

Policy Statement 6.20 – Social Responsibility

Position Summary

The Australian Dental Association has a commitment to ethical and professional standards and, as an employment entity itself, acknowledges it has a cultural and social responsibility and promotes such behaviour amongst its members and the wider community.

1. Background

- 1.1. Australia is made up of people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds. Our rich society is derived from the special and unique culture of our indigenous population to our more recent members from around the globe. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) recognises the cultural and legislative support for all Australians to be treated equitably and without discrimination.
- 1.2. The ADA and its member dentists have a long-standing commitment to ethical and professional standards and practice and have historically helped those in need both in Australia and overseas with assistance such as financial aid, scholarships and volunteer efforts. They have a proud history of proactively and ethically advocating for oral health.
- 1.3. The ADA's objects as enshrined in its Constitution include encouraging the improvement of the oral and general health of the public and advancing and promoting the ethics, art and science of dentistry.
- 1.4. Health is considered a central human right and so all Australians should have access to basic resources for health
- 1.5. Prevention of disease is physically, socially, culturally, economically, psychologically and ethically more desirable than treatment. Much of dental disease is preventable.
- 1.6. A Code of Ethics is an essential requirement for a profession to inform the ethical practice standards expected of its members.
- 1.7. The environmental impact of dental care delivery should be minimised.
- 1.8. There are individuals and communities that cannot adequately fund their dental treatment who require the benevolent support of the wider community.
- 1.9. The ADA is politically neutral and has no allegiance to any political party.
- 1.10. International Standard ISO/FDIS Guidance on Social Responsibility was published in 2010 (Appendix).

Definitions

- 1.11. DEVELOPMENT AID is material or logistical assistance, which seeks to address the underlying socioeconomic factors which may lead to crises or emergencies.
- 1.12. HUMANITARIAN AID is material or logistical assistance provided for humanitarian purposes, typically in response to humanitarian crises including natural disaster and man-made disaster.
- 1.13. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY is an ethical ideology or theory that an entity, be it an organization or individual, has an obligation to act to benefit society at large.

- 1.14. SUSTAINABILITY is improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting eco-systems.

2. Position

- 2.1. Dentistry should be practised in a way that is culturally-sensitive, non-discriminatory and socially responsible.
- 2.2. Employees and employers should treat each other fairly and within the standards set out by jurisdictional legislation.
- 2.3. The ADA governance system should reflect the principles of social responsibility in its policies, procedures and protocols as guided by ISO 26000:2010 (Appendix).
- 2.4. The ADA must have a Code of Ethics for its members and a mechanism for its enforcement.
- 2.5. Promotion of water fluoridation and other oral health preventive measures should be advocated.
- 2.6. The ADA should be politically non-partisan and should not make political donations.
- 2.7. The ADA should advocate for the protection of Patient health, safety and privacy.
- 2.8. The ADA should provide a patient support and dispute resolution service. .
- 2.9. The ADA should support dental practices in minimising their environmental impact.
- 2.10. The ADA, Branches and members should be provided with up to date human resources information.
- 2.11. The ADA must manage its funds responsibly.
- 2.12. The ADA should provide:
 - a safe and non-discriminatory work environment;
 - resources for development and humanitarian aid including support for volunteers;
 - rural student scholarships;
 - aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student scholarships; and
 - funding for oral health promotion

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Appendix to Policy Statement 6.20 Social Responsibility – ISO 26000:2010

It provides guidance to all types of organizations, regardless of their size or location, on:

- concepts, terms and definitions related to social responsibility;
- the background, trends and characteristics of social responsibility;
- principles and practices relating to social responsibility;
- the core subjects and issues of social responsibility;
- integrating, implementing and promoting socially responsible behaviour throughout the organization and, through its policies and practices, within its sphere of influence;
- identifying and engaging with stakeholders; and
- communicating commitments, performance and other information related to social responsibility.

ISO 26000:2010 is intended to assist organizations in contributing to sustainable development. It is intended to encourage them to go beyond legal compliance, recognizing that compliance with law is a fundamental duty of any organization and an essential part of their social responsibility. It is intended to promote common understanding in the field of social responsibility, and to complement other instruments and initiatives for social responsibility, not to replace them.

In applying ISO 26000:2010, it is advisable that an organization take into consideration societal, environmental, legal, cultural, political and organizational diversity, as well as differences in economic conditions, while being consistent with international norms of behaviour.

ISO 26000:2010 is not a management system standard. It is not intended or appropriate for certification purposes or regulatory or contractual use. Any offer to certify, or claims to be certified, to ISO 26000 would be a misrepresentation of the intent and purpose and a misuse of ISO 26000:2010. As ISO 26000:2010 does not contain requirements, any such certification would not be a demonstration of conformity with ISO 26000:2010.

ISO 26000:2010 is intended to provide organizations with guidance concerning social responsibility and can be used as part of public policy activities. However, for the purposes of the Marrakech Agreement establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO), it is not intended to be interpreted as an “international standard”, “guideline” or “recommendation”, nor is it intended to provide a basis for any presumption or finding that a measure is consistent with WTO obligations. Further, it is not intended to provide a basis for legal actions, complaints, defences or other claims in any international, domestic or other proceeding, nor is it intended to be cited as evidence of the evolution of customary international law.

ISO 26000:2010 is not intended to prevent the development of national standards that are more specific, more demanding, or of a different type.