

The Review of the National Medicines Policy

Preamble

The Australian Government has commissioned a Review of the National Medicines Policy (NMP).

The NMP is a statement of principles designed to guide the range of activities encompassing medication management, access and affordability of medicines in Australia through a partnership approach between all sectors.

Published in 2000, the NMP is a well-established framework to promote four objectives:

- timely access to the medicines that Australians need, at a cost individuals and the community can afford;
- medicines meeting appropriate standards of quality, safety and efficacy;
- quality use of medicines; and
- maintaining a responsible and viable medicines industry.

The NMP is not prescriptive about the programs and processes used to deliver these four objectives. While the objectives of the NMP continue to resonate today, the landscape in which the policy operates has changed significantly with rapid therapeutic and technological innovations which have expanded treatment options for patients and increased their complexity.

The NMP has influenced a number of important strategies, frameworks and programs developed since its publication. However, feedback suggests the Review may need to consider modifying and/or including additional objectives such as the centrality of the consumer, transparency and equity, and the relationship with the policy enablers (health literacy, implementation and communication strategies, and performance measures). This feedback has been incorporated into the following Terms of Reference for the Review.

Terms of Reference

This is a high level review aimed at identifying any gaps in the NMP's objectives, partnership approach and accountabilities. The Review of the NMP will:

1. Evaluate the current NMP objectives and determine whether these should be modified or additional objectives included. This includes consideration of the proposed Principles to be included within the NMP.
2. Consider the definition of medicines and whether the NMP needs to be expanded to include health technologies.
3. Assess the NMP's utility in the context of rapidly evolving treatments options, population changes, interconnected relationships and system-wide capacities.
4. Consider the centrality of the consumer within the NMP and whether it captures the diversity of consumers' needs and expectations.
5. Identify options to improve the NMP's governance; communications, implementation (including enablers) and evaluation.

6. Review the NMP partners and provide options for building greater accountability including addressing conflicts of interest.

The Review will be inclusive of the community and supported by a consultation process that ensures the diversity of stakeholders and consumers are captured, including a call for public submissions and a stakeholder forum.

The review process is anticipated to take approximately six months.