
Submission form

To help us to consider your submission we are asking that you focus on the following questions. There is the opportunity to provide additional feedback at the end. We expect to get a high response and ask that, where you can, you are concise. Once you have completed your submission please send it to: pharmacreview@health.govt.nz

Note that submissions are subject to the Official Information Act and may, therefore, be released in part or full.

If your submission contains any confidential information please state this within submission, and set out clearly which parts you consider should be withheld and the grounds under the Official Information Act 1982 that you believe apply. We will consult with submitters when responding to requests under the Official Information Act.

Submission questions

Tell us about your current experience with PHARMAC and how it functions

1. What is your understanding of what PHARMAC does?

PHARMAC receives a budget from MOH for drug funding, and then makes decisions on which drugs are funded for people in NZ. Balancing individual over population needs is a challenge.

2. What has been your experience of working with PHARMAC?

I have not had much experience as a personal user or professional really. Perceptions are: clunky, takes a long time to make decisions, no apparent transparency to users on how decisions are made.

3. What are the challenges with PHARMAC's functions for funding medicines and devices?

The same clunkiness for medicines will be even worse for devices as the evidence base often isn't there, and devices come on the market and are integrated into practice quickly. Encouraging the idea of improving equity of access across NZ with transparency around pricing so hospitals are paying the same.

What do you know about PHARMAC's processes and how they work?

4. What do you think works well with the processes PHARMAC uses to assess the funding of medicines and medical devices?

It is difficult to understand how this works. When PHARMAC is interviewed in the media they often refer to being transparent, but then cannot answer questions on how the decision was made, citing reasons such as commercial sensitive. It comes across as cloak and dagger.

5. What do you think are the barriers to accessing medicines and devices?

Funding, weighing up the evidence – you can always sway this to the desired outcome in most situations.

6. Is there any other country that does it better? What is it that it does better and would any of those systems apply here?

Possibly Canada. We understand that they considered adopting a model similar to PHARMAC, however were concerned that they would fall behind in the treatments they could offer e.g cancer treatments.

What should PHARMAC's role include in the future?

7. How might PHARMAC look in the future? And what needs to change for this to happen?

PHARMAC needs to have less red tape so that it is less bureaucratic. Transparency is key, especially in terms of the decision-making process.

PHARMAC should consider transparency on the number of applications received each year, the number decided, the number still in progress, the number rejected etc. Hard to get an idea of this on current website.

8. Are there additional or different things that PHARMAC should be doing?

No. PHARMAC should focus on drugs and devices and do that well.

9. What do the wider changes to the Health and Disability system mean for PHARMAC?

Will Health Partnerships NZ disband or be rebranded?

Greater accountability.

Benchmarking of our outcomes based on treatments we offer with international statistics?

How should PHARMAC address the need for greater equity in the decisions it takes, in particular for Māori, Pacific and disabled people?

10. How well does PHARMAC reflect the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi?

We believe there is great room for improvement, as there is for MOH.

11. How can PHARMAC achieve more equitable outcomes?

PHARMAC should consider the following: What is the make up of minorities in the workforce at PHARMAC and on its committees? This would be a good starting point. Integrating the principles throughout policies and processes. Engagement with minority groups to see how best you can serve them.

12.

Additional feedback

Is there anything else that you think the Review Panel should consider?

Contact information

Your feedback is important to us. If you are comfortable for us to get in touch if we have any questions or points of clarification regarding your feedback, please provide your name and contact email address below.

Name	Dr Sheila Hart, President
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Organisation	New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists

If you do not want your personal details to be shared for any other purpose (for example if we receive a request for information under the Official Information Act) please signal this using the box below.

I do not want my personal details to be shared for any purpose other than this review.

Thank you for providing your feedback.

Tēnā koe mō tō tuku urupare mai.