

Optometry Board of Australia

27 February 2025

Considering invitations to attend events policy

Introduction

Members of the Optometry Board of Australia (the Board) receive invitations to attend various events.

The Board recognises that successful implementation of the National Scheme requires engagement with a wide range of stakeholders and has therefore developed this policy to assist with determining which invitations to accept.

Policy intent

To ensure the Board considers invitations to attend events using consistent criteria and keeping in mind meaningful engagement with stakeholders on key issues.

Policy principles

The Board has adopted the following principles for considering invitations and protecting its integrity as a regulator:

- the Board will only accept an invitation if it does not create any impression (actual or implied) of endorsement or partisanship
- the Board seeks to engage appropriately with relevant stakeholders
- the Board's engagement with stakeholders will be consistent with its regulatory role and build direct lines of communication between the Board and registrants
- the Board's main way of engaging with stakeholders will be through the promotion and communication of its activities through its own communication strategies and channels (in partnership with AHPRA), and
- attending appropriate stakeholder events is a secondary strategy to the ongoing communication activities the Board undertakes.

Board and committee members may not comment publicly as individuals on the work of the Board or the National Scheme without securing the Chair's approval and are reminded to comply with the Board manual during attendance at events.

Policy

It is Board policy that:

- all invitations received in the capacity as member or Chair of the Board must be submitted in writing (letter or email) addressed to the Chair
- invitations will be discussed at a standing agenda item on the Board's agenda (both prospective attendance and reports on past events)
- its consideration of and decision about each invitation will be based on an assessment of:
 - potential for actual or perceived conflict of interest
 - likely number of attendees at an event
 - expected outcome of the activity/event
 - how the activity/event is relevant to the Board's purpose
 - how the activity will add value to the Board's responsibility to protect the public
 - time commitment involved/availability of representative

- the cost of attendance
- the potential cost benefit to the Board to attend the event, and
- whether the desired outcome could be achieved in another way.

All invitations will be considered in line with the following Ahpra policies and procedures:

- Board member manual
- Gifts, benefits and hospitality policy
- Gifts, benefits and hospitality procedure
- Code of conduct for Board and committee members, and
- Declaration of private interest.

When attending any functions/events Board members must be very clear in communicating whether they are attending as individuals or as representatives of the Board.

If an invitation is extended between Board meetings and cannot be deferred for discussion at the Board meeting, the Chair will decide in accordance with this policy.

Any representative will report back to the Board after representing the Board at any event.

Approved and in effect: 27 February 2025

Due for Review: 27 February 2030