

**Minutes of the
Consumer and Patient Working Group Meeting
Thursday 20 November 2025**

The meeting was held online from 1pm to 4pm.

Present:

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

Apologies:

Malcolm Mulholland (Chair)

Pharmac staff in attendance:

Reset programme team

Jannel Fisher (Reset Programme Manager), Sarona Iosefa (Reset Programme Engagement Lead), Becky Littlewood (Reset Programme Coordinator)

Vision and Strategy update

Michael Johnson (Director Strategy, Policy and Performance), Brent McPherson (Manager, Strategic Planning and Performance)

Medical Devices update

Catherine Epps (Director, Medical Devices)

Consultation discussion

Megan Nagel (Engagement Lead, Medical Devices), Susan Melvin (Senior Policy Advisor), Conal Edwards (Senior Therapeutic Group Manager), Jade Matthews-Wanden (Tender Analyst, Procurement & Contracts)

1. Karakia and welcome

Opening by the Chair

2. Minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting minutes were approved.

- Moved by: Francesca
- Seconded by: Trent

3. Action items

The Director of Strategy, Policy and Performance provided a verbal update on several actions, including Pae Ora Legislation amendments and Budget process.

One member requested process maps to support their participation in the working group. Another member requested time on the January workshop agenda to discuss engagement and consultation. These requests will be considered by the Chair and Deputy Chair during workshop planning.

Agreed actions:

- Working Group Chair and Deputy Chair, along with the Reset Programme Manager, will finalise the agenda in December for the workshop scheduled for January 2026.
- Pharmac staff will consider how best to provide information about Pharmac's processes for the January workshop to support discussions.

4. Interest register

Deon updated his declarations.

5. Medical Devices update

The Director of Medical Devices provided a brief update following the Ministerial directive. Members raised questions regarding:

- Budget and funding processes
- How treatments are classified as a medicine or a medical device
- Timeliness of processes with two agencies involved.

6. Vision and Strategy update

Members received an update on the progress to develop Pharmac's new vision and strategy. Input has been gathered from staff, Consumer Advisory Committee, PTAC, and Consumer and Patient Working Group, with notable similarities across the feedback provided.

The proposed vision and strategy will be considered by Pharmac's Board in December, followed by further engagement with staff and stakeholders in early 2026. This engagement will include input into the development of statutory accountability documents.

Members expressed interest in adding a deliverable to the Statement of Performance Expectations to demonstrate Pharmac's consumer focus.

Questions were raised about how industry representatives would be involved in this work. In response, Pharmac noted that following the success of the monthly consumer hui, discussions are underway to establish quarterly industry forums, which would include consideration of this work.

Members also highlighted the need for clarity on Pharmac's plans over the next four years, including consumer input. The Reset Programme Manager confirmed that a reflection session will be held at the January workshop to review the impact of the working group and capture learnings to date.

Agreed action:

- *Feedback will be sought from members on the draft Statement of Intent and the draft Statement of Performance Expectations to ensure deliverables are consumer focused. This is expected to occur around March 2026.*

7. Consultation

Members discussed when formal consultation with patients and consumers should occur in the medicine funding application process as well as other situations. The consensus was that consumers should be involved early and throughout the process. Some members note that there is a preference for engagement to start at the beginning, then consultation occurring as soon as possible after the expert clinical advice is received.

Members stressed the importance of well-coordinated consumer groups to respond effectively to consultations and flexibility from Pharmac to recognise and accommodate different organisational levels and their capacity to participate. They also emphasised the need for clear feedback loops to show how input is used, noting that differing perspectives between consumers and clinicians are acceptable.

Members highlighted the need for greater visibility of opportunities to provide additional information. They requested clearer guidance on how to engage in the medicine funding application process, what type of information should be included, and how that information will be used. The new stakeholder database and relationship team will support this work.

Pharmac staff asked how best to identify which items warrant consultation and which could be communicated through advocacy networks. There is an opportunity for the Working Group to help provide clarity and confidence on where engagement and consultation are most appropriate.

Concerns were raised about the backlog of medicine funding applications and the need for an efficient, transparent process to clear it and prevent future delays. It was suggested that this be the focus of a future working group meeting, in particular exploring how to incorporate consumer perspectives.

Agreed actions:

- *Develop a draft consultation framework to support early, transparent, and consistent practices, with feedback and endorsement from the working group.*
- *Create patient resources explaining the consultation process and how feedback informs decisions.*
- *Schedule a discussion in quarter 3 (January–March 2026) on Pharmac's approach to addressing the application backlog.*
- *Extend the member survey by one week to allow further contributions.*

8. General business

No general business discussed.

Close of meeting at 3.15pm.

Next meeting is 2.00pm – 4.00pm on Thursday 4 December to discuss embedding lived experience