

Review of the Healthway Co-Sponsorship Policy – Summary for Stakeholders

In late 2012 the Board of Healthway resolved to commission an independent Review of the Co-Sponsorship Policy.

A sub-committee of Board members selected Quantum Consulting Australia (QCA) to undertake the Review, which commenced in March 2013. QCA's findings and recommendations were considered by the Board over the second half of 2013.

The Board has accepted the findings of the Review and endorsed most of the reviewer's recommendations. Healthway would like to share the more significant findings of the Review with stakeholders and outline the recommendations endorsed by the Board.

Background to the Review

The Co-Sponsorship Policy was first adopted in 2004 and previously reviewed in 2010. The policy is designed to reduce the promotion of unhealthy brands through sport and arts activities and events in Western Australia and minimise the risk that Healthway objectives will be undermined by the presence of other sponsors.

The agreed Terms of Reference for the Review included examining:

1. The rationale for the Co-Sponsorship Policy;
2. The effectiveness of the Co-Sponsorship Policy as a strategy to support Healthway objectives;
3. Any potential unintended consequences of the Co-Sponsorship Policy ;
4. The relevance of the Co-Sponsorship Policy to the broader health promotion agenda; and
5. Opportunities to improve Co-sponsorship implementation approaches.

Key Findings of the Review (grouped by terms of reference)

1. Rationale for the Policy

The reviewer found that:

- The scientific evidence for the Policy is strong.
- A significant level of public concern and discussion has developed around sponsorship by alcohol and fast food companies. This level of community interest and concern lends strong support to the relevance of the Policy.
- The Policy is appropriate and reflective of Healthway's strategic positioning as an agent of change in moving community thinking and action.

2. Effectiveness of the Policy as a strategy to support Healthway Objectives

The reviewer found that:

- The Policy has delivered a combination of direct and indirect positive outcomes. These include:
 - The Policy has stimulated organisations to consider the appropriateness and broader ramifications of sponsorship arrangements.

- The Policy has helped stimulate public debate on the inappropriateness of alcohol and fast food sponsorship.
- The Policy facilitates applications from organisations keen to be aligned with Healthway objectives.
- The Policy has worked to direct Healthway funding to those organisations that best advance health promotion objectives.
- The Policy has had an effect of maximising the return on Healthway's investment of public funds.
- The Co-Sponsorship Policy sits comfortably with and is aligned to Healthway's strategic objectives.

3. Potential unintended consequences of the Co-Sponsorship Policy

The reviewer found that:

- Healthway's total annual sponsorship investment in sport and arts activities has not decreased since the Policy was last reviewed in 2010.
- The Policy has not deterred organisations from applying for Healthway sponsorship. Demand for Healthway sponsorship has continued (and grown) since the Policy was introduced.
- The substantial demand for sponsorship provides Healthway with significant flexibility in removing unhealthy brands from organisations partnered by Healthway.
- The general uptrend in sport and arts participation rates does not support claims by a small number of stakeholders that the Policy has had a negative impact on participation in sport or the arts.

4. Relevance of the Co-Sponsorship Policy in the broader health promotion agenda

The reviewer found that:

- When the Policy was first introduced it was innovative, with few other organisations taking a similar approach to sponsorship supported by a well-developed risk assessment process. By 2013 acceptance of the Co-Sponsorship Policy had increased and there is now growing public interest and discussion regarding concerns about alcohol and fast food sponsorship.
- In addition, other health promotion agencies have more recently introduced objectives and programs similar to those of Healthway.

5. Opportunities to improve Co-sponsorship implementation approaches

The reviewer found that:

- There is scope for Healthway to adopt a firmer stance (including withholding a portion of the sponsorship) in circumstances where a sponsored organisation has breached contract obligations relating to co-sponsorship issues.
- In an environment where demand significantly exceeds available sponsorship funding, this provides Healthway with some flexibility to increase its expectations of sponsored organisations.
- Healthway's Grants Management System (GMS) could be better used to monitor co-sponsorship trends and conditions.
- There is scope for Healthway to collect more information regarding Co-Sponsors at the application stage.

Significant Recommendations of the Review endorsed by Healthway's Board

- The Board has decided to revise the Co-Sponsorship Policy to further strengthen its effectiveness in reducing the promotion of unhealthy brands. Specifically, the reference in the Policy to the “quarantining” of unhealthy brands or messages has been deleted from the Policy.

This decision acknowledges the growing body of evidence indicating that young people cannot be effectively quarantined from unhealthy promotions associated with an organisation's other activities involving adults or elite athletes/performers.

- The Healthy Participation category of sponsorship has been absorbed into the Message Promotion category, with Healthway to continue a flexible approach in regards to expectations for message promotion opportunities to suit the practicalities and circumstances of any particular sponsorship.

This decision ensures Healthway will continue to support participation in healthy sport or arts activities, while emphasising that the primary focus of the Sponsorship Program is to extend the reach of health promotion campaigns.

- Ongoing approaches to implement the Co-Sponsorship Policy were noted and supported. In particular, the Board supported the current approach to reviewing the Minimum Health Policy Requirements, management of Co-Sponsorship contract conditions, and sponsorship application requirements.

Summary

An independent Review of the Co-Sponsorship Policy has found that the rationale and supporting evidence for the Policy is strong. Furthermore, the Policy has been very effective in terms of providing support for Healthway objectives.

In order to strengthen the effectiveness of the Co-Sponsorship Policy, the Board of Healthway has approved a small number of changes to the Policy and its implementation.

The revised Co-Sponsorship Policy and Guidelines can be viewed at <http://www.healthway.wa.gov.au/programs/co-sponsorship-policy-and-guidelines>

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers regarding the Healthway Sponsorship Program can be viewed at <http://www.healthway.wa.gov.au/docs/programs/sponsorship-program-faqs.pdf>

Any questions regarding the Co-Sponsorship Policy can be directed to healthway@healthway.wa.gov.au