



THE NUTRITION SOCIETY  
OF AUSTRALIA (INC.)

## **Nutrition Society of Australia policy on Sponsorship and Corporate Engagement**

### **1. About the Nutrition Society of Australia**

The Nutrition Society of Australia (NSA) was founded in 1975. It is a scientific society whose members are qualified individuals working to contribute to the body of scientific knowledge of nutrition and its application to people and animals. The Society has members throughout Australia organised into 9 regional groups, and some members located in other countries.

The Society aims to advance the scientific study of nutrition, support its ethical applications and communicate nutrition science to nutritionists and non-nutritionists.

### **2. Purpose of the policy**

The purpose of this policy is to recognise that fundraising is a key element to the continuing success of the NSA's meetings and other activities. The policy enables NSA to raise funds ethically and efficiently and protects NSA from being associated with inappropriate partners.

The goal of NSA is to increase the value and relevance of nutrition science in Australia.

NSA has four strategic priorities:

- 1 Nutrition Science Research: NSA will foster excellence in the conduct and application of nutrition science research.
- 2 Communication of Nutrition Science: NSA will communicate the results and implications of nutrition science to audiences including nutritionists, policy makers, stakeholders and the general public.
- 3 Responsible Nutrition Related Practice: NSA will promote responsible and science-based nutrition-related practice by nutritionists.
- 4 Efficiency and Governance: NSA will manage resources efficiently and accountably to advance the NSA goal.

*This document addresses:*

- A. *The nature and scope of the different types of commercial arrangements*
- B. *The expectations and responsibilities of both parties*
- C. *The processes for establishing commercial arrangements between NSA and other organisations*
- D. *The criteria for deciding on the appropriateness of a commercial arrangement such as sponsorship*



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### **3. Engagement between NSA and sponsor**

#### **Commercial sponsorship arrangements**

- The level of income generated by membership subscriptions is adjusted from time to time to cover basic operating expenses of NSA and maintain a prudent level of reserves. Generally, NSA activities are not intended to generate income because it is a 'not for profit' organisation.
- Additional activities that are consistent with the goal and priorities of NSA could be funded by an increase in membership subscription, an increase in activity registration or personal donation. In the past, cash or in-kind sponsorships from commercial organisations have supported NSA activities including student prizes, conference breakfasts and other events, group activities and special projects.
- It is acknowledged that while commercial or other organisations may have different overall objectives to NSA, specific agreed activities can lead to the advancement of the joint objectives of both NSA and the relevant organisation.
- NSA has accepted cash and in-kind sponsorships since its establishment to support the wide range of activities that are considered consistent with the strategic directions of NSA.

#### **Sponsorship from corporations or organisations and not from products**

- Sponsorship agreements will be made with corporations or organisations and the sponsorship will be acknowledged in the name of that corporation or organisation.

#### **Funding as part of a sponsorship arrangement will be accepted as a specific purpose grant defined by an agreement or an unencumbered *educational grant*.**

- All direct monies paid to NSA must be provided in the form of an educational grant for use by NSA in accordance with its constitution, or supported by a jointly signed specific written agreement.
- NSA, at its discretion, may also agree to enter into a joint project with a sponsor for a project that is consistent with, and promotes the NSA goal. In this situation the project must be undertaken in accordance with a written agreement between NSA and the Sponsoring organisation and if money is transferred to NSA it must be set aside to cover the costs of the specified project.
- Offers for sponsorship or other funding will be assessed using the guiding process and criteria set out in this document.
- NSA will enter in sponsorship arrangements at its discretion. NSA reserves the right to decline or postpone sponsorship arrangements prior to signing an agreement.

#### **Sole purpose for which sponsorship money is to be used:**

- To support the business and activities of NSA.
- Sponsors may develop and present proposals for specific activities to be undertaken by, or in collaboration with NSA, which will be considered by the NSA Council.



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### **Range of sponsoring organisations**

- NSA has the intention of allowing a wide range of organisations to collaborate in its activities, including sponsoring organisations.
- Every practical attempt will be made to avoid a reliance on any one sponsor, sector or product area for sponsorship support.
- NSA does not offer exclusivity of engagement to sponsoring organisations. Specifically, sponsorship agreements do not preclude NSA from reaching agreement with competitors of the sponsoring organisation.

### **NSA will maintain a full listing of its current sponsors**

- An up to date listing of sponsors will be available on the NSA website, and available on request
- Sponsors of the NSA annual scientific meeting will be listed in the program book

### **A. The nature and scope of different types of commercial arrangements**

Sponsorship of NSA may take varying forms and involve a wide range of financial commitments. Arrangements may vary from provision of materials for the Annual Scientific Meeting to a significant financial contribution to assist in meeting the operating costs of NSA. The nature of any commercial sponsorship arrangements may include (but is not restricted to):

- Annual unencumbered sponsorship of the society
- Sponsorship of an NSA conference, seminar or educational event
- Direct sponsorship of an NSA product, activity or award
- Establishment of joint projects where funding or part-funding is provided by a commercial organisation
- Contributions from commercial organisations to foundations associated with NSA or where NSA is involved in the management.

### **B. The expectations and responsibilities of both parties**

- NSA maintains the right to use funds not tied to a specific agreement in a manner it determines appropriate for the effective functioning of the Society and the achievement of its goal.
- Sponsors should not expect their sponsorship of NSA to directly influence the activities of NSA beyond the agreement. Accepting sponsorship funds will not influence the development of NSA policy. NSA retains its full independence from all sponsors including in exercising its discretion to make uninhibited comments or representations on any issue that NSA feels is consistent with its organisational priorities.
- Acknowledgement of sponsorship is a public expression of appreciation for the sponsorship, and is publicly made for the purpose of transparency. Acceptance of sponsorship does not imply any explicit endorsement of the sponsor or any product and care will be taken where necessary to avoid the perception of implicit endorsement.



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- Where sponsorship takes the form of provision of a sponsors' product or literature to NSA members, or to attendees of NSA activities, the product will be evaluated by NSA for its usefulness and appropriateness against objective criteria which are relevant to the purpose of NSA
- It is not appropriate for any office holder of NSA to receive any direct personal benefit from a sponsorship arrangement. Where such an arrangement exists, a declaration must be made to NSA Council and the arrangement approved prior to any commitment being made.
- Sponsors may be given special promotional rights and benefits at the NSA Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM), the level of which will correspond to their level of support. These rights will be set and reviewed regularly by the ASM Organising Committee, on delegation by the NSA Council.
- The acceptance of sponsorship will not influence the program or content of the Annual Scientific Meeting, other NSA meetings or any NSA publication unless by specific written agreement.
- Sponsors have the right to request clarification of statements produced or actions undertaken by NSA
- Sponsors may not release promotional material bearing the NSA logo or identity without the prior written agreement of NSA.
- NSA will identify Sponsors on relevant printed materials or media as providers of sponsorship.
- NSA will consider private and confidential any information provided by a Sponsor about its functioning or activities and clearly identified as such. This must not transgress other aspects of these guidelines such as the direction to publicly acknowledge sponsorship.
- Sponsors will not reveal to an external audience any information relating to NSA or its activities that is identified as being confidential.

**C. The processes for establishing collaborative arrangements with other organisations**

- Proposals for sponsorship must follow a defined process. Any discussions between a potential sponsor and NSA will be considered confidential and no approval can be given until the process of review is completed.
- Proposals of general sponsorship must be made in writing by an approved officer of the sponsoring organisation and require the approval of the NSA Council.
- Proposals to provide sponsorship for the NSA Annual Scientific Meeting or other NSA meetings may be directed to the appropriate Organising Committee who consider the merit and benefits of the proposal. However,



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- Initial correspondence between Sponsors and NSA may be directed through the NSA President, or NSA Treasurer through the NSA Secretariat Office. However, no single officer or individual within NSA has the authority to approve sponsorship arrangements.
- The merit of a sponsorship arrangement will be assessed for its appropriateness and potential benefit (using criteria set out in section D) by the NSA executive before putting a recommendation to the full NSA Council.
- Sponsors will be informed of the response to their proposal in writing from the NSA President or their nominee.
- NSA reserves the right to decline sponsorship.
- All proposals for sponsorship must be approved by the NSA Council.

#### **D. Criteria for deciding on the appropriateness of a commercial arrangement such as sponsorship**

NSA will only work with other organisations in a commercial arrangement provided the following conditions are met:

1. The sponsorship or other commercial arrangement is in the name of the organisation (rather than in the name of a brand or product).
2. The products or marketing practices of the organisation are deemed to be appropriate by a majority decision of the NSA Council.  
For guidance, products or practices may be considered to be inappropriate in the following areas:
  - a. Products that are deemed to be contrary to public health and well being (e.g. tobacco)
  - b. A product line or marketing strategy in which the major food or beverage products are deemed to be energy-dense and micronutrient poor and thus do not actively contribute to nutritional health
  - c. Marketing practices which are potentially misleading or deceptive particularly in relation to inappropriate and unsubstantiated claims in relation to health outcomes
  - d. Inappropriate marketing of products to children or other vulnerable groups.
  - e. The presentation of unbalanced or inconsistent health communications, especially where the roles of both diet and physical activity in achieving and maintaining good health are not appropriately addressed.

Inappropriate products or practices may still provide grounds for declining sponsorship, regardless of the proportion of a company or organisations activities, or when it occurred. This is at the discretion of the NSA Council.

3. The commercial arrangements would further the objectives of NSA, and are not likely to bring NSA into disrepute or negatively impact on its reputation.



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#### **4. Auditing of NSA funds.**

All sponsorship monies will be paid into the general bank account of NSA and will not be held by individuals or associated institutions. All contributions are subject to defined regulations and audit procedures as required by the Australian Companies and Securities Commission and the Australian Tax Office.

Dated: June 2016