

# 2026 ARCS

## ANNUAL CONFERENCE

### Charter of Respect

#### Conference Purpose

The ARCS Annual Conference is the largest conference on regulation, reimbursement, clinical research and utilisation of medical technologies and therapeutics in the Australia/New Zealand region. Its primary purpose is educational and aims to provide a neutral forum for debate and discussion around processes, policies and the future of the industry.

Delegates represent a cross section of professionals working in academia, government, biotech and pharmaceutical companies, hospitals and healthcare settings and other organisations across the disciplines of clinical research, regulatory affairs, pharmacovigilance, medical affairs/MSLs, medical technology, health economics and quality/good manufacturing practice.

#### Context for Consumer Participation in the Conference

The NHMRC Statement on Consumer and Community Involvement in Health and Medical Research<sup>a</sup> recognises the active involvement of consumers and community members in health and medical research benefits the quality and direction of research. Medicines Australia is committed to enhancing its relationship with health consumers and continues to actively engage with key consumer groups to better understand their needs and issues. Its Working Together Guide<sup>b</sup> developed with Consumers Health Forum of Australia aims to provide guidance on building a collaborative relationship between individuals, health consumer organisations and pharmaceutical companies based on effort, openness, trust and respect.

ARCS recognises the growing and important role of consumers in health and medical research, and the therapeutics industry. ARCS has been working with organisations/businesses to make available scholarships to support the inclusion of consumer participants at the Annual Conference since 2019.

#### Charter Purpose

This Charter of Respect has been developed to ensure the ARCS conference continues to serve its purpose and to facilitate the interaction of industry employees and consumers. Industry employees may be subject to legislation<sup>c, d</sup> and industry codes<sup>e, f, g</sup> and may not previously have had the opportunity to interact with consumers in a professional capacity and who may be unfamiliar with the therapeutics environment and its strict controls. All attendees of the ARCS conference are asked to acknowledge and adhere to the Charter Principles in all conference-related activities, to ensure a safe and enjoyable conference experience for everyone.

In the event that a conference attendee's behaviour is inconsistent with the Charter Principles, ARCS Australia reserves the right to remove and ban an attendee from the remainder of the conference without refund of registration fees.

## Charter Principles

1. The core of being respectful is showing you value other people's perspectives, time and space. Differences between people are what makes life interesting. Have curiosity about the perspectives of others, and remain civil and respectful when you don't understand or differ in views.
2. Language, non-verbal cues and communication styles matters. Seek to understand, be understood, be courteous, and respectful in your communications with each other.
3. Everyone has a story, wears different hats. The label of 'consumer' on a badge is not an invitation to ask someone their story, any more than the label of 'company X' is an invitation to ask about or share experiences with that company's products or services. Respect individuals' privacy and professional obligations to industry codes or regulations.
4. The ARCS conference purpose is primarily educational not promotional. Speakers should be mindful of regulations and codes <sup>(c-h)</sup>, and not name individual products unless necessary to illustrate a point for educational purposes or discussions around process improvement.
5. ARCS conference speakers may disclose information about things that go wrong or need improvement to educate and drive discussion around change. Such examples are not to be misused for the purposes of bringing the individuals, their organisations or the industry into disrepute. Attendees should respect any requests by speakers to keep such information confidential and refrain from sharing it on social media or other public domains when asked.
6. Social media is a powerful platform for sharing learnings and dissemination of information. ARCS encourages attendees to share content (subject to the approval of speakers) using the hashtag #ARCSAus. All attendees should consider the basic principles of confidentiality, privacy, discrimination and respect before posting any content on social media. Consciously reflect in advance on the tone, context and accuracy of social posts, as well as how they may be perceived or interpreted in the public domain outside the context of the conference.
7. At the end of each day, conference attendees have the opportunity to informally network and socialise over drinks and/or food. ARCS encourage the responsible serving and consumption of alcohol during these events, in order to maintain a safe and enjoyable environment for all attendees.
8. In the event that conflict or unacceptable behaviour arises at any time during the conference or social event, parties should raise the issue as soon as possible with a session chair and/or a member of the ARCS team, as appropriate to the timing/nature of the incident.

## References

- a. NHMRC Statement on consumer and community involvement in health and medical research <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/statement-consumer-and-community-involvement-health-and-medical-research>
- b. Medicines Australia Working Together Guide <https://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/community/health-consumer-advocacy-and-support/working-together-guide/>
- c. Therapeutics Goods regulatory framework <https://www.tga.gov.au/how-therapeutic-goods-are-regulated-australia>
- d. Therapeutic Goods Advertising Code <https://www.tga.gov.au/publication/therapeutic-goods-advertising-code>
- e. Medicines Australia Code of Conduct <https://www.medicinesaustralia.com.au/code/about-the-code/>
- f. MTAA Code of Practice <https://www.mtaa.org.au/code-of-practice>
- g. ASMI Code of Practice <https://www.chpaustralia.com.au/About/Code>