

Transcript of “MSAC – Robyn Ward” Video

[Video opens with the speaker, Professor Robyn Ward, standing outside in a garden setting, late afternoon, surrounded by various trees and green shrubs (a mature camellia tree with pink flowers is to the viewer’s left, and a mature tree with lighter pink blossoms is to the viewer’s right, further in the background). View of the speaker is from the waist up. Speaker is wearing a dark blue cardigan, over a tailored shirt with small blue and white patterning.]

SPEAKER: *[As the speaker starts talking, white text appears at the bottom left hand corner of the screen: “Professor Robyn Ward - Chair, Medical Services Advisory Committee (MSAC)”]*

I’m Robyn Ward and I’m the Chair of the Medical Services Advisory Committee for the Commonwealth of Australia. In my day job, I’m the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health at the University of Sydney. I’m an Oncologist and Cancer Researcher, and someone who’s very dedicated to equitable access to healthcare for all Australians.

[Screen changes to a light green coloured background, with a question posed in large white text: “**What is the role of MSAC?**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward]

SPEAKER: The Medical Services Advisory Committee provides advice to Government about whether services, tests and technologies should be reimbursed: whether they’re safe, whether they’re effective, and what is an affordable cost for those services in the Australian community.

Many people would be familiar with the outputs of the Medical Services Advisory Committee, in terms of when they go to see their doctor. They understand that a few things are funded under Medicare (the Medicare Benefits Scheme [Schedule]), and that things that appear on the Medicare Benefits Schedule have usually been through a process of assessment, being the Medical Services Advisory Committee.

[Screen changes to a question posed in large white text: “**What are the challenges at MSAC?**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward]

SPEAKER: The Medical Services Advisory Committee is facing a lot of challenges, largely because there’s a lot of new technologies coming down the pipeline. On the one hand, that’s very exciting, with new technologies around genomics, around technologies for devices and other procedures that can now be done, which could potentially cure or impact on the course of disease.

The challenge we face is that we don’t know all of these technologies are safe, effective and cost effective for the Australian population. So MSAC needs to now exercise a lot more judgement, based on early data, on the impact of these technologies in terms of those three things I mentioned earlier – safety, effectiveness and cost effectiveness for the Australian population.

MSAC is currently seeing about fifteen new technologies at each meeting, and we meet three times a year. So there’s a lot of new technologies coming down the pipeline, which is now challenging our traditional approaches to assessing value in healthcare.

[Screen changes to a question, posed in large white text: “**Who can apply to MSAC?**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward]

SPEAKER: The applications to MSAC usually come from the pharmaceutical industry, from medical device companies and from other companies. Occasionally, they come from medical societies. Irrespective of who is the applicant, there is a formal process for applying to MSAC, for reimbursement through public subsidy of the particular intervention. There is a set of Guidelines that have been developed that help applicants prepare their submissions for an MSAC assessment.

[Screen changes to a question, posed in large white text: “**How can consumers contribute to MSAC?**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward]

SPEAKER: MSAC has a number of opportunities for consumers to play an important role in helping MSAC make decisions. Firstly, there’s a formal process by which consumers are represented on MSAC and also on its Sub-Committees. In addition to that, we also very much value the input of consumers, through formal and informal mechanisms outside the MSAC process.

Firstly to speak to the formal process, during an application process, there are multiple opportunities for consumer groups to provide their perspective on the value of particular technologies, to themselves, to their families or to the consumer groups they represent. Or indeed more generally, to society as a whole.

[Screen changes to a question, posed in large white text: “**How are consumer inputs used?**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward]

SPEAKER: Finally, the patient perspective, on what is valuable to them, in terms of outcomes for healthcare, is an ongoing discussion with many consumer groups. Not just informing the Medical Services Advisory Committee, but also the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, and a number of other committees that are really looking for consumer impact statements in terms of assessing value of interventions in healthcare.

[Screen changes to a comment in large white text: “**We look forward to working with you**”]

[Screen reverts to speaker, Professor Robyn Ward, still standing in the garden setting, ready to make her final comments]

SPEAKER: If consumers or consumer groups would like to have input into funding decisions, then I would really encourage you to firstly take a look at the MSAC website, to find the contact details and the ways of finding out how you can best provide input. Certainly, as MSAC Chair, I’m very open to discussions with consumer groups. I have regular conversations with consumer groups, as do other members of the Department and also the Committee. So please, if you’ve got something to say, please don’t be backward in coming forward, and tell us your thoughts.

[Video ends. Go to <http://www.msac.gov.au/>]