

**Minutes of the
Pharmac Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Wednesday 27 May 2026**

The meeting was held online via teams.

Present:

Robyn Manuel
Vivienne Verheijen
Pui-Yi Cheng
Georgina Johnson
Jesse Davis

Apologies:

Hazel Heal
LJ Apaipo
Manager, Equity and Engagement

Pharmac Staff in attendance:

Director, Equity and Engagement
Engagement Coordinator

For relevant items:

Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Manager, Reset Programme
Project Manager, Reset Programme

Karakia

The meeting was opened with karakia.

1. Committee only time

Committee only time was held.

2. Interest register / notes from previous meeting / action items

Interest register

Noted.

Notes from previous meeting

Accepted with changes, changes actioned.

Action:

(1) Meeting minutes to be shared with CAC members 1-2 days after meeting occurs.

Action items

Noted.

Action 1 completed; Provide an answer to members on the accessibility of submitting applications.

The Chair used the Pharmac website to start an application and noted the link to register for Pharmconnect as a new consumer was difficult to locate.

Action 4 cleared; Director Equity and Engagement to provide response to CAC regarding Pharmac's work in precision medicine.

Members agreed to remove action 4, as there would be no updates for a long time.

Membership terms

Noted.

Professional Development report back

Jesse Davis attended the 21st World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) Rural Health Conference hosted in Wellington, 10-13 April 2026, presenting "Equity in Palliative Care: The Pōwhiri Model – Returning to the Marae Ātea". During the conference, Jesse Davis contributed to the World Health Organizations current work – a global action plan for the health of Indigenous people. Jesse offered to share his presentation.

Pui-Yi Cheng attended the World Indigenous Cancer Conference hosted in Auckland, 20-24 April 2026.

Both Jesse and Pui-Yi thanked Pharmac for the professional development support provided to enable their attendance at these events.

Vivien Verheijen's abstract on Diverse Voices on Equity has been accepted for presentation at the Health Technology Assessment International Conference in Istanbul, Türkiye, in June this year, and received a participation grant. Vivien thanked Pharmac for supporting her professional development, and especially acknowledges the Chair of CAC, Robyn Manuel, for her encouragement and support in empowering members' participation in HTAI to increase patients and consumers involvement in the sector.

3. CAC Chair Update

- The Chair attended the Pharmac Board meeting on Tuesday 26th May.
- The proposal to amend the special authority access criteria for type 2 diabetes medicines consultation has been extended by 2 weeks.
- The Chair spoke on the Asia Pacific 360 survey, thanking those members who were able to complete the survey.
- The Chair's term on the Pharmacology and Therapeutics Advisory Committee (PTAC) has ended. The Chair noted that as a result there is no consumer voice, or Māori clinician or consumer now on PTAC. The next PTAC meeting is in August 2026.
- The Chair will not be attending the Health Technology Assessment International annual meeting hosted in Istanbul, Türkiye, 6-10 June 2026. CAC member Vivien

Verheijen and two Pharmac staff members will be attending. Vivien Verheijen will be presenting a talk titled 'Diverse Voices on Equity'.

- The Chair encouraged CAC members to attend and present at future Health Technology Assessment International annual meetings.

4. External Engagement Team Update

The team provided an update of their work as part of the External Engagement Team. They spoke of a strong focus on improving consumer experiences with Pharmac, connecting with people and groups on the ground. Noting that relationships vary depending on a range of factors including whether Pharmac is building a new relationship or working with a known group.

The Principal Advisors, Consumer Relations outlined their contribution to the Annual Tender process, including engagement with consumer groups regarding potential medicine brand changes alongside Therapeutic Group Managers and Tender Analysts. It was noted that there have been efforts to engage with Māori and Pacific voices, as well as to engage with underrepresented groups, for example - mental health, rural and isolated communities, and older populations. Their work has also included areas like the Exceptional Circumstances Framework review and medicine supply shortages.

Members were invited to contact the Principal Advisors, Consumer Relations to share connections and support future engagement opportunities.

The Chair expressed gratitude for the team's work and indicated interest in future collaboration, particularly in advocating for Māori and Pacific communities. The Chair highlighted the importance of patient lived experiences informing the work of PTAC. The Chair noted that lived experience from patients with Rare Disorders have been included in PTAC papers.

Members acknowledged the team's proactive approach of meeting people where they are and highlighted the importance of their work for youth engagement. One member expressed interest in continued collaboration, particularly in strengthening engagement with migrant communities, including Indian and South Asian groups.

A committee member emphasised the breadth of communities reached by the External Engagement Team and noted that increased engagement activity may require corresponding growth in team capacity.

The Chair commended Pharmac staff attendance at the World Indigenous Cancer Conference and encouraged continued participation. She noted the upcoming International Indigenous Research Conference hosted at the University of Auckland, 16-19 November and suggested submitting an abstract.

5. Reset Programme update

Manager, Reset Programme provided an update on the Reset Programme. This included discussion on the revised 8-step process definitions, assessment and advice timeframe targets, and consumer applications.

Members acknowledged and appreciated the updates made to the 8-step process, noting that this reflected previous feedback.

Members recommend

Creating a one-page information sheet for patients/consumers who have completed the application process previously, and a more detailed two-page information sheet for new users.

The Chair asked for clarity as to Pharmac's target time for assessment being in 'median' days or 'average' days noting that using median days removes the impact of applications that are in the system for an extremely long or short time. The Chair noted that in the SOI and SPE, 'median' days are used.

Members recommend

Pharmac to collect and report data to show if achieving these timeframes is affected by Pharmac turn around or external impacts. Noting this would support transparency and help consumers understand that delays may not be attributable solely to Pharmac.

Members discussed the importance of maintaining the consumer application pathway. It was noted that clinicians and suppliers may not always complete applications due to time constraints, and consumers therefore require a direct pathway. Limitations to redesigning the consumer application process were acknowledged.

Members recommend

- Consumers partnering with suppliers or consumer clinicians, only if this is safe, transparent and equitable.
- Clinicians and suppliers supporting a consumer's application if appropriate. Areas of support could include evidence for health benefit and, costs and savings.
- Establishing clear boundaries and safe engagement models for consumers.

Action:

- (2) Manager, Reset Programme to check that the Pharmac SOI and SPE state 'median days' for the assessment and advice current timeframes.
- (3) Committee members to send further feedback to Manager, Reset Programme.

6. Pharmac Verbal Update

With time short, Members noted they had read the Director's update included in the meeting pack.

- Recruitment is currently underway within the Equity and Engagement Directorate, including roles for Manager Communications; Principal Advisor, Government Services; and within the Enquiries Team.

Director, Equity and Engagement provided a Consumer Advisory Function review update following discussions with the Pharmac Board on 26 May 2026.

- The Pharmac Board has agreed to establish an interim Consumer Advisory transition group to ensure continuity of consumer input and advice.
- The transition group will operate from 1 August 2026 for a period of six months, commencing after the terms of three CAC members have concluded.
- Membership will comprise four remaining CAC members and four members from the Consumer and Patient Working Group (CAPWG).

Members queried how CAPWG representatives were selected. It was advised that the CAPWG Chair recommended members. Director, Equity and Engagement highlighted CAPWG members support to work collaboratively.

Members asked how vacancies would be managed if individuals from CAC or CAPWG declined participation in the transition group. Members signalled the importance of an equal balance of CAC and CAPWG members. Director, Equity and Engagement noted that this is still under consideration, with no decision confirmed at this stage and that she will be in touch with Members going forward.

Members asked if their current appointments remain beyond the 6 month transition period and if CAPWG members would be subjected to the same or similar process that CAC members had in order to join CAC.

The Chair proposed that if a CAC member declines participation, a CAC member whose term concludes in July 2026 could be invited to join the transition group for the six-month period. Members expressed support for this approach.

The Chair Advised that at least one member of PTAC remains a member beyond his term expiring as a precedent for the above.

Members recommend

Should a vacancy arise from CAC representation in the transition group, a CAC member whose term ends in July 2026 be invited to join for the duration of the interim period.

Karakia

The meeting was closed with a karakia.