

Endorsement Policy and Procedure

Purpose and Scope

The purpose is to outline the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RANZCOG) endorsement guidelines and procedures for external organisations and/or Third Parties who wish to have their documents, events and/or educational activities endorsed by the College. The policy also covers College initiated documents, programs and projects, specifically in relation to the use of the College crest or logo. Any requests for sponsorships or advertising must be considered under the Sponsorship Policy and Procedure and Advertising Policy and Procedure documents respectively. Any requests for accreditation of conferences, events or educational material is not covered under this policy, and must be referred to the CPD Department for processing under the CPD accreditation guidelines.

The College at present develops, reviews and endorses a number of documents, events and educational activities that originate from within the College. The College is also asked to perform the following functions:

- Contribute to the development of specific documents in partnership with external organisations;
- Review documents developed by external organisations;
- Review events and activities conducted by external organisations

This policy provides guidance for when such requests are received.

Endorsement occurs when the College gives approval or support to an external organisation, individual, product, service or educational activity.

This policy aims to ensure that the College's reputation and name is always upheld and maintained in relation to any endorsements it may grant. To achieve this aim, the policy provides guidance on the management of endorsements, including:

- commercial and non-commercial endorsement;
- identifying organisations, documents and activities suitable to receive College endorsement;
- identifying organisations, documents and activities excluded from receiving College endorsement;
- the approval processes for selecting activities for College endorsement; and
- the on-going management of endorsed organisations, documents and/or activities.

1. Commercial and Non-commercial endorsement

1.1. Commercial Endorsement

Commercial endorsement occurs when a business or organisation receives a commercial benefit or profit through association with the College. The College will not normally consider commercial endorsement.

1.2. Non-commercial Endorsement

Non-commercial endorsement occurs when an event or educational activity organised by a government body, another medical college or another health-related body is publicly supported by the College and the benefit it receives does not involve a commercial benefit or profit.

RANZCOG is a preeminent institution, and home to women's health practitioners across Australia and New Zealand. Accordingly, RANZCOG has a strong reputation and standing within the health community and amongst general public. When considering requests for endorsement, RANZCOG will only approve requests that can be assessed against the following principles:

- Must be aligned with the objects defined in the RANZCOG Constitution.
- Must be aligned with the business objectives, mission, vision and values.
- Must be consistent, enhance and engage with RANZCOG's strategic plan.
- Must be consistent with RANZCOG's corporate image and identity.
- Must enhance the reputation of the RANZCOG brand in the community.

To ensure its credibility as the peak body in Obstetrics and Gynaecology, and to uphold of the trust and confidence of its members and of the public, RANZCOG must be free of undue influence or conflicts, and in control of the decisions it makes. To this extent, when assessing endorsement proposals, due regard must be given to member perspectives, views, and concerns. As such, RANZCOG will not accept or support any endorsements, or engage with organisations that:

- Are likely to be perceived by a significant proportion of RANZCOG members as anti-social, anti-environmental, divisive, or controversial.
- Conflict with any health message or position statements issued or accepted by RANZCOG.
- Support political parties or religious organisations.
- Presents a reputational risk.
- Promote directly or indirectly the business of gambling, alcohol, arms, smoking, drugs and abuse and exploitation of women.
- May be construed as discriminatory.
- Could be detrimental to public health and safety.
- Promote socially divisive issues or events e.g: beauty pageants or activities that may be linked to animal cruelty.
- Perceived to impose conditions that could limit, or appear to limit, the ability of RANZCOG to carry out its function fully and impartially.

RANZCOG will not engage in the endorsement of individuals or entities that are or may be subject to action or investigation by government or government bodies. RANZCOG will not be obliged under any endorsement arrangement to provide explicit endorsement of services, products or product categories.

2. Procedures

2.1. General Procedures

Any requests for endorsements must be submitted through the Executive and Advocacy Office (ceo@ranzco.edu.au). The application must include the following information to help RANZCOG make an informed decision regarding the request:

- Details of the organisation, document or activity to be endorsed/supported.
- Details of what type of endorsement/support is sought by the organisation or individual, ie use of College crest or logo.

- Contact details.
- Details of any other bodies/partners involved in the event or with the organisation.
- Details of the objective of gaining endorsement/support.
- Details of how College endorsement will be used.
- A statement that the organisation, document or activity will not profit from the event/document or activity.
- A statement that the applicant is not aware of any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest relating to the College or College staff members.
- Acknowledgement that if College endorsement/support is granted, the conduct of the organisation or activity reflects on the College. Also, that the organisation will ensure that any activities which could reasonably be viewed as bringing the College into disrepute do not occur or are quickly identified and terminated.

Endorsement requests must be reviewed and approved by the CEO in consultation with the President and/or the Board. Relevant committees and / or Executive Leadership Team members will also need to be consulted and required to provide input when endorsement impacts their functions and objectives. Any queries around clinical or medical propriety of a proposal will be forwarded to the Board or relevant committee, to be addressed on a case-by-case basis. All parties involved in making a decision around endorsement / non-endorsement must ensure that a consultative process is followed, and must not enter into communication with the requesting organisation prior to a final decision being made. Any relevant or associated conflict of interest must be declared prior to assessment of these requests.

Endorsements do not roll over automatically or transfer across different items even if they are under the same entity. A written request must be submitted each time new endorsement is sought.

2.2. Repeat Events

Previous endorsement of an organisation, document or activity does not mean automatic endorsement for future iterations or versions. A written request must be submitted each time, and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the merit of the request and the circumstances.

2.3. Letter of agreement

- Once endorsement/support has been granted, the arrangement must be detailed in a written agreement in the form of an endorsement letter. The agreement must specify the arrangements between the College and the organisation, and must provide the following details: The organisation's full (corporate) name.
- A description of the event or activity to be endorsed/supported, the time period of the event or activity and the objective.
- The type of endorsement/support that the College will provide, ie how and in what format the College crest can be used.
- Contact details for both parties.
- Duration of the endorsement, including end date.
- A statement that the endorsement/support of the activity, document or organisation does not imply endorsement/support of an organisation, individual, service or product and the organisation will not claim or imply endorsement/support in any public communications or advertising.
- Details of how and when an endorsement/support may be withdrawn.
- Any other details relevant to the endorsement arrangement.

2.4. Cancellation of Endorsement

Should the College become aware of any circumstances that arise because of breaches made or risks are identified, then the suitability of the endorsement agreement must be reviewed by the College and a decision made as to whether to continue, vary or terminate the agreement.

Circumstances which may lead to the modification or termination of an endorsement agreement may include, but not be limited to:

- a significant change in the event's or organising body's mission or objectives;
- a breach of the endorsement agreement where the breach is unlikely to be rectified;
- situations that pose a reputational risk to RANZCOG as a result of any change in the endorsed organisation's circumstances;
- endorsements where it becomes evident that a person or organisation will receive a commercial benefit from the event or activity;
- Situations where the endorsed content is no longer in College / Public interest.
- a merger or other event causes a conflict of interest that cannot be reasonably managed; or
- any situations resulting in serious adverse publicity for the organisation.

3. RANZCOG initiatives / projects/ programs / documents

The College actively develops a range of initiatives, projects, programs and general documents through the course of general and core business. The College accepts full responsibility for the content of all of these College developed programs/projects/documents. In all of these cases, either the College crest or logo will be displayed, where appropriate on documentation and publicity materials.

An approval date from the RANZCOG Board must be included on all documentation in connection with the College initiative, project or program.

A designated review and/or end date must also be included on the relevant documentation.

Documents and other relevant information regarding the initiative, project or program should be published on the RANZCOG website.

3.1. Time-expired RANZCOG documents

Documents that have passed their end date but are currently under review may still be available and visible via the College website, but a note should be included that they are under review. If documents are not under review but have reached their end date, then they should be removed from the College website and/or taken out of circulation in a timely manner.

4. RANZCOG endorsed documents

For endorsement requests relating to documents initiated solely by an external organisation, the document should be referred to the relevant RANZCOG committee for review as to its appropriateness and relevance before being submitted to the Board for approval.

A decision on endorsement in such cases must follow the core principles outlined in this policy. The responsibility for content will rest with the initiator, who must keep the College informed of any impending changes.

The College will provide approval for a link to the document's original website. The approval for the use of the College crest or logo on such a document will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant College Committee or RANZCOG Board.

Endorsement will be provided under the following categories:

- Evidence based clinical guidelines
- Clinical guidelines
- General documents and statements

As with all endorsements, a time limit will apply to the validity of endorsement for such documents, after which a new request will need to be submitted.

5. RANZCOG representation and endorsement

In instances where RANZCOG members form part of an external committee or working party that is developing content with the intention to acquire RANZCOG endorsement, it should be noted that these members are present to provide their expertise and guidance. RANZCOG representation does not guarantee endorsement. Every endorsement request will be considered on its merit and circumstances.

6. RANZCOG non-endorsed documents

For documents reviewed and found not suitable for endorsement by RANZCOG, consideration will be given to the relevance and usefulness of some of the information present within such documents. If this is deemed to be the case, the College may provide approval to the originating link, but permission to use the College crest or logo will not be given.

7. RANZCOG rejected documents

For documents that have been reviewed and assessed as not suitable or of any relevance or use to the College membership, no endorsement will be provided.

8. Non-compliance

A failure to comply with this Policy may result in RANZCOG incurring unwanted or misaligned obligations or responsibilities which could lead to significant legal, financial or reputational risks.

9. Related RANZCOG documents

- Constitution
- Strategic Plan
- Code of Conduct
- Endorsement Policy and Procedure
- Advertising Policy and Procedure

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1.1	May / 2015	Policy established
v2.1	September / 2021	Major amendments and corrections

Policy Version:	Version 2.1
Policy Owner:	Executive Director, Innovation, Learning and Quality Assurance
Policy Approved by:	RANZCOG Board
Review of Policy:	July / 2023