

Pharmac Engagement Strategy

2024-2026

PHARMAC
TE PĀTAKA WHAIORANGA



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1. Context

Pharmac has well-established systems for assessment and procurement of medicines, and growing capability in the field of hospital medical devices. We are actively working to build a more consistent and strategic approach to engaging with our partners and stakeholders.

Pharmac obligations under the *Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act 2022* (the Pae Ora Act) provided us an opportunity to strengthen our approach and identify actions to improve our engagement with partners and stakeholders. With Pharmac's Reset Programme providing the mechanism to further refine and deliver these actions.

This strategy enables and links to existing work across the wider health and public sectors. This includes, but is not limited to:

- internal strategy and policy documents, such as the Equity policy, Māori Responsiveness Model, Statement of Performance Expectations 2025/26 and Statement of Intent.
- external strategic documents, such as the *New Zealand Health Strategy*, the *Code of Expectations for Health Entities' Engagement with Consumers and Whānau*, *Government Policy Statement on Health 2024-2027 (with its definition of highest health need populations)*, and commitments from the independent review of Pharmac.
- external engagement guidance documents, such as Te Arawhiti's *Crown engagement with Māori guidelines* and Ministry of Pacific Peoples' *Yavu - Foundations of Pacific Engagement Tool*.

2. Scope

This Engagement Strategy outlines our approach for engaging with external partners and stakeholders and the actions required to strengthen the way we do it.

It informs our approach to engaging with Māori, as part of the Crown's intention to give effect to the principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, and our health sector partners.

Stakeholders are an external organisation, entity, or individual that may impact or in turn be affected by our work. This includes, but is not limited to, the health sector, Pacific peoples, disabled people and other high health need groups, Government, advocacy groups, industry/suppliers (excluding business services), and consumers/patients and their whānau.

Out of scope for this Strategy is engagement with the media and general public. This engagement is generally one-way (broadcast) and captured in external communications strategies and plans.

3. Crown/Māori Partnership

We acknowledge the ongoing partnership between the Crown and Māori under the Tiriti o Waitangi. Through our work on behalf of Aotearoa/New Zealand, we strive to improve health outcomes for Māori.

We will continue to align with government priorities including the Pae Ora Act requirement that the Government Policy Statement on Health contains priorities for hauora Maori.

4. Purpose

This Strategy outlines the actions and approach to strengthen our engagement with partners and stakeholders.

The Strategy is intended to be succinct and accessible, setting the focus areas and direction for engagement mahi at Pharmac.

5. Objectives

The Strategy will support us to:

- give effect to *te Tiriti o Waitangi* obligations through acting on the expectations and responsibilities laid out in the *Pae Ora Act* and our Māori responsiveness model.
- meet the range of wider obligations we have under the *Pae Ora Act* and other legislation.
- meet the Letter of Expectations 2025/2026, particularly objectives:
 - 6: *“Partnership and engagement work being strengthened to ensure all stakeholders understand what Pharmac does and how it works...”*, and
 - 7: *“Partnering with government and non-government stakeholders... to identify and pursue opportunities that improve horizon scanning, enable process efficiencies, support funding and planning for emerging technologies, and ultimately deliver better health outcomes”*
- strengthen our engagement approach to:
 - be strategic
 - be efficient
 - be coordinated
 - meet the needs and aspirations of our partners and stakeholders
- better understand the experience, views, and challenges of consumers and whānau, with a focus on Māori and high health needs groups.
- build new or stronger relationships with partners and stakeholders across the health sector
- develop our people to have the confidence and capability to engage with our diverse range of partners and stakeholders
- demonstrate our values when we engage to meet the needs and aspirations of our partners and stakeholders.

6. Principles

Our Pharmac values are the compass for all engagement mahi, they ground our behaviour and guide our thinking. Descriptions of how the principles apply specifically to engaging with partners and stakeholders are detailed below.

Whakarongo | Listen

We are approachable and engage in a timely and collaborative manner, striving for early and meaningful two-way engagement at an appropriate level for the relationship.

Tūhono | Connect

We foster mana-enhancing relationships with respect and care. We demonstrate flexibility, empathy, and understanding.

Wānanga | Learn together

We display integrity and think broadly. We consistently behave with honesty and courtesy, and show a willingness to learn and be challenged.

Māia | Be courageous

We are open and constructive, by communicating with transparency and standing up when we see opportunities to do better.

Kaitiakitanga | Preserve, protect, and shelter our future

We are accountable, operating within statutory frameworks we explore how we can safeguard wellbeing for New Zealanders, now and for the future.

7. Levels of Engagement

We determine the level of engagement based on the below Spectrum of Engagement guide so we can effectively plan an effective and transparent engagement process.

The level of engagement may change throughout an engagement process and there can be differing levels of engagement for various partners or stakeholder groups.

Several factors need to be considered when determining the appropriate level of engagement such as statutory obligations and expectations, partner or stakeholder interest/impact, the purpose and objectives of the engagement, and other internal or external factors. The spectrum is intended to be a guide only and methodology may be changed to meet the needs of the population group we are engaging with.

Spectrum of Engagement

Empower

We support our partners and stakeholders to develop the solutions and help with implementation.

Co-design

We work alongside partners and stakeholders to understand the issue, develop solutions, and make a shared decision.

Collaborate

We will work with partners and stakeholders to understand the issue and develop solutions, but we and our partners or stakeholders keep respective decision-making abilities.

Consult

We will seek feedback from partners and stakeholders and, once a decision is made, we will communicate how their feedback was considered.

Inform

We will keep stakeholders and partners informed of what is happening. This is generally one-way communication with limited opportunity to provide feedback.

Note: The Spectrum is based on the Engagement Institute *Spectrum of Engagement* and aligns with Te Arawhiti's *Crown engagement with Māori framework*.

8. Engagement Guidelines

The Engagement Guidelines outline the high-level approach to the way we engage, what we consider when planning, and the behaviours we demonstrate. These guidelines will be supported by detailed guidance documentation to be developed as outlined in the [Actions](#) section.

1. Plan

We take a strategic approach to plan meaningful engagement.

Define our purpose. We clearly outline why we're engaging, what we're engaging on and what we want to achieve.

Identify who to engage. We give careful consideration to who will be affected by decisions, particularly:

- Māori
- High health need groups
- Consumers and whānau.

We also consider what subset of audience we are best to engage with.

Identify existing relationships that can be involved, these relationships may be held by internal stakeholders or with health sector partners.

Identify the level of engagement required that is appropriate for the kaupapa and level of interest and impact for partners and stakeholders.

Review existing feedback and insights, such as research, data, or engagement reports, so we have context to support discussion and do not ask people to repeat themselves.

Identify any related engagement mahi being delivered by health sector partners that could be joined-up.

Develop clear and concise key messages, written in plain language and translated when required, so people understand our kaupapa and how they can participate.

Design our approach with partners and stakeholders so they can let us know what will work for them and to establish a shared understanding of what the engagement will achieve.

Plan where, when, and how to engage, considering how we can:

- engage early and often as possible
- ensure equal and fair access to participate
- provide flexible and accessible methods of engagement with sufficient time to engage effectively
- use engagement methods that support and empower people to provide meaningful feedback
- identify potential risks and plan mitigating actions
- outline deliverables and a complete timeline.

Follow best practice guidance and advice when planning engagement with Māori, high health need groups.

Plan how we will capture feedback accurately and fully, with adequate resource and systems in place. We also plan how information will be effectively analysed and summarised later on.

2. Engage

Our engagement with partners and stakeholders is authentic and embodies our principles.

Develop an understanding of our partners' and stakeholders' needs, shared interests, and concerns.

Prepare clear messaging and questions specific to who we are engaging with.

Have tikanga Māori capability to participate in, or facilitate, relevant protocols.

Have cultural awareness to engage appropriately, we can do this by seeking guidance from internal or external support or resources.

Make time for whakawhanaungatanga - the process of building and maintaining relationships through shared experiences and connections.

Build strong relationships through mutually beneficial, transparent, and frequent engagement, and acting on our commitments.

Listen to and value all perspectives, expertise and lived experience, acknowledging all contributions.

Adapt our engagement methods to meet partners' and stakeholders' specific needs.

Record all feedback. We file this appropriately so the wider team and other internal stakeholders can access this information.

Identify and document risks and escalate when required. When there is a conflict we identify and address it promptly with the goal of finding mutually beneficial solutions and transparent outcomes.

For Māori, through the process of genuine engagement we:

- acknowledge their rangatiratanga and status as Tiriti partners
- acknowledge that mātauranga Māori makes an important contribution to building relationships, including Māori world views on hauora in our work, developing policy and solving practical problems
- acknowledge that Māori may or may not have the resources and capability to contribute
- acknowledge that some issues affect Māori disproportionately and as such they are better placed to develop the solutions.

3. Respond and Review

We analyse and share what we heard and provide updates on progress and next steps. We review our engagement process with participants and look at where we can improve.

Analyse all partner and stakeholder feedback and prepare reports that accurately reflect the voices of participants.

Share feedback, themes, and outcomes with participants and the wider organisation. We inform participants how their feedback has translated into action and outcomes, we also let them know if something is not proceeding.

Communicate next steps, milestones, timings, and outcomes with all partners and stakeholders.

Invite participants to share their experience engaging with us.

Review our engagement processes and identify areas for improvement and share across the organisation.

9. Actions

To build and strengthen our engagement capability and leadership, we have developed the following focus areas and actions for our implementation planning and delivery.

Engagement Foundations			
Focus Area	1. Tools and training Lift the confidence and capability of our kaimahi (staff) to plan and deliver meaningful engagement with partners and stakeholders.	2. Processes Embed engagement practices across the organisation to elevate the voices of our partners and stakeholders, particularly consumers and whānau.	3. Specialist advice and coaching Establish guidance and support for our teams to plan and deliver best-practice engagement.
Actions	<p>1a. We will produce and deliver an engagement training curriculum for our kaimahi.</p> <p>1b. We will produce engagement guides for kaimahi, with specific guidance on engaging with Māori, Pacific peoples, and disabled people.</p> <p>1c. We will develop tools to deliver a clear Pharmac narrative and key messages.</p> <p>1d. We will develop templates for engagement planning and implementation.</p> <p>1e. We will increase visibility of engagement activity and provide opportunities for kaimahi to participate.</p> <p>1f. We will assess the effectiveness and accessibility of our engagement channels and make improvements.</p>	<p>2a. We will further embed engagement into our assessment and decision making, with focus on engagement with Māori, high health need groups.</p> <p>2b. We will develop a consolidated system and procedures to capture partner and stakeholder information, discussions, and feedback.</p> <p>2c. We will enable opportunities where possible for Māori to exercise decision-making authority on matters of importance to Māori, such as our assessment process and how we implement decisions.</p> <p>2d. We will consider and specify engagement needs and resourcing requirements in our business planning.</p>	<p>3a. We will define engagement roles and responsibilities across the organisation.</p> <p>3b. We will establish specialist engagement kaimahi who will provide support, advice, and coaching on engagement planning and activity across the organisation.</p> <p>3c. We will provide specialist advice and coaching for kaimahi engaging with Māori, high health needs groups.</p>
More voices and collaboration			
Focus Area	4. Consumer and whānau voices Improve and expand our engagement with consumers and whānau.	5. Advisory network development Increase collaboration, representation, and support with our advisory network.	6. Health sector collaboration Build a proactive, strategic, and coordinated approach to collaborating with our health sector partners.
Actions	<p>4a. We will establish a new consumer and patient working group to partner with Pharmac to provide insight, lived experience, and advice to ensure that the Pharmac Reset Programme is designed in a way that values and reflects the needs, values, and perspectives of consumers and patients.</p> <p>4b. We will create an external engagement team with dedicated consumer relations kaimahi to build and foster strong relationships with consumer representatives, including high health need groups.</p> <p>4c. We will work with the Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) to assess our consumer and whānau engagement practices to ensure they are culturally responsive, supportive, accessible, reciprocal, and foster meaningful engagement and self-determination.</p>	<p>5a. We will create opportunities for our advisory groups to engage with us through collaboration and co-design methods.</p> <p>5b. We will support our advisory members to meaningfully engage with us by developing an induction programme.</p> <p>5c. We will support our advisory members to build and maintain connections with other Pharmac and health sector advisory groups.</p> <p>5d. We will partner with Māori high health needs groups to identify and build appropriate representation into our advisory network.</p>	<p>6a. We will create an engagement plan to maintain and build health sector relationships to achieve a one-system culture and ethos.</p> <p>6b. We will identify and implement opportunities to coordinate or combine engagement activity and share engagement best practice with our health sector partners.</p>