

**Australasian Association of Bioethics and Health Law (AABHL)
Policy on Sponsorship of AABHL Activities by External Parties**

1. Preamble

The mission of the AABHL is to promote the study of bioethics and health law; to provide a public forum for debate and discussion; and to promote awareness of bioethics, health law and bioethical and legal issues in the community among all those involved in health care and related disciplines.

There may be occasions where AABHL, members or AABHL and/or individuals acting on behalf of AABHL may seek support from external parties, including governments and public services, health insurers, private hospitals and health providers, medical indemnity providers, the pharmaceutical industry, the biotechnology industry, pathology services, political organisations, professional colleges, consumer and community groups, education providers, philanthropic bodies, research foundations and so forth. This may be to support meetings, educational activities, research, prizes, publications, administrative processes and may take the form of monetary payments, in-kind support, such as the use of the external party's expertise, facilities, venues or other resources, or non-financial support, such as advertising of AABHL and its activities by the external party.

While external parties may expect nothing more than acknowledgement for their support, external parties may also seek, for example, input into the content or organization of the AABHL activity, publication of their support for AABHL on their organizational website, co-badging of materials/resources prepared by the AABHL, reciprocal endorsement of their activities by the AABHL, promotion on the AABHL website, or promotion at an AABHL event.

While such arrangements may provide an important source of support for the activities of the AABHL and its members, they are ethically complex, and if not appropriately managed, may create conflicts of interest, undermine the credibility and authority of the AABHL, reduce trust in the AABHL, both among its members and among the broader community, and impact negatively on the AABHL's ability to advance its mission and goals.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the process by which decisions about sponsorship of AABHL activities will be made.

3. Scope

This policy is designed to assist the AABHL Committee, members of the AABHL, and individuals acting on behalf of the AABHL manage sponsorship of the AABHL activities by external parties.

It does not cover other related processes, such as how individual members of the AABHL should identify, appraise, and manage their own relationships with external entities, or how the AABHL will make decisions regarding provision of support for activities conducted by AABHL members.

Related AABHL Policies can be found on our website (aabhl.org) and include:

- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Stream and Other Activity Support Policy

4. Appraisal and decision-making

Authority for decisions regarding sponsorship lies with the AABHL Committee. Each application for external support of AABHL activities will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This will involve a careful risk—benefit assessment of the proposed interaction/sponsorship, description of strategies for managing potential risks of the interaction and drafting of a sponsorship contract between the AABHL and the external party. Details of sponsorship arrangements must be outlined in a sponsorship Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approved by AABHL and the external party.

Process for the assessment and management of sponsorship of AABHL activities is outlined below.

To mitigate the risks associated with accepting support, AABHL accepts financial or in-kind support from external parties based on a series of guiding principles:

1. *Alignment with the values and mission of AABHL*

In seeking or accepting support for its activities, the AABHL will always prioritise its mission.

2. *Commitment to ethics, health and the public good.*

Consistent with its values and mission, the AABHL will not accept sponsorship from external bodies whose activities or products are antithetical to the public good, and that actively contribute to poor health in the community. These bodies include but are not limited to: the tobacco industry; gaming and betting (gambling) organisations; perpetuate the use of prohibited/regulated drugs; and weapons/arms industry.

3. *Transparency*

All external sponsorship of the AABHL must be publicly acknowledged and transparently declared.

4. *Independence must be guaranteed.*

It is critically important that sponsorship not impact the integrity and independence of AABHL activities. To ensure that this is the case, unless explicitly authorised by the AABHL Committee:

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Endorsed by the AABHL Committee 3 February 2025

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- Sponsorship should be for an AABHL event/activity and should not be tied to a specific participant or event session.
- No suggestion should be made or implied that sponsorship of an AABHL event/activity indicates endorsement of the sponsor's product or services.
- Sponsors should have no role in determining the content of an event/activity.
- Sponsors should have no role in selection of participants in an event/activity.
- Monetary support should ideally be paid to an event/activity account to avoid sponsors directly paying or reimbursing participants.
- All marketing or advertising should be approved by the AABHL and the organisers of the event/activity.

Process for assessment and management of sponsorship of AABHL activities

The following process should be followed whenever AABHL seeks sponsorship/support from an external party or where an external party offers AABHL support for an event/activity.

Step 1: Sponsorship Proposal

Where sponsorship for an AABHL event/activity is sought or offered, a sponsorship proposal should be prepared for the AABHL Committee. This should include:

- A detailed description of the sponsorship proposal including what is being offered by/sought from the sponsor, what, if anything, the sponsor is seeking/expecting in return for support, and what, if anything AABHL would provide the sponsor in return for support.
- An appraisal of the likely risks and benefits of the proposal, taking into consideration:
 - How helpful the sponsorship will be in advancing AABHL's core goals,
 - Whether there are any alternative ways of achieving the same ends,
 - What costs and risks there are associated with the sponsorship arrangement.
- A plan for managing risks associated with the sponsorship.

Step 2: Decision by Committee

Following submission of the sponsorship proposal (which must be accompanied by all relevant supporting documentation), the AABHL Committee will determine whether the sponsorship proposal should be approved, approved with amendments, or rejected.

Documentation of the AABHL Committee's deliberations, including its management of relevant conflicts of interest, evaluation of the proposal, final decision, and rationale for its decision, will be recorded in the minutes of AABHL Committee meeting.

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Step 3: Sponsorship MOU

Where the AABHL Committee approves external sponsorship of a AABHL event/activity, a MOU should be prepared and agreed to by both AABHL and the sponsor (Appendix 1) that outlines:

- Details of the support/sponsorship being provided by the external party for the AABHL event/activity.
- Details of what is being provided by AABHL to the external party in return for their support/sponsorship.
- Names/details of relevant contacts at both AABHL and the external party.

Step 4: Monitoring

All sponsorship-related documentation will be retained by the AABHL Committee and will be available for scrutiny by AABHL members.

The success of each sponsorship/support arrangement will be evaluated by the AABHL Committee after completion of the AABHL activity/event. External parties that have provided support to AABHL will also be invited to indicate the degree to which they were satisfied with the sponsorship/support arrangement and their interest in sponsoring future AABHL activities.

5. Policy review

This Policy shall be reviewed every three years by the AABHL Committee to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. Amendments may be made as necessary to reflect changes in AABHL's operations or regulatory requirements.

6. Contacts

For questions about this policy, contact secretary@aabhl.org

Appendix 1: MOU Template for Sponsorship of AABHL activities/events

Agreement

1. (ORGANISATION) agrees to provide support/sponsorship for (ACTIVITY/EVENT) proposed by AABHL.
2. Support/sponsorship provided by (ORGANISATION) will include (DESCRIBE DETAILS OF SUPPORT).
3. In recognition of the support/sponsorship provided by (ORGANISATION) AABHL will (DESCRIBE DETAILS OF WHAT WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE SPONSORING ORGANISATION BY AABHL).
4. Any revenue remaining after all disbursements related to the proposed AABHL event/activity will be retained by AABHL.
5. Any shortfall or liability in relation to the proposed AABHL event/activity will be the responsibility of AABHL.
6. Sponsorship does not imply any grant of control or influence over the operations of AABHL.
7. Sponsorship does not imply endorsement of (ORGANISATION) and is limited to the terms and purposes of the Sponsorship MOU.

Signed by:
 (AABHL Office-bearer)
 Witness
 Date

and

(Organisation Office-bearer)
 Witness
 Date