

Optometry Board of Australia: Policy

24 October 2013

Considering invitations to attend events

Background

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

The Board recognises that successful implementation of the National Scheme requires engagement with a wide range of stakeholders¹ and has therefore developed this policy to assist with determining which invitations to accept.

Goal

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

Principles

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

- 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).
- Attending appropriate stakeholder events is a secondary strategy to the ongoing communications activities the Board undertakes.
- The Board will only accept an invitation if it does not create any impression (real or implied) of endorsement or partisanship.

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

¹ See "Manual for National Boards and their committees", section 2.2.

- 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.

Procedures

- 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.
- Board representatives speaking on behalf of the Board will only do so with the prior knowledge and permission of the Board (as per Manual for National Boards and their Committees).
- 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.
- All Board members will ensure effective internal communication by advising the Chair and Executive Officer of all invitations and attendances.
- Any representative will report back to the Board after representing the Board at any event.

The Board agreed to this Policy at its meeting on 24 October 2013.