Policy for co-branding and endorsement

1. OVERVIEW

The Australian Rheumatology Association (ARA) regularly develops position statements and information sheets for use by members, other health professionals and the general public.

The ARA regularly receives requests to endorse organisations, publications and other activities that have been developed by an organisation external to the ARA community. This is known as 'endorsement'.

The ARA is also asked to contribute to the development of specific documents in partnership with external bodies (such as government, consumer organisations and other professional bodies) and co-branding the final product.

In some cases, it is appropriate for specific statements, information sheets or other activities to be co-branded with other organisations such as professional bodies or consumer organisations.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to ARA Board Members, ARA staff and contractors, and ARA members.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy and process is to establish:

- the circumstances under which it is appropriate for the ARA to provide endorsement.
- the authority for the determination of requests to the ARA for endorsements
- the required procedures to be followed for the authorising and publication of information or activities containing the ARA logo or attributed to the ARA.

4. POLICY

The ARA will provide general information and advice for use by members, other health professionals and the general public. This information will be current, evidence based and developed and reviewed by appropriate experts and ARA Board or subcommittees.

The ARA will consider co-branding or endorsing documents or initiatives with external organisations such as other specialty societies, professional organisations or consumer organisations.

In general, ARA will not co-brand or endorse information sheets, statements or activities with industry such as pharmaceutical, complementary medicine or device industries, or other commercial entities.

To ensure the ARA's professional reputation, consideration of endorsement and co-branding opportunities must align with the ARA's mission statements and strategic directions.

4.1. Co-branding
Co-branding should generally be a co-development process, where optimally, both groups are involved at each stage. However, in many situations, it is likely that one or other organisation will take the primary 'drafting' role.

For information sheets related to medications, the content will be developed and reviewed primarily by the ARA Therapeutics Committee.

The process for development of a position statement should be evidence-based and the quality of the evidence should be clearly stated using a validated method such as GRADE. If the evidence base is limited or the quality of the evidence is low or very low, this needs to be clearly stated.

4.2 Endorsement
Prior to endorsement of a document it must be reviewed by the ARA Board or delegate, and then endorsed at a Board Meeting. In general, this will require a minimum of six weeks from the initial request.

4.3 Final approval
The ARA Board or delegate appointed by ARA Board must have final approval prior to publication of all published information containing the ARA logo, co-branded or containing the ARA's endorsement).

See Appendix for the required procedures for content development, review and ARA Board approval.

Professor Catherine Hill
Honorary Secretary
27 November 2017

APPENDIX

Procedure for creating, co-branding or endorsement of public documents

Preliminary approval to commence development
Prior to commencing the drafting process for an information sheet or position statement, the ARA Board or its Delegate needs to agree the terms of reference for ARA participation in the development of a publication, i.e.:

1. the aim of the document
2. the format of the document
3. the parties that should be involved in the development and review process for the development of the document
4. the means of determining the comprehensibility of the information sheets including for people with low literacy and/or health literacy
5. the appropriate development and review timeframe
6. agreement with regard to date for review of document (generally every two years)
7. consideration of translation and cross-cultural validity
8. consideration of conflicts of interests (e.g. authors of document, support of document)

Drafting and Review

When the ARA Board has agreed the terms of reference for initiating development or endorsement of a publication, this will include a schedule with review dates for review and final approval of the publication. This schedule is to incorporate the Board and Sub Committee meeting cycles.

The draft of the information sheet should be provided to the ARA in Word or other format that is easily editable to facilitate making comments and/or suggested changes.

Version control process: information sheets are currently reviewed every two years.

When the ARA is responsible for the primary drafting role, copies of references used to develop the information sheets will be available from the ARA to the other co-branding organisations and for users of the information.

Publication

The final document will be submitted to the Board accompanied with a background paper which details: authors, contributors, stakeholders consulted and any conflicts of interest.

The application of the ARA logo must be consistent with the ARA Branding Guidelines.

The Board will approve the document and, where required, the next review point for the publication.