

Update from the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee

May 2025

The latest meeting of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) was held on 9 and 10 May 2025. This update aims to enhance the Committee's communication to all stakeholders separate to the formal outcomes and Public Summary Documents (PSD) for the meeting, which will be published along the standard timeframes.

PBAC Membership

The Committee acknowledged two departing members: Dr Peter Fox who attended his final meeting, and Professor Michael Kidd, who recently resigned to take up the role of Australia's Chief Medical Officer, the Committee thanked them both for their contributions.

The Committee welcomed three new members appointed to the Committee, Dr Geoffrey Herkes (Consultant Neurologist), Dr Adrian Pokorney (Medical Oncologist), and Dr William Renton (Paediatric Rheumatologist).

Consumer and clinician input and involvement

A final total of 20 submissions were on the May 2025 meeting agenda, of which 17 required external evaluation. The submissions requiring external evaluations included 9 cost effectiveness/cost utility analyses, and 8 cost minimization submissions.

In relation to the submissions, the Committee received 95 inputs across 16 agenda items. These included 32 inputs from individuals, Consumer Organisations provided 25 inputs, Health Professionals submitted 22 inputs, and other Health Organisations provided 16 inputs.

The Committee acknowledged the importance of these contributions and thanks them all for their engagement and commitment to work with the PBAC to better support positive outcomes for patients.

PBAC considerations

The Committee considered an overview of Sponsor Hearings and their contributions to PBAC meetings. Discussion included the information and types of presentations that have been most useful for PBAC deliberations. Collated feedback has been provided to the PBAC Secretariat for consideration and to provide guidance to pharmaceutical companies considering a hearing before the PBAC in the future.

The Committee was informed of the positive engagement in the post-PBAC meetings with a number of sponsoring pharmaceutical companies, and welcomed the timely resubmissions received for the May meeting consideration.

The Committee had previously received a request from the Melanoma Institute of Australia, supported by the Medical Oncology Group of Australia and patient groups, to review current PBS drug listings for melanoma. The Committee received published clinical trial data from the Neoadjuvant Ipilimumab plus Nivolumab versus Standard Adjuvant Melanoma in Macroscopic Stage III Melanoma (NADINA) trial, supporting practice changes for melanoma patients undergoing surgery. The PBAC Executive, in collaboration with the PBAC Secretariat and the medicine's sponsor, prioritised this request to ensure the Committee could consider the item in a timely manner and facilitate patient access to the regimen. The item was considered at the May 2025 meeting and the Committee anticipates sharing the outcomes with clinical and patient groups when the web outcomes for the meeting are published on the PBS website.

The Committee considered ATAGI advice related to updates to the National Paediatric Pneumococcal Schedule. This included a request to standardise the three primary doses plus a booster regimen currently available to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia to enable equitable access to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children nationally. The PBAC values the ATAGI's advice on matters related to immunisation and looks forward to continuing its work with the ATAGI to ensure Australians are provided access to appropriate and evidence-based immunisation schedules.

The Committee noted the update of the current review of the National Prescriber Bag, and noted the Prescriber Bag is a separate PBS Schedule that provides certain pharmaceutical benefits without charge to community-based prescribers who can supply them to patients for emergency use. The PBAC also noted the consultation with stakeholder groups to date, and that further analysis and feedback will be provided to the PBAC Meeting in September 2025.

The Committee noted that the PBAC Chair and Deputy Chair have been invited to the next meeting of the HTA Review Implementation Advisory Group in June 2025, in Canberra.

Outcomes for the May 2025 PBAC meeting will be published on the PBS Website on Friday 20 June 2025.

Next PBAC meeting

The next PBAC meeting is scheduled for 9 – 11 July 2025. The public agenda and consumer portal has been available since 2 April 2025 for this meeting, providing the opportunity for consumer inputs until 28 May 2025.

Robyn Ward
Chair, Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee

Jo Watson
Deputy Chair, Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee