

## Minutes of the Consumer and Patient Working Group Meeting Thursday 14 August 2025

The meeting was held online from 2pm to 4.10pm.

### **Present:**

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

### **Pharmac staff in attendance:**

Jannel Fisher (Reset Programme Manager)  
Michael Johnson (Director Strategy, Policy and Performance)  
Sarona Iosefa (Reset Programme Engagement Lead)

### **External attendees:**

Jess Hewat (Treasury Manager, Health & ACC)

### **Apologies:**

Malcolm Mulholland (Chair)

### **1. Karakia and welcome**

Opening by the Deputy Chair

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting**

Minutes of the previous meeting minutes were approved.

- Moved by: Rachel
- Seconded by: Gerard

### **3. Action items**

Reset Programme Manager gave an update on completed and active actions. The group discussed the consumer network database and the best way to support this action.

#### *Agreed actions:*

- Pharmac to create a shared consumer network database document for member input.

### **4. Interest register**

No new declarations or changes were made.

## 5. Budget 2026/27 discussion

The group discussed the Budget process, including key timeframes and the use of Treasury templates.

Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance provided an update on the current work underway for Budget 2026/27. He noted the Minister's expectation that individual medicines should not be included in the bid.

Manager for Health & ACC at Treasury explained that the templated approach ensures consistency and helps manage the volume of Budget bids. She acknowledged that while templates are essential, additional conversations and supporting information – such as those provided by Pharmac – are also important. She emphasised that the Budget process and bids must align with the Government's fiscal strategy.

Members expressed frustration at their limited influence in the process, particularly regarding input into the Budget Policy Statement. Concerns were raised about the achievability of Pharmac's Letter of Expectations, considering recent unsuccessful Budget bids.

Members sought clarification on whether Treasury consider New Zealand's medicines spend comparative to other countries, and how equity and severity of need is considered.

Suggestions from members to strengthen future Budget bids included:

- Using aggregate data to demonstrate impact and value
- Emphasising patient outcomes
- Reframing the relationship team bid to highlight the benefits of engagement.

Members also discussed the importance of aligning consumer voices and illustrating the human impact of investing in medicines.

*Agreed actions:*

- Rachel, Francesca, Tracy, and Deon to co-develop an approach to tell the human impact of medicine investment.
- Pharmac to report back to the working group on how aggregate data and patient outcomes can be effectively incorporated into the 2026/27 Budget bid.

## 6. General business

- The draft Pae Ora advice document, prepared by members for inclusion in Pharmac's advice to the Minister, was reviewed and discussed.
- Members noted the need to balance aspirational goals with operational feasibility, ensuring the proposed changes are future proofed.
- The urgency to finalise the advice and secure majority agreement was acknowledged, with further discussions required to refine the document.

- The contributions of Chris, Libby, and Tim in preparing the draft were acknowledged and appreciated.

*Agreed action:*

- The Chair will lead the finalisation of the Pae Ora advice document in collaboration with members and submit the final version to Pharmac by Monday, 18 August.

Close of meeting at 4.10pm.

Next meeting is 2.00pm – 4.00pm on Thursday 28 August to discuss future 90-day plan action items.