

Key Themes - National Medicines Policy Review Workshop - 30 January 2020

Theme	Discussion
Consumer focus	Most discussions emphasised the need for a patient-centric focus within the National Medicines Policy (NMP) to empower consumers to make informed choices about the quality use of medicine (QUM). This sentiment was widely held. The strengthening of the consumer voice and input in the policy was raised as an important principle.
Expanding objectives	Feedback suggests the Review may need to consider modifying and/or including additional objectives such as transparency and equity; strengthening the centrality of the consumer and including policy enablers (health literacy, digital health, implementation and communication strategies, and performance measures).
Definition of medicines	Most tables discussed the definition of medicines; how treatments have changed since the original policy and whether the definition is too narrow. Some tables discussed whether the NMP should be expanded to include emerging technologies. The need for medical devices to be covered in the NMP was also raised, however, in response some participants' preference was for a separate policy for medical devices to be developed.
Health literacy	The importance of consumer health literacy to understanding and implementing QUM was frequently raised. Multiple tables proposed that health literacy should be explicitly included in the NMP. Many participants emphasised the need for consumer education to be a focus of the updated policy. There was some discussion on the language in the Terms of Reference, and suggestions that the language should be reworked into plain English to ensure information is accessible to the consumer.
Governance and accountability	Participants discussed the need for greater accountability and clearer governance in the implementation of the NMP. A strong theme was the need for implementation plans and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the policy. Transparency and accountability, especially in relation to partnerships involved in implementing the policy, was raised as an important principle.
Future proofing	The importance of future proofing the policy for the next 20 years was discussed by some participants. There was suggestion that the policy should be framed in a non-specific way to account for future changes.
Barriers to access	Some tables discussed the barriers faced by particular groups that restrict QUM. The barriers to accessing PBS medicines faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people living in rural and remote areas, and people with a mobility impairment were given as examples.
Post-market monitoring	Post-market monitoring was also raised as an important issue to be included within the policy.