



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

**MEDICINES**  
*Australia*

BETTER HEALTH THROUGH RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

## Access to Medicines Working Group

### 12 December 2008

The Access to Medicines Working Group (AMWG) met on 12 December 2008.

The Government published the AMWG Interim Report on 18 November 2008. The AMWG co-chairs have since consulted with the Generic Medicines Industry Association and Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC). AMWG committed to undertaking further consultation with the Consumers' Health Forum in early 2009 to complete stakeholder consultations regarding the report. The report is available at [www.health.gov.au/amwg](http://www.health.gov.au/amwg).

AMWG discussed the positive outcomes of a workshop held on 2 December 2008 and undertook to further examine four key outcomes aimed at improving and streamlining the PBS processes. The outcomes of the workshop considered the views of representatives from the Department of Health and Ageing (the Department), PBAC, Medicines Australia member companies, the Generic Medicines Industry Association, and the Consumers' Health Forum.

AMWG committed to drafting a report for the Minister on the outcomes of the Second Joint Policy Conference on Medicines, organised by the Department and Medicines Australia and held on 25 and 26 November 2008. The event was attended by Minister Roxon, representatives from the Department, pharmaceutical companies and consumer groups. The chair of PBAC (Professor Lloyd Sansom), chair of the English and Welsh National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (Professor Sir Michael Rawlins) and Canadian consumer advocate, Dr Durhane Wong-Reiger presented papers and participated in panel discussions. It was agreed that AMWG would maintain oversight of the implementation of the outcomes of this conference.

AMWG noted that consumers had for the first time been given an opportunity to comment on medicines to be considered by the PBAC, via the Department's website. The publication of the PBAC agenda was recommended by AMWG and will continue to be published six weeks prior to future PBAC meetings to encourage further consumer participation in the PBAC decision making process. More information can be found at <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/PBAC-Meeting-Agenda-and-Consumer-Comments-lp>

AMWG continued to examine the use of post marketing data and the contributions of innovation for the drug development process and for the objectives of the PBS.

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