

Media release

HTA reform needs to address genomics technologies

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Australia's Industry Genomics Network Alliance (InGeNA) is advocating for genetic and genomic technologies to be addressed when this year's Health Technology Assessment (HTA) reform process gets underway.

The review of Australia's HTA system will be the first of its kind in 30 years, as agreed by Government in Medicines Australia's Strategic Agreement. It will ensure our HTA system keeps pace with advancements in medical technologies and achieves faster access to new medicines for patients.

InGeNA published a whitepaper today [Future directions for health technology assessment in Australia](#), providing a unified industry viewpoint on how the reform of the HTA system could substantially improve and enhance access to genomic technology for health consumers.

InGeNA Chair David Bunker said there would be more equitable access to genomic testing if health technology assessment (HTA) processes were improved.

"The integration of genomics requires a collaborative approach across stakeholders in the value chain," he said

"Genomics is complex and evolving rapidly. Therefore, successful integration into clinical practice will require effective collaboration across the genomics value chain, including Government, pathologists, healthcare professionals, consumers and suppliers of genomic technologies," Mr Bunker said.

"It was this recognition, and the need for better understanding the needs of consumers, that led a group of forward-thinking genomic technology suppliers to unite as InGeNA in 2020."

Mr Bunker said in 2021 InGeNA commissioned HTANALYSTS to develop a whitepaper identifying current HTA challenges and potential solutions for genomic technologies such as large panel tests.

The whitepaper outlines how the HTA review could address many challenges such as the length and efficiency of the Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC) HTA process, and improve transparency around evidentiary requirements, value definition and transparency. It says the reform process could also address larger issues such as funding models and broader legislation.

In addition, the reforms to consumer engagement should be harmonised across the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee (PBAC) and MSAC processes which would increase patient engagement.

The report listed various structural issues to be addressed:

- Clarifying and aligning federal versus state/territory funding and evaluation processes

- Legislation or an agreement to compel the federal government to act on MSAC decision-making
- A national policy to guide decisions on access to genetic and genomic technologies and the ethical issues raised by genetic and genomic information
- Investigating a mechanism to link research funding through schemes such as the MRFF to HTA decision-making

Mr Bunker said it was an important whitepaper for genomics in Australia, made possible by funding from MTPConnect, and developed through broad stakeholder consultation.

“I would like to thank InGeNA members and the numerous participants at the workshops who donated their time and the consumer members of InGeNA who have actively engaged, participated and informed this process,” Mr Bunker said.

Download [*Future directions for health technology assessment in Australia*](#)

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For more information contact media@digitalhealth.org.au

InGeNA is part of the [Australasian Institute of Digital Health](#), Australia’s peak body for digital health and health informatics.