



## **AUSTRALIAN RESPIRATORY COUNCIL POLICY STATEMENT ON ADVOCACY**

This Policy Statement on Advocacy outlines the Australian Respiratory Council's (ARC's) commitment to advocacy as a tool in advancing ARC's mission to prevent and reduce vulnerability through improved lung health. In the context of ARC's mission, vulnerability pertains to physical, social or economic disadvantage. This Policy is informed by:

- The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) Code of Conduct, in particular the compliance requirement in regard to contributing to systematic change
- The Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) guidelines on advocacy.

Advocacy consists of activities undertaken to change the systematic and structural causes of poverty and disadvantage which may include; campaigning, lobbying, research, policy positions, alliances and use of the media. These activities may occur both in Australia and overseas. Advocacy includes the application of a set of strategies conducted as part of an agency's overall predominant purpose.

ARC will at all time be mindful of the regulatory requirements that relate to advocacy for charitable organisations. Charitable organisations must operate for public benefit, rather than the private benefit of individuals or members. Where advocacy activities are directed at the general public there is likely public benefit to be gained. In accordance with the ACNC guidelines, a charity's advocacy work may include:

- Making submissions or giving evidence in relation to existing or proposed laws, government policies or practices
- Generating public debate about or seeking explanation of current or proposed laws, government policies or practices
- Distributing information on, analysing or comparing party policies as they relate to a charity's purposes
- Publishing research on current or proposed laws, government policies or practices
- Directly promoting the charity's purpose, or the interests of their beneficiaries, to elected representatives and public officials, or
- Hosting, promoting or participating in public debates on law or policy matters.

There are 'disqualifying purposes' which impact on an organisation's charitable status with the ACNC. These include ensuring that the organisation does not:

- Engage in, or promote, activities that are unlawful
- Engage in, or promote, activities that are contrary to public policy, or

- Promote or oppose a political party or candidate for political office.

The ARC's advocacy role is aimed at persuading and influencing decision makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles.

The core objectives that ARC seeks to achieve in undertaking advocacy include:

- Gaining public policy change and better outcomes for vulnerable and marginalised people
- Achieving greater visibility and understanding of ARC's values and activities among decision makers and opinion leaders
- Increasing public support for the mission of ARC.

In persuading and influencing decision makers and opinion leaders, ARC will:

- Focus on the needs and perspectives of vulnerable and marginalised people
- Use a range of tools and actions including engaging at times with partners, and ensuring that the rights of affected local people are protected during advocacy campaigns
- Leverage ARC's role.

ARC advocacy will at all times be characterised by the following:

- Persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable and marginalised people
- Employing appropriate tools and actions. Strong advocacy includes trust building and confidential representations as well as advice to and liaison with decision makers
- Implementing public forms of advocacy, through information and education campaigns, where they complement ARC's mission
- Avoiding advocacy that brings direct public conflict with the public authorities in order to avoid where possible, negative impact on ARC's work. Public advocacy will aim to empower those most affected by the issue in local communities to advocate for themselves
- Ensuring that advocacy is based on evidence and draws on organisational knowledge, experience and expertise, utilising rigorous research methodologies and processes
- Leverage ARC's status to enhance its advocacy activities, influence policy decisions, direct resource allocation and generate positive social change for vulnerable and marginalised people.

Adopted by the Board of Directors on: 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

To be reviewed annually commencing May 2020