

## **Australia and New Zealand Vasculitis Society Ltd (ANZVASC) Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to help board members of ANZVASC to effectively identify, disclose and manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest in order to protect the integrity of ANZVASC and manage risk.

### **2. Objective**

The ANZVASC Board (called the 'board' in this policy) aims to ensure that board members are aware of their obligations to disclose any conflicts of interest that they may have, and to comply with this policy to ensure they effectively manage those conflicts of interest as representatives of ANZVASC.

### **3. Scope**

This policy applies to the board members of ANZVASC.

### **4. Definition of conflicts of interests**

A conflict of interest occurs when a person's personal interests conflict with their responsibility to act in the best interests of the charity. Personal interests include direct interests as well as those of family, friends, or other organisations a person may be involved with or have an interest in (for example, as a shareholder). It also includes a conflict between a board member's duty to ANZVASC and another duty that the board member has (for example, to another charity). A conflict of interest may be actual, potential or perceived and may be financial or non-financial.

Situations in which a conflict of interests exists present the risk that a person will make a decision based on, or affected by, these influences, rather than in the best interests of ANZVASC and must be managed accordingly.

Involvement with industry-sponsored clinical trials, as an investigator, safety tester, or adviser, where there is no direct pecuniary award to the individual is not necessarily in itself considered a conflict of interest.

Examples of a conflict of interest include (but are not limited to):

- shareholdings (by you or your immediate family) in a company active in vasculitis
- paid employment, including paid consultancy, for a company active in vasculitis
- paid work (speakers fee/advisors fee) for a company active in vasculitis
- paid membership of a company advisory board active in vasculitis
- receipt of a travel grant, conference expenses or hospitality from a company active in vasculitis
- membership of a firm or corporation who may potentially derive direct benefit from allocation of funds from ANZVASC
- any other material interest (actual or perceived) in a matter relating to ANZVASC

## 5. Policy

This policy has been developed because conflicts of interest commonly arise, and do not necessarily present a problem to ANZVASC if they are openly and effectively managed. It is the policy of ANZVASC as well as a responsibility of the board, that ethical, legal, financial or other conflicts of interest be avoided but in the event that any such conflicts (where they do arise) do not conflict with the relevant board member's obligations to ANZVASC.

ANZVASC will manage conflicts of interest by requiring board members and other persons covered by this policy to:

- avoid conflicts of interest where possible
- identify and disclose any conflicts of interest that have arisen
- carefully manage any conflicts of interest, and
- follow this policy and respond to any breaches.

### 5.1 Responsibility of the board

The board is responsible for:

- establishing a system for identifying, disclosing and managing conflicts of interest across the charity
- monitoring compliance with this policy, and
- reviewing this policy on an annual basis to ensure that the policy is operating effectively.

ANZVASC must ensure that its board members are aware of the ACNC governance standards, particularly governance standard 5, and that they disclose any actual or perceived material conflicts of interests as required by governance standard 5.

### 5.2 Identification and disclosure of conflicts of interest

Once an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest is identified, it must be entered into ANZVASC's register of conflicts of interest, as well as being raised with the board. Where all of the board members share a conflict, the board should refer to governance standard 5 to ensure that proper disclosure occurs. The register of interests must be maintained by the Secretary of ANZVASC, and record information related to a conflict of interest (including the nature and extent of the conflict of interest and the steps taken to address it).

If an individual is in doubt as to whether they have a conflict of interest in a matter, that individual should seek the advice of the board as to whether the circumstances constitute a conflict of interest for the purposes of this policy.

Once a conflict (actual or perceived) has been on the register of interests for 3 years, the board must review and consider whether the actual or perceived conflict still exists. If conflict no longer exists, the register may be amended accordingly.

### **5.3 Confidentiality of disclosures**

Access to information regarding disclosures will be restricted to the board.

## **6. Action required for management of conflicts of interest**

### **6.1 Conflicts of interest of board members**

Once a conflict of interest has been appropriately disclosed, the board (excluding the board member disclosing and any other conflicted board member) must decide whether or not those conflicted board members should:

- vote on the matter (this is a minimum requirement),
- participate in any debate, or
- be present in the room during the debate and the voting.

In exceptional circumstances, such as where a conflict is very significant or likely to prevent a board member from regularly participating in discussions, the board should consider whether it is appropriate to suggest that the person conflicted resign from the board.

### **6.2 What should be considered when deciding what action to take**

- In deciding what approach to take, the board will consider whether the conflict needs to be avoided or simply documented
- whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making
- alternative options to avoid the conflict
- ANZVASC's objects and resources, and
- the possibility of creating an appearance of improper conduct that might impair confidence in, or the reputation of, ANZVASC.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of at least a majority of the board (excluding any conflicted board member/s) who are present and voting at the meeting. The action and result of the voting will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting and in the register of interests.

## **7. Compliance with this policy**

If the board has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances.

If it is found that this person has failed to comply with this policy, the board may take action against them. This may include seeking to terminate their membership of ANZVASC, including expulsion under clauses 5.8 and 5.9 of the ANZVASC Constitution.

If a board member suspects that another board member has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the matter must be referred to the chair of the board for further action.

This conflict of interest policy should be reviewed on a regular basis by the board to ensure it adequately addresses the issues facing ANZVASC.

### **Contacts**

For questions about this policy, contact the ANZVASC Chair by email: [anzvasc@gmail.com](mailto:anzvasc@gmail.com)

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