



**PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS AND
FUNDING RELATIONSHIPS POLICY**

March 2020

Introduction

Since its inception in November 2015, Harm Reduction Australia (HRA) has operated with donations, membership fees, in-kind contributions from volunteers and festival organisers, no government funding and occasional one-off funding for specific projects.

In addition to this, HRA has from time to time received small amounts of funding from the private sector for partnership activities and/or 'untied' educational projects. This policy is concerned with the latter sources of funding that require the consideration of a range of ethical matters for the organisation that can differ from the considerations associated with other funding sources.

There are many funding sources available, including funding from a variety of private sector companies and businesses that have a stake hold in the lives of people who use drugs. This can include but is not limited to:

- ✓ Pharmaceutical companies
- ✓ Manufacturers of injecting equipment and other paraphernalia
- ✓ Suppliers of injecting equipment and other paraphernalia

HRA accepts and understands that some people are opposed to receiving funding from and working with the private sector. However, Government funding can also have significant limitations. Accordingly, receiving funding from and working with the private sector is viewed simply as those companies making an appropriate contribution to addressing the issues affecting people who use drugs. Indeed, entering into partnerships with the private sector is seen by many as a legitimate source of funding for work aimed at improving the lives and health of people who use drugs.

Where a company is not acting within what HRA considers to be an ethical framework, it would not be appropriate to receive money from or to work formally with such entities on projects or other activities. Rather, HRA may decide to work with the company to encourage them to align their trading practices to better meet appropriate ethical standards. There are many issues that need to be addressed what ever the engagement with the private sector may be.

Complex issues can and do arise in relation to both government and private sector funding sources and each offer of funding requires discussion and in-depth consideration from all involved in the work and its implications. Final approval for all funding decisions rest with the HRA Board.

Principles & Process

HRA agrees in principle that working with the private sector to improve the lives of people who use drugs, their families and friends, is an appropriate and rewarding strategy. HRA will always seek to work with a range of companies rather than exclusive relationships with individual companies. There are a number of processes, standards and principles that must be met when entering into any funding arrangements with private sector entities.

These are:

- HRA is generally open to seeking or receiving funding from the private sector;
- Entering into funding agreements and/or partnerships with the private sector will only be considered if there are clear goals and benefits to HRA and people who use drugs;
- Any decision to accept private sector sponsorship, funding or to enter into a working partnership will be considered on a case by case basis with the strategic value of the activity to be funded and/or aim of the partnership to be fully assessed by the HRA Board;
- A written proposal detailing all aspects of the project/activities to be undertaken or supported and the terms and conditions of any funding on offer will be presented to the HRA Board for approval;
- Final approval in relation to accepting any funding on behalf of HRA or its auspiced entities rests with the HRA Board;
- As a fully independent not-for-profit non-government organisation HRA will not enter into funding agreements that jeopardise HRA's independence or allow another entity to control the actions, work, policies or statements of HRA as an organisation;
- All HRA Board members, staff and volunteers who have direct dealings with representatives from the private sector should engage in a professional, ethical and transparent manner always;
- Where a project or publication is fully or partially funded under a private sector funding arrangement, this must always be publicly acknowledged;
- Where funding has been provided to produce a resource, conference presentation, or other material the company must agree to have no editorial control;
- Invitations to participate in private sector sponsored events as a representative of HRA require HRA Board approval;
- Where partnership work is being undertaken, the company may seek input, but this must not compromise the independence of HRA;
- HRA does not forfeit its right to publicly challenge and/or criticise private sector companies regardless of funding arrangements;
- Gifts and gratuities should only be accepted subject to approval from the HRA Board.

Conclusion

This policy will ensure that private sector partnerships will only be undertaken in an ethical and meaningful way. Such working partnerships can be of great value and benefit. It is intended to make this policy available to all private sector companies seeking to or working with HRA.