

## Terms of Reference



### MBS REVIEW WORKING GROUP

#### **Background**

Recent changes by Government to the MBS have highlighted the critical importance of ensuring clinician involvement throughout the entire MBS policy process.

With the MBS Review currently underway, the AMA remains wary of the process and the outcomes.

The AMA has remained adamant since the inception of the MBS Review that the clinical committees must have strong clinical leadership and participation. The AMA has been less concerned about the scope of each of the individual clinical committees although in some cases the AMA has questioned whether the committee has the most appropriate clinical representation. The committees set the clinical questions, review the available evidence, test findings with relevant specialties, and based on their findings recommend removals, amendments, recasting items and the addition of new items to reflect modern medical practice. They also advise on how the findings would be implemented.

AMA support for the MBS Review has been contingent on adequate and relevant clinician guidance and input.

#### **Terms of reference**

The AMA is establishing a clinician MBS Working Group (Working Group) to provide advice to the AMA in shaping the MBS Review narrative and framework through to the final policy decisions. The Working Group will be asked to:

- address key issues of concern with the MBS review process and policy implementation;
- use practical, working experience to provide input into the development of AMA principles to be applied to the MBS review process and policy decisions;
- consult with clinicians outside of the MBS Taskforce and clinical sub-committees to ensure that broad input is considered during the entire lifespan of the review, including implementation and impacts on health funding;
- develop and maintain working relationships with clinicians who are directly involved in the review; and

- on-going review of this terms of reference during the early adoption period

The primary purpose of any principles and recommendations developed will be to increase trust between the medical profession, consumers and the Government by ensuring that the MBS Review is complete, and does not have unintended consequences.

The Working Group will provide input based on the perspectives of their broad expertise with the interests of the broad medical profession as their primary concern, and will consult with other medical professionals in developing principles and recommendations. The Working Group will determine the most effective consultation mechanism to engage with all relevant stakeholders.

### **Structure and membership**

Voluntary participation will be open to up to 30 AMA members who have a specialty in or knowledge of the tranches of work underway in the MBS Review.

AMA Secretariat and the Chair will use their discretion to invite observers to participate in meetings as appropriate.

The Working Group will be supported by a Secretariat from the AMA – led by Luke Toy, Director, Medical Practice and Eliisa Fok, Policy Advisor, Medical Practice.

### **Rules of Participation**

This is to be an open and transparent forum whose intended purpose is to develop and evolve the principles and recommendations which can be applied to the Government-led MBS Reviews.

- All participants agree to treat the discussions as confidential and the AMA Secretariat will only distil key points that relate to principles and common themes and experienced, not specific examples of MBS Taskforce Review conversations that are shared with the group.
- AMA Secretariat will not attribute any particular point to any individual. It may be necessary from time to time to include the speciality/area of medicine that a particular principle or point relates to, in this instance, the Secretariat will not disclose the source of this information.
- Views expressed by participants during meetings will not be treated as the formal position of the organisation they are representing and will in no way prejudice any future consultation responses in this area.

### **Meetings**

AMA Secretariat will convene meetings of the Working Group. Meetings will be held informally to encourage open discussion and will take place by videoconference or teleconference. The intended duration of meetings is one hour. Working Group

meetings will be held monthly however members may be approached to provide input from time-to-time as the MBS reviews unfold.

An agenda and any supporting briefing papers will be distributed at least two days prior to the meeting.

Summary notes of meetings will be distributed by email to all members within two weeks after the meeting. The record of meetings will include a short précis of the discussion and decisions taken, action items, the responsible person, due dates and outcomes where applicable.

The overarching aims of the Working Group are to ensure that the medical profession is united in holding the Federal Government accountable to the principles considered necessary to enable complete MBS reviews. These include:

- Seeking reassurance that the reviews do not have unintended consequences for patients;
- Being vigilant that clinician input is considered during the entire lifespan of the review, including implementation and impacts on health funding;
- Ensuring the review is not a mechanism to reshape the scope of practice;
- Ensuring the integrity of the medical profession is not being compromised through the review process;
- Supporting clinicians who are directly involved in the review.

### **Timeframe**

AMA Secretariat will provide Working Group summary reports at quarterly AMA Federal Council meetings for the duration of the MBS Review lifespan (from 2017 to 2018).