

**Minutes of the
Pharmac Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Wednesday 5th November 2025**

The meeting was held Level 9, 40 Mercer St, Wellington.

Present

Robyn Manuel (Chair)
Hazel Heal
Vivien Verheijen
Jesse Davis
Leo Junior Apaipo
Pui-Yi Cheng

Apologies

Georgina Johnson
Manager, Equity and Engagement

Pharmac staff in attendance

Director, Equity and Engagement
Engagement Coordinator

For relevant items

Chief Advisor Māori
Senior Policy Advisor
Senior Exceptions Advisor
Engagement Lead, Medical Devices Programme Delivery
Manager, Medical Devices Programme Delivery
Reset Programme Manager
Acting Manager, Public Affairs and Government Services
Team Leader, Implementation
Senior Implementation Advisor
Chief Executive
Manager, External Engagement
Director Strategy, Policy and Performance
Manager, Strategic Planning and Performance

Karakia

The meeting was opened with karakia.

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

Interest register

Noted.

Minutes from previous meeting

Minutes from the October 2025 meeting were approved as a true record of discussion.

Action items

The action items were reviewed and confirmed.

Action number 2 – Members requested an update on Publishing CAC agendas on the Pharmac Website. Director Equity and Engagement informed members this process has begun.

Action number 4 – The Chair requested that CAC receive the written Pharmac update included in PTAC meeting pack.

Actions:

- (1) *Pharmac staff to consider recommendation from CAC to receive written Pharmac update before CAC meetings.*

Membership terms

Noted.

Actions:

- (2) *Members requesting CAC recruitment update and confirmation on time frame.*
- (3) *Director Equity and Engagement following up with Board Chair.*

Professional development report back

Two members provided an overview of the professional development courses they attended.

2. CAC Chair update

- The Chair provided positive feedback on the inclusion of Pharmac Values in the meeting pack.
- The Chair mentioned she was unable to attend the *Valuing Life: Medicines Access Summit 2025*. However, the Chair received positive feedback from those who attended.
- The Chair confirmed the July 2025 Board minutes are now available on the Pharmac website.
- The Chair discussed the 'equity policy paper' currently under review by the Board, noting that the Chair and Acting PTAC Chair were not included in the last discussions in November Board as no observers present.
- The Chair mentioned that Pharmac is currently monitoring Measles cases.

3. Māori responsiveness model update

Chief Advisor Māori discussed the background to the shift to an integrated Māori Responsiveness Model including the disestablishment of the Rōpū Māori Advisory Group, disestablishment of the Māori Directorate, the Board approving the Māori Engagement Framework, the focus on the Cabinet Circular on health need and ongoing partnerships supporting Māori engagement.

Chief Advisor Māori also provided a brief verbal update on the development of the integrated Māori Responsiveness Model itself including the 3 key focus areas of the model, Ōritetanga-Māori Health Need, Build Kamahi Capability and the Māori Engagement Framework. Members discussed Māori patient connections with the Consumer Patient Working Group, timelines, and how this model will integrate within Pharmac.

Chief Advisor Māori provided clarification that the Integrated Māori Responsiveness Model will align with Pharmac values and reflect the equity policy.

Members look forward to progress updates.

Actions:

(4) Chief Advisor Māori to provide updates to CAC on the Māori Responsiveness Model going forward.

4. Exceptional Circumstances Framework review update

Senior Policy Advisor and Senior Exceptions Advisor provided an overview of the planned review of the Exceptional Circumstances Framework. They outlined the engagement plan and presented a draft set of questions for stakeholders that will be used as part of consultation process. It was noted the questions will be part of the consultation which will include various methods for gathering feedback. Members were asked to provide feedback on both the engagement approach and proposed questions.

Members highlighted the importance of having a clear framework and application process for the Named Patient Pharmaceutical Assessment (NPPA) to manage expectations. They stressed the need to provide patients with information of the application process. Members encouraged consultation with Primary Care, Māori Health organisations, Health New Zealand Consumer Councils, and HQSC networks. Accessibility for feedback was considered essential, including options such as Word documents, phone messages, and provisions for individuals with disabilities.

There was also a discussion on where the majority of applications originate, both geographically and professionally, and discussed challenges faced by rural communities. Feedback included they felt the timeline proposed for consultation was too short.

Members recommend:

Receiving information on how the pharmaceutical budget is allocated for NPPA, the number and proportion of patient applications received, and the numbers of applications where principles were not met.

Actions:

(5) To explore what information regarding budget can be shared with CAC.

(6) Senior Exceptions Advisor and Policy Advisor to explore data that can be shared regarding proportion of patient applications received, where do the majority of applications come from (rural vs urban and socioeconomic status) and the number of applications where principles were not met.

5. Medical Devices update following the outcome of the Medical Devices Review

Manager, Medical Devices Programme Delivery discussed an overview of changes to medical devices management as a result of the recent Cabinet decision for shared responsibility between Health NZ and Pharmac; and what this means for consumers and communities.

Members recommend:

Pharmac include environmental impact considerations as part of its medical device assessment process.

Members noted the absence of a formal pre-market safety assessment and approval process for medical devices. The risks of hospitals having different processes for adopting use of devices was noted, as was the lack of clear information for consumers and patients to trust the devices used in their care.

Members look forward to the collaboration between Pharmac and Health New Zealand bringing clear and effective outcome focused processes aligning with Pharmac values.

6. Reset program update

Reset Programme Manager provided an update on the Reset Programme, including progress on the second 90-day plan.

Members discussed the benefits of consumers sharing information and patient lived experiences with Pharmac.

Members recommend:

To explore more ways for consumers to be a part of the medicines application funding process.

Members recommend:

Using simple, clear templates for consumers to provide information, increasing accessibility and consistency – particularly for communities with less engagement with Pharmac.

Actions:

(7) The Chair will follow up with sending template examples to the Reset Programme Manager.

7. Communications update

Acting Manager, Public Affairs and Government Services discussed Pharmac's communications approach, including its source of reputation and updates to Pharmac's public affairs strategy.

Committee members were asked to discuss patient stories, how these could be developed with empathy and respect, and how they might be shared.

An interactive activity was completed, feedback summarised below:

- The need to build trust in Pharmac so that people understand how their patient story will contribute to the 'greater good' and know their concerns about media / privacy will be understood.
- Communicate with empathy and acknowledge the hardships people face when they don't have access to a medicine they need.
- Use existing channels where possible to invite patient stories – e.g., asking via the consultation process: 'Can we contact you to share your story?'

- Prioritise stories that are ready to be told (make contact, build trust, don't rush the story)
- Feedback provided about the importance of accessible formats, the impact of changes with Te Tiriti and the Pacific Responsiveness Strategy, and the need to connect with consumers/communities e.g. youth, regions etc.

8. Implementation update/ADHD update

Senior Implementation Advisor provided an update on ADHD stimulant medicines, seeking feedback on the implementation plan.

Members highlighted the importance of using plain language and graphics in official information to provide accessibility and inclusivity for consumers. Members discussed creating information personalised to consumers' lived experiences and being clear that communities, patients, and whānau can ask questions - providing guidance on how to ask questions to receive the best information. The implementation team discussed the work being done together with ADHD NZ in these areas.

Members recommend:

Making information available in different languages, sign language, and video format.

Members recommend:

Engaging with education stakeholders, including schools, to support young people with ADHD.

Implementation Team Leader provided members with an update on how the implementation team has utilised CAC's feedback over the last year. Implementation Team Leader presented the inhaler chart poster, an action of previous committee feedback.

Members were pleased to hear the Implementation Team has listened to member feedback and who they have been engaging with. Members were impressed with the inhaler poster, happy to see previous advice has been actioned. Members and the implementation team lead discussed the importance of sharing information in different formats and some of the work planned across the organisation including the use of technology and sign language engagement.

Actions:

(8) Senior Implementation Advisor and Implementation Team Leader to work with cross sector working group with Ministry of Health to consider education stakeholder engagement for ADHD.

(9) Ensure work is progressed on technology, and making sure official information includes the use of plain language and graphics

(10) Ensure work is progressed with providing information in different formats

(11) Engage with Māori and Pacific Health Providers and Stakeholders

9. CE update

Following in person introductions from the committee members, the Chief Executive:

- Highlighted the diverse voices and constructive conversations at the *Valuing Life: New Zealand Medicines Access Summit in October*.

- Discussed a previous patient voice project and the importance of patient perspectives.

Members appreciated the Chief Executive's comments.

Members commented on CAC recruitment.

The committee Chair provided recommendation for Pharmac staff to join the Health Technology Assessment International 'Patient and Citizens' Interest Group' as presenters.

10. External Engagement Team update

External Engagement Manager provided information, progress updates and next steps regarding establishment of the consumer relations team.

Members acknowledged the progress made in recruitment and noted concern about not being involved in the recruitment process. Members discussed the strategy of the consumer relations team. Members offered to assist the consumer relation team with engagement in their regions where possible.

Members recommend:

Using Pharmac values as a framework and model, highlighting the importance of equity and diversity within the team and when engaging with different communities.

Members recommend:

Communication from the consumer relations team moving forward.

Actions:

(12) Introducing the consumer relations team to CAC once formed.

11. Vision and strategy update

Director Strategy, Policy and Performance provided an update to the process of developing Pharmac's new vision and strategy.

Members discussed the current vision being written in Te Reo Māori, noting it is impactful and important. Members commented on the potential negative impact that changing the vision might have when engaging with individuals with disabilities and Māori and Pacific communities.

Members recommend:

Using Pharmac values and patient lived stories influence the vision and strategy discussions.

Members recommend:

Sharing consumer and patient lived stories with advisory groups.

Actions:

(13) Changing the papers questions to be numbered rather than bullet pointed.

(14) CAC will send a written response via email.

12. Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference presentation

As requested by Members earlier, Director Equity and Engagement shared a presentation regarding attendance to the 'Lowitja Institute 4th International Indigenous Health and Wellbeing Conference' in June 2025.

Members were pleased to hear about this conference and the positive feedback shared by Director Equity and Engagement.

Members inquired about precision medicine and the work Pharmac is doing in this space.

Actions:

(15) Director Equity and Engagement to provide response to CAC regarding Pharmac's work in precision medicine.

13. CAC survey report back

Director Equity and Engagement discussed the results and advised Pharmac open to feedback at any time.

No feedback from members.

14. 2026 annual agenda planning

Director Equity and Engagement proposed having fewer meetings in 2026 however, increasing the number of face-to-face meetings and extending the duration for online meetings to two hours.

- Members were concerned that meetings would become less effective if held less frequently than monthly.
- Members expressed hope for recruitment soon, as some of the current members will leave the committee in 2026.
- Members confirmed having hybrid meetings when unable to be in person.

Members confirmed bi-monthly meetings for 2026:

- 3 face-to-face meetings – April, July. Third date to be confirmed.
- 3 online meetings

Members recommend:

Receiving CAC papers at least a week before the meeting, including a weekend.

15. Pharmac update (verbal)

Director Equity and Engagement gave a verbal update:

- Recruitment for the Communications team in the Equity and Engagement Directorate and for the Government services team.
- The recent split in the Medical Devices Directorate with Health NZ. The Equity and Engagement team will be involved to influence new processes being set up within Medical Devices.
- The Ministry of Health's 'Health Needs Framework'. Pharmac has noted our interest in being a 'pilot agency'; testing new models set up by the Ministry of Health.

Committee only time was held.