



# Position and Consensus Statement Policy

## PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy aims to establish an overarching and consistent approach for College in the development and promotion of College position and consensus statements.

## POLICY SCOPE

This policy applies to all staff and to College Officers involved in the development and promotion of College position and consensus statements, in line with the definition provided in this policy.

This policy is not applicable to media releases or other marketing-related outputs; government submissions; consumer resources or evidence-based clinical guidelines.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

This policy is based on the principle that any position or consensus statement released by College is a reflection of and adheres to the principles outlined in the College's Strategic Plan, Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy and ACD's Strategic Engagement Framework.

## DEFINITIONS

**Position statement:** an assertion of an official position held by College developed for the intention of public promulgation and is representative of the views of its Fellows. A position statement may refer, but is not restricted to, topics of dermatological interest and relevance, and where possible, will be evidence-based. Clinical, scientific, political, behavioural or cultural issues may be addressed where it is deemed strategically appropriate for College to assert a public position or where it is viewed as a responsibility of College to members and the community.

**Consensus statement:** an assertion of an official position held by College and Fellows developed for the intention of public promulgation, most commonly relating to a clinical topic for which supporting evidence may be lacking or of insufficient quality to establish evidence-based statements. Recommendations or views put forward have considered the strength of available evidence and have been reached by consensus of an expert group.

**Consensus group:** a representative group of College Fellows, experts in the relevant field or consumers who have been involved in the development and approval of consensus statements.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

- a) ACD will demonstrate, through the implementation of this policy, a commitment to represent the views and opinions of its members in College position and consensus statements with authenticity and integrity.
- b) Position and consensus statements will be developed with the intention of promoting and reflecting the views of College for the purposes of advocacy, education and communication, and promoting clinical best practice to support optimal outcomes in skin health across the community.
- c) The College will endeavour to ensure that clinical position and consensus statements will be supported by up-to-date and highest quality clinical and scientific evidence where available, and will set standards or recommendations in clinical practice where these may be otherwise lacking to assist health professionals in clinical decision-making.
- d) The Professional Standards Committee will have oversight of the conceptualisation, development, review and approval of College position and consensus statements and will be supported by the Manager Strategic Projects.
- e) For existing content, such as consensus statements published in the Australasian Journal of Dermatology or other outputs developed by College Fellows, all authors will be provided with the position or consensus statement for approval and author permission will be sought prior to publication with full acknowledgements.
- f) As the College is the copyright holder for all publications in the Australasian Journal of Dermatology (with the exception of the Open Access articles, which is covered by a separate Creative Commons license), publications can be used in the preparation of position and consensus statements with no prior permissions required from the publisher (Wiley). Such position and consensus statement will cite the original publication and will contain a link to the Wiley-hosted version.
- g) Proposed topics for new position or consensus statements will be drawn from emerging issues including but not limited to: dermatology; medicine, science and research; health services and models of care; policy and legislation; and other topical political or cultural issues of interest.
- h) Proposed topics will be identified through methods such as systematic environment scanning of relevant databases, media monitoring and stakeholder engagement including the College membership. Topics will be considered and prioritised by the Professional Standards Committee, informed by a summary of the supporting evidence base and an assessment of evidence quality, developed by the Manager Strategic Projects.
- i) Resource requirements or constraints will be considered in the selection of priority topics, such as engagement of an external contractor if lengthy evidence reviews are required. Projected budgets and expenditure will require formal approval from the Chief Executive Officer.
- j) Position and consensus statements will be developed by a panel of Fellows with relevant expertise nominated by the Professional Standards Committee and supported by the

Manager Strategic Projects. If required, additional insight or expertise may be sought by external health professionals or consumers, such as members of the Community Engagement Advisory Committee.

- k) Where insufficient evidence is available to support the development of a clinical position statement, a consensus group will be established by the Professional Standards Committee. An agreed methodology for reaching consensus will be documented prior to development of the statement and will be included in the final publication.
- l) All position and consensus statements will include the following within its structure: a summary statement of purpose; intended audience; background, context or rationale; methodology; guidance or recommendations; references; author or committee/group acknowledgments and permissions; endorsement; disclaimer; and date of approval and next review.
- m) Position and consensus statements will include the following disclaimer:  
This statement reflects the general views of The Australasian College of Dermatologists at the date of release and may be subject to amendment to reflect emerging clinical and scientific evidence. This information provides educational information and is not intended as a substitute for individual patient assessment. Practitioners are advised to interpret and apply recommendations according to the needs and circumstances of each patient.  
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Relevant policies which are publicly available to be issued to others outside of the College will carry the appropriate legal disclaimer as follows:

This document has been prepared having regard to general circumstances, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to have express regard to the particular circumstances of each case, and the application of this document in each case.

Professional documents are reviewed from time to time, and it is the responsibility of the practitioner to ensure that the practitioner has obtained the current version. Professional documents have been prepared having regard to the information available at the time of their preparation, and the practitioner should therefore have regard to any information, research or material which may have been published or become available subsequently.

Whilst the College endeavours to ensure that professional documents are as current as possible at the time of their preparation, it takes no responsibility for matters arising from changed circumstances or information or material which may have become available subsequently.

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- n) A promotion and dissemination strategy will be developed prior to public release to identify relevant target audiences and strategic mechanisms for promotion, with reference to the ACD Risk Management Policy.
- o) For topics which are deemed potentially sensitive, contentious or divisive with respect to public opinion or amongst health professionals, a risk analysis and mitigation strategy will be developed to inform the decision of the Professional Standards Committee to proceed with development or release.

- p) While position and consensus statements are developed with full consideration of the latest evidence, these documents will be viewed as fluid and subject to amendment or revision to reflect changes in the clinical, policy or media landscape.

## APPROVAL AUTHORITIES AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

The following authorities are delegated under this policy:

Policy Category	Approve new policy and major amendment		Approve minor amendments	
	Authority	Reporting Requirements	Authority	Reporting Requirements
Member Policy	Professional Standards Committee	Board for noting	Manager Strategic Projects	Chair, Professional Standards Committee

### Control Requirements

Policy Number :	MEM#16-02
Approval Authority:	Professional Standards Committee
Responsible Officer:	Manager Strategic Projects
Designated Officer:	Manager Strategic Projects
First approved:	23 December 2016
Last amended	N/A
Effective Start date	23 December 2016
Review date	23 December 2019
Revision frequency:	3 yearly

### RELATED DOCUMENTS

Strategic Engagement Framework

Consumer and Community Engagement Policy

Planned Approach to Policy and Advocacy

Professional Standards Committee Charter (in development)

Risk Management Policy