

Minutes of the Consumer and Patient Working Group Meeting Thursday 12 February 2026

The meeting was held online from 2pm to 4pm.

Present:

Malcolm Mulholland (Chair)
Rachel Smalley (Deputy Chair)
Libby Burgess
Tim Edmonds
Chris Higgins
Francesca Holloway
Trent Lash
Gerard Rushton
Deon York

Reset programme team:

Jannel Fisher (Reset Programme Manager), Becky Littlewood (Reset Programme Coordinator)

Pharmac staff attendees:

Nicola Ngawati (Director, Equity and Engagement), Ryan Perica (External Engagement Manager)

Apologies:

Tracy Tierney
Sam McCarthy (Reset Programme Project Manager)

1. Karakia and welcome

The Chair opened the meeting by acknowledging the value of the recent in-person workshop, noting it had been a positive and productive day. He highlighted that members appreciated the opportunity to undertake a deep dive into Pharmac's processes. The Chair requested that his thanks and appreciation be conveyed to all staff who attended the workshop, as well as those who contributed to organising and supporting the day.

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting minutes were approved.

- Moved by: Libby
- Seconded by: Malcolm

Agreed actions:

- The Reset Programme Team will send members a copy of the notes from the in-person workshop to ensure they are complete and feedback is correctly captured.

3. Action items

Action items were noted.

Agreed actions:

- The Reset Programme Team will share the table showing applications from different submitter groups (action item 79)

4. Interest register

No new declarations or changes were made.

5. Consumer advice framework

The group discussed the development of the Stakeholder Engagement Framework, intended to guide how external engagement is planned, prioritised, and delivered across the organisation. This framework will support the transition from the Reset Programme and the Consumer and Patient Working Group (concluding on 30 June 2026) into the longer four-year improvement programme.

Feedback received ahead of the meeting was reviewed, including questions about the scope and design of the proposed framework. Members also discussed what a future model for consumer engagement could look like, including the role of the legislated Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC).

Key discussion points:

- The consumer advice framework should be endorsed by the end of the Reset Programme to support implementation and strengthen consumer voice within Pharmac.
- Members expressed interest in gaining a clearer understanding of how CAC approaches consumer engagement, the Terms of Reference and how these are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose, and details of Pharmac's recruitment process and the related Board role.
- The group discussed the representation of Māori and high health needs representatives in relation to diversity, noting there are various approaches to how the Tiriti o Waitangi can be reflected.
- Further consideration is required on how the working group's contributions will be carried forward post the Reset Programme, including the potential for a smaller transition group to support implementation of the consumer advice framework.

Agreed actions:

- Add an additional column in the external engagement workplan to show benefits for each focus area.

6. Quarter four 90-day action plan

Members endorsed the quarter four 90-day action plan.

- Moved by Rachel
- Seconded by Gerard

It was noted that a number of actions from previous quarters continue to progress and will be brought back to the group for endorsement during quarter four.

The working group will continue to contribute to planning for the four-year programme. All feedback and advice will be recorded for future work. There are also opportunities for further deep dives into processes.

A final in-person meeting is being considered, with timing to be confirmed.

Agreed actions:

- The Rest Programme Team will map out the meetings and agenda topics for the remainder of the programme and send to the group for feedback.
- Determine date of next in-person meeting prior to the next meeting.

7. General business

The Chair and Deputy Chair will be presenting to the Pharmac Board later this month to discuss the working group achievements. The Chair also attends the monthly Governance Group to maintain oversight of progress.

Close of meeting at 3.45pm.

Next meeting is on Thursday 26 February 2.00pm – 4.00pm to discuss the application backlog pilot and inactive applications.