

Streamlining of Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee Processes

What will the measure do?

From 1 July 2015 the measure will seek to streamline the operations of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and the process for listing medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS).

This measure is designed to improve the operations of the PBAC. It will streamline and strengthen the PBAC's capacity to consider the increasing number and complexity of submissions and make recommendations for listings in the most effective and efficient way. These enhancements follow feedback from various stakeholder groups on ways the operation of the PBAC could be improved. It also follows a Senate Inquiry in early 2015, and reflects discussions with many groups during the negotiation of the PBS Access and Sustainability package.

This measure will expand the PBAC membership from 18 to 21 members, including a new Deputy Chair, and provide the opportunity for members to be nominated and appointed from industry. It will also create a PBAC Executive for triaging and considering certain applications.

The changes will allow for an improved level of engagement with key stakeholders such as consumers and clinicians to inform the PBAC's decision-making process. The improved transparency of the process and outcomes will generate more informed public debate about the true benefits of a medicine, and allow patients and prescribers to make informed decisions.

The changes will facilitate data collection and research for PBS drugs to track real-life benefits and side effects to ensure the listing of medicines on the PBS is properly targeted. This is particularly the case where a medicine addresses an area of high clinical need, but where the extent of additional clinical benefit is unclear.

As a package, the changes will improve the capacity, flexibility, efficiency and transparency of PBAC processes and improve PBS listing timeframes.

What is the impact?

Stakeholder groups support changes that will streamline and strengthen the PBAC's capacity and capability to consider and recommend the listing of clinically and cost-effective medicines in the shortest possible timeframe and at the lowest cost and regulatory burden to industry.