

**Minutes of the
Pharmac Consumer Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting
Wednesday 28 January 2026**

The meeting was held via teams from 09:30 am.

Present:

Robyn Manuel (Chair)
Vivien Verheijen
Pui-Yi-Cheng
Georgina Johnson
Hazel Heal
LJ Apaipo

Pharmac staff in attendance

Director, Equity and Engagement
Manager, Equity and Engagement
Engagement Coordinator
Manager, External Engagement
Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations
Manager, Reset Programme
Director, Strategy, Policy and Performance
Manager, Strategic Planning and Performance

Apologies

Jesse Davis

Karakia

The meeting was opened with karakia.

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

Interest register

Noted.

Notes from previous meeting

Accepting November minutes by edits.

Action items

The action items were reviewed.

Action item 6 – Request to edit: CAC requesting the written Pharmac update included in PTAC meeting pack.

Membership terms

The membership terms were reviewed.

Professional development report back

Jesse Davis will be attending 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”.

2. CAC Chair update

The Chair noted the Medsafe Medicines Classification Committee vacancies. Applications close 30 January 2026.

3. Revised Equity Policy update

Director, Equity and Engagement provided an update on the Equity Policy and outlined recent changes. Members expressed disappointment with some aspects of the changes however, acknowledged the importance of retaining the Equity Policy and supported its continuation. The Māori Responsiveness Model and Equity Policy were noted as working together to support equitable outcomes.

4. External Engagement Team Introduction

Following CAC’s request, Manager, External Engagement and the Principal Advisors, Consumer Relations attended to introduce themselves to the Members. In return, CAC members introduced themselves.

Action:

(1) *External Engagement Team to meet with CAC in the March 2026 in person hui.*

5. Reset programme update: 4-year improvement programme presentation

Early conversations held on the future 4-year improvement programme and the current 8-step medicine funding application process. Members viewed the current process as internal-facing and noted it would benefit from clearer, simpler, consumer-focused language. Strong support for simplifying step descriptions, increasing transparency (particularly around step 3¹), and adding hyperlinks for further detail.

Members recommend:

Accessibility improvements including the use of easy-read formats, and a key (e.g colour or shape to distinguish consumer and Pharmac steps).

Members recommend:

A clear end-to-end view of the process, including application stages, clear indicators of what

¹ Conduct Assessment: Develop a comprehensive Technology Assessment Report (TAR) to evaluate the proposal against the Factors for Consideration, including clinical and economic impact.

Pharmac assesses, what happens after decisions are made, and explanations of terms such as direct source.

A discussion on advice and assessment timeframes acknowledged application backlogs and increasing complexity from new treatments and technologies. The indicative 12-month timeframe was broadly supported, with recognition that some applications may take less time and others longer. Members queried fast-tracking special cases and reducing timelines, Director Strategy, Policy and Performance confirmed a fast-track assessment pilot is underway and emphasised continuous improvement.

Members recommend:

Providing timeframes and time-to-rank averages will provide transparency and help consumers understand their position.

Members recommend:

Explicit explanation that a change in terminology to "time to rank" does not necessarily lead to faster drug access and empathy should be used when describing funding limitations.

Members recommend:

Pre-validation stage support, application guidance and early engagement especially if funding is unlikely.

The member's feedback was requested on what components from the current Pharmac model should be retained moving forward. Members noted the importance of consumer led applications, expert advice and lived experiences.

Action:

(2) Provide an answer to members on the accessibility of submitting applications.

(3) Members to provide feedback on the draft improvement programme blueprint

6. Vision and Strategy update

Manager, Strategic Planning and Performance presented an update on the renewed vision and strategy following feedback from internal staff, SLT, SACs, PTAC and the Board. CAC were appreciative that prior feedback had been considered and adopted (such as the recommendation to retain 'He Rongoā Pai, He Ahu Pae Ora' alongside the visible English Translation 'Healthier Futures. With you, for you'.

Members noted the vision and tagline are strong. The vision makes people feel included and will strengthen trust and understanding. The term "consumer" is disliked by some Members.

Members spoke of the vision and noted how medicines are health technologies. Manager, Strategic Planning and Performance confirmed discussions are underway on this.

Feedback was sought from CAC for the areas of strategic focus. Members advised the areas of focus feels overly wordy and does not clearly convey Pharmac's action or intent.

Members recommend:

Switching the order of English and te reo Māori in the vision.

Members recommend:

Wording the tag line as "delivering medicines and medical devices".

7. Pharmac verbal update

Director Equity and Engagement gave a verbal update:

- Recruitment is in process for a Principal Advisor, Equity and a Senior Advisor Implementation.
- The CE Consumer Stakeholder Forum will be moving to a bi-monthly schedule, CE to chair the February Forum then rotate the chair between the Senior Leadership Team.
- Director Equity and Engagement and Chief Advisor Māori to attend the World Indigenous Cancer conference in April 2026. A Principal Advisor, Consumer Relations will also attend (as will the CAC Chair and Pui Yi Cheng).
- Director Equity and Engagement will be speaking with the Dunedin School of Pharmacy at Otago University in February 2026.
- Otago University, Te Oranga ki Otago (TOKO) Māori Medical Students have invited Director Equity and Engagement back to the Otakou marae to present on Pharmac's work and increase their awareness about Pharmac as future prescribers.
- Working to progress Consumer Advisory Committee recruitment.
- Implementing increasing the CAC sitting fees. The CE will update the Board in February 2026. Updates will be provided to CAC members.

Committee only time was held.