

Generic Medicines Working Group (GMWG) Communiqué

9 September 2015

The first meeting of the GMWG was held in Canberra on 9 September 2015.

Attendees

Attendees included co-Chairs Mr Andrew Stuart, Deputy Secretary, Department of Health, and Mr Allan Tillack, Chairman of the Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (GBMA). In addition, representatives from GBMA and the Department of Health were in attendance.

Purpose

To agree a Terms of Reference and initial policy priorities for the GMWG.

Outcomes

The group agreed on a Terms of Reference, co-Chair arrangements between the GBMA and the Department of Health, meeting timing, and discussed policy priorities.

Proposed priorities

The group agreed to propose four policy priorities to the Minister:

1. Pricing policy, supply and viability
The group had extensive discussions about the success of price disclosure in reducing prices and improving access for consumers, with GBMA noting that this is a developing issue. The Department advised that it was already looking into this matter, but highlighted the challenges in verifying claims such as these without access to relevant information.
2. Uptake drivers for generic and biosimilar medicines
GBMA discussed the importance of supporting the uptake of generic medicines, and that it was important to maintain volume or market share even after the price is reduced to market price, as a move back to innovator brands could also see players leave the market.
3. Biosimilar medicines
Government policy regarding biosimilars was discussed, with a focus on opportunities to establish a biosimilars market in Australia. As agreed in the Strategic Agreement, the Department will work with GBMA on the initiative to develop awareness of, and confidence in, biosimilars.
4. Transparency of PBS processes
The Department suggested that improving transparency around PBS processes for biosimilar medicines would be an important policy priority for GMWG to help improve the understanding of health professionals and consumers regarding these issues and processes.

Next steps

The revised Terms of Reference and proposed policy priorities will be provided to the Minister for her endorsement and public announcement.

The next meeting will be scheduled once Ministerial approval of the policy priorities has been received.