



**Healthy
Cities**
Illawarra

Corporate Funding and Partnerships Statement.





Our Mission:

To improve **ALL** health outcomes for **ALL** communities.

Our Values:

- Integrity - Equity - Collaboration - Inclusion

Healthy Cities Illawarra (HCI) is proud of the public trust we have built over nearly four decades through our clear mission and values aligned actions. HCI seeks to work with organisations which align with our mission, purpose and objectives; we are cautious about entering into partnerships that may be perceived to endorse an organisation with unethical business practices, offer products which are harmful to the health and well-being of people and/or the planet, and that do not align with our mission and values. This applies to partnerships including funding, research, advocacy and other forms of support.

There are many factors which impact on the health and well-being of people and a sustainable planet.

Social determinants are the non-medical factors where people live, work, and play such as education, income, housing, food security, social inclusion and access to services. Understanding these and trying to redress them in the structural fabric of our society is important because socio-economic disadvantage is strongly correlated with poor health status, quality of life and life expectancy.

Commercial determinants relate to the provision of goods or services for payment such as commercial activities and the environments that these occur in. Corporate decisions such as production, pricing and marketing influence behaviours and health outcomes. The promotion of products and behaviours that undermine the health of people and communities is highly problematic. Highly profitable companies exert influence through sophisticated marketing and lobbying, and again, it is the most vulnerable in our communities who are significantly affected. This is in direct conflict with the mission and values of HCI.

Managing potential or real **conflicts of interests** is a tricky challenge for many public health organisations and charities as partnerships with corporate entities can provide opportunities for both parties. For the charity, this could include access to funding, an increased supporter base and enhanced visibility and marketability. For the corporate, this could be volunteering or other opportunities for staff who want to 'make a difference'. Corporates can also benefit by enhancing the goodwill and reputation of their brand, or their social licence to operate (SLO) and the opportunity to deliver on corporate environmental, social and governance (ESG) objectives.

The wicked problems HCI faces are vast; their solutions are many. We have attempted to be transparent in our funding and partnership positions below citing the breadth of issues and different caveats we encounter. The following is a summary of our position in relation to certain industries and sectors based on alignment with our mission and key objectives. HCI however reserves the right to consider partnership opportunities on a case-by-case basis, where a blanket-rule could be excessively restrictive or unfair.

Healthy Cities. Healthy People.

Issue:

Our Position:

1. TOBACCO, INCLUDING VAPES

HCI will not accept funding or other forms of support from tobacco companies. There is a plethora of evidence that smoking and vaping is harmful to human health causing cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. We note the deceptive and covert marketing and promotional strategies of tobacco companies over decades, particularly to young people, which continue to cause disease and death.

2. ALCOHOL

HCI will not accept funding or other forms of support from alcohol companies. Alcohol misuse impacts the physical, mental, social and economic health of individuals, families and communities causing disease, injury and death and is a significant contributing factor in crime, motor vehicle crashes, domestic and family violence. We note the powerful and attractive marketing, sponsorship and promotional strategies of alcohol companies over decades, particularly to young people, which continue to perpetuate social norms.

2. FOOD & DRINKS

Broadly speaking, HCI will not accept funding or other forms of support from junk food/drink companies. Such food and drinks are those which are high in energy (kilojoules), sugar, fat, and salt) but low in nutrients (vitamins and minerals). Unhealthy diets, being overweight and obese cause a plethora of chronic diseases in children and adults such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. The pervasive nature and sheer volume of advertising and marketing of unhealthy food and drinks to children is at insidious levels – 23% of children aged 5-16 are overweight or obese which will continue to impact healthcare costs in a public health system that is already buckling under high demand and pressure.

However, sometimes, companies manufacture and market a range of products, thus HCI will consider funding and support opportunities on a case-by-case basis. For example, Nestle has over 2,000 brands and whilst HCI may not support confectionery, we do support healthy breakfast cereals.

2. GAMBLING

Broadly speaking, HCI will not accept funding or other forms of support from companies whose primary business is gambling such betting agencies, casinos, or related manufacturing industries.

Gambling is a public health concern because it causes physical, social and mental health harms for individuals, families and communities. Gambling is linked to alcohol misuse, anxiety, depression, self-harm, family and relationship breakdowns and financial insecurity. The average amount a problem gambler loses per year is \$21,000. The profits from gaming machines in NSW were a record figure of \$4.3 billion in just a 6-month period in 2022. Consistent with other social issues, gambling affects vulnerable people and those in low socio-economic demographics the most.

HCI notes the powerful and pervasive marketing, sponsorship and promotional strategies of gambling companies, particularly to young males via sport and social media, which continue to contribute to physical, social and mental health harms.

HCI recognises the prevalence and impact of gambling through secondary venues, particularly poker machines in pubs and clubs. We also note the combined effect of gambling and alcohol within these venues. Pubs and clubs are also multifaceted in nature and play a variety of roles in society such as centres for social interaction, entertainment, community

engagement, some promote physical activity through sport and others even operate as emergency hubs in natural disasters. We also acknowledge that some clubs are committed to their social responsibility and have taken voluntary steps such as the removal of poker machines. Clubs and pubs also provide funding to community groups through the ClubGrants program. ClubGrants was established in 1998 to ensure registered clubs in NSW with profits over \$1 million contribute financial or in-kind support to local community services, programs, and projects.

We also acknowledge that pooled funding such as the ClubsGrants program can therefore be problematic due to the mixed origins and interests represented.

Disclosure: HCI has previously applied for and accepted funding from ClubsGrants.

HCI will not seek to fund new programs through the ClubsGrants program. We will however maintain this funding to support our current programs unless alternative reliable sources can be secured (approx. \$30k per year). We believe the absence of our programs in vulnerable communities if we were to withdraw would have immediate negative effects.

HCI will consider any future partnerships with pubs and clubs on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the values and social responsibility demonstrated by individual venues.

5. FOSSIL FUELS

HCI acknowledges that fossil fuels have been instrumental in powering industrialization, economic growth, and technological advancements that have improved the quality of life for billions of people worldwide and our Illawarra region, in particular.

Yet the impact on human and planetary health is devastating and we support the urgent transition to cleaner and more sustainable energy sources. Investing in renewable energy technologies such as solar, wind, hydro, green hydrogen and geothermal power is crucial for mitigating the impacts of climate change, reducing dependency on finite resources, and fostering a more resilient and sustainable energy infrastructure.

HCI will consider any future partnerships with the energy and manufacturing sector, including their supply chains, on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the values and social responsibility demonstrated by individual companies.

We believe that as a declared Renewable Energy Zone and 'transition community', that the social and economic health and wellbeing of our communities will be impacted in this transition. HCI is willing to partner with companies that are committed to working towards a renewable future, playing a role in community engagement and in building the capacity of our community to make healthy, informed decisions which enable climate recovery and a healthier planet.

