

Portfolio	People and Culture	Ref. No.	REL-HRS-049
Department	People and Culture		
Title	Responsible Approach to Alcohol		

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The **objectives** of this policy are to:

- Reflect RACS' commitment to maintaining a respectful and safe working and learning environment;
- Set out RACS' commitment to the responsible management of alcohol service and consumption;
- Set out RACS' commitment to provide an inclusive environment for all staff, Fellows, Trainees and IMGs who choose not to consume alcohol;
- Set out expectations of employees and Fellows with respect to the service and consumption of alcohol while on RACS premises;
- Set out expectations of employees and Fellows with respect to the service and consumption of alcohol while performing duties for RACS or representing RACS at outside events; and
- Protect RACS staff, trainees and Fellows from alcohol related harm.

In recognising that workplace health and safety issues require a 'whole of workplace' approach, this policy applies to all RACS people including:

- employees;
- surgeons performing RACS business whether in a paid or unpaid capacity;
- contractors/consultants;
- program volunteers;
- sub-contractors involved in program delivery;
- Council and committee members; and
- Trainees, SIMGs, junior doctors, invited speakers and guests including course attendees and faculty.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- RACS is a strong public advocate for highlighting the harm that alcohol can cause in the community and to the health of individuals.
- RACS policies reflect the leadership role we hold in the community and our mission to improve patient outcomes.
- RACS recognises that events and ceremonies are an important part of celebrating special occasions, commemorations and maintaining working and social relationships. When managed safely and responsibly, alcohol can be viewed as a symbolic part of celebrations and traditions and can contribute to a successful event or occasion.
- RACS acknowledges that its workforce is unique in that it is made up of paid employees and pro-bono surgeons.
- We are mindful that in both work and social settings a power imbalance may exist between Fellows and employees, and Fellows and trainees/SIMGs, medical students and junior doctors.
- It is the responsibility of all RACS people to uphold the highest standards of behaviour when performing any service, whether paid or unpaid, on behalf of RACS within the workplace or at events, including after work hours.
- To uphold the integrity of business decisions, the end to the business meeting will be signalled before the social component of the meeting / event commences

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3. BODY OF POLICY

3.1. Employer Duty of Care

Employers have a duty of care under occupational health and safety legislation in both Australia and New Zealand to protect all RACS people from any known health and safety risks. This includes risks to both physical and mental health.

RACS requires that RACS people follow this policy and the Code of Conduct at all times, and:

- Take reasonable precautions for their own health and safety, and that of other staff or guests;
- Refrain from any conduct which could adversely affect professional performance or the safety and well-being of themselves or others, including alcohol or substance abuse or misuse;
- Engage in conduct that is respectful of difference and does not discriminate,
- Avoid behaviour that may be reasonably perceived as harassing, intimidating, overbearing, bullying or physically or emotionally threatening; and
- Uphold the name and reputation of RACS, and refrain from acting in a way that would unfairly harm its reputation; including preserving appropriate confidentiality of College information.

It is critical that all RACS people comply with these requirements to ensure that RACS can meet its safety obligations.

3.2. Approach to Events

Social functions, dinners, ceremonial events and all other RACS-related events are sufficiently work-related to fall under a range of legislation and RACS policies including, but not limited to, occupational health and safety legislation, discrimination legislation and the RACS Workforce Conduct Policy. This means that inappropriate conduct at an event can lead to legal liability and prosecution, just like conduct in the workplace. RACS will take reasonable steps to ensure all RACS people are free from harassment, discrimination, injury and violence.

To minimise the risk of alcohol related harm RACS will:

- Observe all relevant regulatory requirements of the jurisdiction in which the event occurs;
- Conduct a risk assessment before each event and identify a senior Fellow and senior member of staff to act as 'event managers';
- Permit the responsible service of alcohol in an environment that is free of inducement and social pressure to consume it;
- Provide a range of workplace functions and events that would not normally be associated with alcohol, e.g. breakfasts and morning teas;
- Clearly define the start and finish time for each event. Alcohol will only be served during these specified hours;
- Communicate this policy in advance to all attendees and speakers at events;
- Ensure that low alcohol and no alcohol beverages are available and are as equally or more accessible than alcoholic beverages;
- Ensure that water is provided [at no cost/at a lower cost] than alcoholic beverages;
- For ticketed events, a 'no alcohol package' option should be provided at a lower cost;

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- For ticketed events when alcohol is included in the price, there should be service breaks, especially in table service events of more than two hours duration. Glasses should not be topped up in table service but refilled when empty and requested by a guest;
- Anyone serving alcohol at a RACS event should hold a Responsible Service of Alcohol Certificate (Aus); 'Serve Wise' certification (NZ);
- For social events of more than two hours in duration, ensure that a range of substantial food options are provided. Substantial food means a minimum of hot or cold platter or buffet-style foods, and does not include nut/chip/dip/cheese options alone;
- Alcohol service should cease during speeches and formalities;
- The cost of alcohol products must be reasonable and the purchase of high cost premium items is not permissible;
- Outside the dinner/event period, staff and Fellows must pay for any alcoholic drinks, whether at a bar or from a room's minibar; and
- Only authorized RACS staff may pay for alcohol on RACS credit cards. All other alcohol purchases must be claimed through the appropriate Finance reimbursement process.

3.3. RACS Business Meetings

There shall be no alcohol served or consumed during the formal business component of any meeting or educational event. The end of the business meeting will be clearly signalled before the social component commences in line with the above guidelines.

4. RELATED POLICIES

- Code of Conduct
- Discrimination, Bullying and Sexual Harassment Policy
- RACS Workforce Conduct Policy
- Expense Reimbursement Policy

Approver CEO
Authoriser Council