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Some information may have been redacted for reasons including confidentiality

Pharmaceutical Management Agency (Pharmac)

Minutes of the Board Meeting

Held on Tuesday 28 January 2025 at 3pm

Via Microsoft Team

Present:

Board members

Paula Bennett	Chair
Dr Peter Bramley (BSc (Hon), LL.B, PhD)	Deputy Chair
Talia Anderson-Town (BBS, PG Dip Professional Accounting, CA, CPP)	Board member
Dr Margaret Wilsher (MD, FRACP, FRACMA)	Board member
Dr Diana Siew (PhD)	Board member

Apologies

Sarah Fitt	Chief Executive
Nicola Ngawati	Director, Equity & Engagement

Pharmac staff in attendance

Michael Johnson	Acting Chief Executive and Director, Strategy, Policy & Performance
Catherine Epps	Director, Medical Devices
Geraldine MacGibbon	Director, Pharmaceuticals
Kathryn McInteer	Director, Corporate Services
David Hughes	Director, Advice and Assessment/CMO
Jacqui Webber	Board Secretary (Minute taker)

Attendees joined the meeting to present relevant papers: Saar Cohen-Ronen and Josh Wiles.

Welcome and Opening of Meeting

The Chair welcomed everyone and opened the meeting with a karakia at 3.02pm.

1. Proposed Data and Digital Strategy

The purpose of this paper was to provide the Board with the updated Data and Digital Strategy, following their review in September 2024.

Discussion included:

- Staff reiterated reasons for the paper and noting that an external review of the paper was undertaken by PwC.

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- Following feedback, the narrative has been strengthened and staff have included more diagrams around current business architecture.
- Options and risks have been strengthened.
- The proposal starts us on the path of modernising our technology, and to improving technology and the business models Pharmac want to run.
- Staff can't currently make large changes to how we operate and share data, as the technology currently used, does not meet our needs.

The Board queried next steps, resourcing and the implementation plan. They acknowledged the importance of this work and the need to reinforce the road map and implementation plan, and they feel reassured by the external review.

- Staff confirmed that a business case for investment will sit alongside a funding proposal and will come back to the Board for approval.
- Staff also undertook to review the road map so that it better reflects the full journey and to add information on milestones to be achieved over the next five years.
- Implementation and business cases will have a clear outline of financial impacts, road map, timing, impact of resourcing. The strategic case will sit alongside the indicative business case. The implementation plan is the business case for this. Coherence across the suite of documents is critical and they need to be very professional. Format, language and design is important – consistency across all documents is key for clarity.
- Implementation will depend on resourcing and funding – at some point staff need to identify what our real priorities are to action and what needs to be retro fitted.
- Operating budget – need to be mindful of ongoing operating costs, as these will go up.

The Board queried whether an external person could be considered to rewrite the document, to ensure consistency and so the work is professionally presented to the Minister – language, format, etc. Management would consider this and look into options.

The Board:

noted the draft Data and Digital strategy has been reviewed externally and no major issues were identified in the target state

noted several recommendations were made for improvement by the external organisation and where appropriate, have been included in the draft Data and Digital strategy. Two recommendations have not been included as they are more appropriately addressed during implementation planning and execution

agreed the draft Data and Digital strategy and that work should commence on the next steps contained in the strategic plan

directed the Chief Executive to update the Board by July 2025, on progress on implementation planning and any implementation work completed or underway.

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2. Novavax Update – Legally Privileged

Pharmac's General Counsel has been negotiating a settlement of the contractual dispute with the COVID-19 vaccine manufacturer Novavax. Shortly before the Christmas break, we received an updated settlement offer which now requires the Board's decision. This paper provided background and details of the proposed settlement.

The General Counsel recommended that the Board accept the offer currently being made.

The Board:

approved the settlement of the contractual dispute with Novavax, as detailed in the paper.

Action: Messaging – the Chief Executive to go back to Board with suggestions on messaging, once we receive the settlement.

Engage with the Minister of Finance and Minister Seymour on the outcome.

3. Update on criteria changes and re-contracting for COVID-19 treatments

This proposal provided the Board with an update on work to secure ongoing supply of COVID-19 antivirals for New Zealanders and the intention to undertake public consultation on a proposal arising from this work. This would include the establishment of ongoing supply arrangements through Pharmac's standard supply agreements and changes to current access criteria (which currently include ethnicity specific aspects).

The Board:

noted and agreed the proposed approach to undertake public consultation on changes to COVID-19 antiviral access criteria

noted we expect a decision on the ongoing funding of COVID-19 antivirals would be made by the Board at a future meeting, following public consultation.

4. General Business

Meeting with iwi Māori partnership Board

The Chair updated the Board on a meeting that she attended last week, along with Kaituruki Māori – Director Māori and Director Advice and Assessment/CMO, and representatives from the iwi Māori partnership Board. It was a great meeting and they are delighted to work in partnership with Pharmac. They have a meeting on 27 February and we have been invited to attend. Talia Anderson-Town and Kaituruki Maori – Director Maori will try to clear their diaries to attend. The Chair acknowledged Kaituruki Maori – Director Maori input into the meeting.

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with a karakia.

Date of Next Meeting: 3 February 2025 Out of Cycle meeting
24/25 February 2025 meeting

Approved

Paula Bennett, Chair

25 February 2025

Date