand the views of consumer groups, amongst others, and the CAC review provides an opportunity to improve that understanding.

"The committee provides us with a valuable perspective and has been instrumental in moving PHARMAC to think more carefully about consumer issues in our work," says Matthew Brougham.

"We're now reviewing how the committee operates and we think the best place for this review to start is to ask our stakeholders what the key issues are. Consumer groups are likely to be particularly interested in this review."

The review's next steps, once initial information gathering is complete, have not been set and will be influenced to some extent by the feedback received. PHARMAC will, however, consult with interested groups on a revised Terms of Reference once this has been developed.

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More information: 021 863 342