

Partnerships Policy

Table of Contents

Partnerships Policy	1
1. Purpose	2
2. Scope	2
3. Policy Statement	2
4. Principles	3
5. Exclusions	4
6. Procedure	4
7. Related Documents and Further Information	5

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1. Purpose

Dietitians Australia partners with external organisations to amplify impact, advance our vision, and support best practice in nutrition and dietetics.

This policy outlines the principles, standards and procedures that guide all partnership, sponsorship and endorsement arrangements.

While many partnerships involve commercial elements, Dietitians Australia approaches them as strategic collaborations. Each must be aligned with our values, uphold professional and scientific integrity, and deliver clear value to our members, the profession, and the broader community.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all collaboration types undertaken by Dietitians Australia, including:

- Partnerships
- Sponsorships and Trade Exhibitions
- Endorsements
- Alliances
- In-kind support

across Dietitians Australia's corporate, education, research, advocacy, events and communications activities.

It covers any collaboration where Dietitians Australia:

- Co-develops or co-delivers initiatives
- Provides or receives financial or in-kind support
- Shares brand exposure
- Participates in programs, campaigns or other joint activities

All collaboration types are assessed for alignment with Dietitians Australia's strategic objectives, independence, reputational considerations and value to members and the profession.

3. Policy Statement

Partnerships at Dietitians Australia are not limited to commercial arrangements. Rather they are strategic collaborations that contribute to our broader purpose and professional mandate.

We seek partnerships that:

- **Enable** dietitians with new tools, capabilities, and career pathways
- **Empower** the profession through stronger identity, leadership, and engagement
- **Elevate** the visibility and influence of dietitians in policy and systems
- **Embed** nutrition as a valued part of society's health, environment, and culture

All collaborations must:

- Align with Dietitians' values, brand and strategic direction
- Deliver measurable benefit to members, the profession and/or the public
- Be governed transparently, ethically and with appropriate risk oversight

Dietitians Australia's collaboration opportunities fall into three main categories, noting that some may overlap:

1. **Partnership:** a strategic, long-term relationship focused on mutual value, brand alignment and measurable impact
2. **Sponsorship and Trade Exhibition:** a shorter-term opportunity for organisations to increase brand visibility and connect with Accredited Practising Dietitians (APDs) through events, campaigns or marketing
3. **Endorsement:** a formal recognition that a product, course, event or program meets Dietitians Australia's standards and supports best practice in nutrition and dietetics
4. **Alliances:** non-commercial collaborations not-for-profit organisations, academic institutions or advocacy organisations for research, policy or shared public health goals

Major partnerships may be disclosed publicly (e.g. via the Dietitians Australia website or annual report) in the interest of transparency.

4. Principles

All partnerships must align with Dietitians Australia's commitment to professional integrity, evidence-based practice, and public trust. The following principles guide all collaboration decisions:

- Align with our strategic plan, values, and mission
- Be evidence-based and support best practice
- Be transparent in purpose, intent, and terms
- Deliver measurable value to members and the profession
- Reflect ethical and professional standards
- Be appropriate to our public role and brand
- Comply with relevant laws, standards, and codes (e.g. Food Standards, WHO)
- Be assessed for reputational, financial, and ethical risks
- Consider public and member perception

Brand and Product Representation:

- Where a partner has a mixed product portfolio, brand use must focus on specific product brands (not the parent company), particularly where the parent brand includes products that conflict with Dietitians Australia's values or exclusions (e.g. infant formula).
- Care will be taken when evaluating brands associated with medical nutrition. Distinct sub-brands clearly positioned for adult medical nutrition (e.g. Resource) may be approved where they are routinely used in dietetic practice and pose low reputational risk. Approval may be withheld for parent brands (e.g. Nestlé) to avoid implied endorsement of excluded or high-risk product categories.
- Feeding equipment (e.g. feeding bottles, tubes, infusion pumps) specifically designed for infant feeding or targeting children under 3 years of age will not be considered. Feeding equipment intended for children over 3 years or for adult use will be considered.
- To avoid implied endorsement, sponsorship approval does not constitute brand or product endorsement. All event and marketing materials must include clear disclaimers, and any sponsorship must be transparently declared to participants.
- Dietitians Australia considers both the legal and ethical dimensions of a prospective partner's business, as well as public and member perception. Where practices are legal but

controversial, a risk assessment will be conducted. Dietitians Australia reserves the right to decline or withdraw from any partnership that does not align with its values, reputation, or strategic priorities.

All collaboration types are assessed using the Partnerships Risk Assessment Framework and approved in accordance with delegated authority. All approved collaborations are recorded in the Partnerships Tracker for oversight and transparency.

5. Exclusions

Dietitians Australia will not enter into agreements with organisations or industries that:

- Diminish public trust in Dietitians Australia or the profession
- Reflect negatively on the credibility or values of the organisation
- Engage in discriminatory, unethical, or illegal practices
- Seek to influence Dietitians Australia's independence
- Promote goods, services or messages that are harmful or not evidence based

Examples of exclusions relevant to this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Weight loss products without a strong evidence-base
- Alcohol or any alcohol containing products
- Infant formula products and toddler food or beverages
- Feeding equipment (e.g. feeding bottles, tubes, infusion pumps) specifically designed for infant feeding or targeting children under 3 years of age
- Gambling or companies that promote gambling
- Tobacco or vaping manufacturers or retailers
- Firearms or weapons manufacturers or retailers

This list is not exhaustive. Dietitians Australia reserves the right to decline or discontinue partnerships based on reputational risk, ethical concerns, or strategic misalignment – even if the organisation or industry is not explicitly listed.

Medical Nutrition and Related Products – Special Considerations

Dietitians Australia recognises the legitimate role of medical nutrition products in clinical dietetic practice. However, the following guidelines apply:

- Only medical nutrition products and sub-brands for older children (3 years) and adults will be considered for partnerships or sponsorships. Medical nutrition products (e.g. oral nutrition supplements or tube feeds) that are prescribed may be acceptable when they are routinely used by dietitians in clinical practice.
- Feeding equipment for children over 3 years or for adult use.
- Partnerships should focus on clearly identifiable medical nutrition sub-brands or feeding-equipment lines rather than the broader food or healthcare parent company.
- All sponsorships must be transparently disclosed and must not imply endorsement of any product or brand.

6. Procedure

All proposed collaborations must undergo assessment using the Partnerships Risk Assessment Framework prior to approval.

Approval authority is delegated in accordance with the Dietitians Australia Delegations Register as follows:

- Very Low and Low Risk collaborations – Executive Director, Strategic Growth and Member Value and Marketing & Communications Manager (co-approval where specified)
- Medium Risk collaborations – Chief Executive Officer
- High Risk collaborations – Board

All approved collaborations must be recorded in the Partnerships Tracker for oversight by the Partnerships Committee.

Interested organisations should complete the Expression of Interest Form to initiate the process.

Formal contracts and agreements are required for all collaborations.

Collaborations will be monitored and reviewed to ensure ongoing alignment, performance and impact. Dietitians Australia reserves the right to decline or withdraw from any collaboration that does not meet the standards outlined in this Policy.

7. Related Documents and Further Information

For sponsorships, trade exhibitions and other collaborations please refer to:

1. Sponsor and Trade Exhibition Guidelines April 2024.
2. Policy for Acceptance and Dissemination of Advertising & Promotions (including Trade Exhibitions).