

# Working Together: Patient Groups and Pharmaceutical Companies



Stronger healthcare outcomes come from collaboration built on trust and clarity.

## Why Partnerships Matter

When patient organisations and pharmaceutical companies work together, the results can be powerful. Patient organisations bring lived experience and community insight, while companies contribute scientific knowledge and resources. Together, they can share information, support independent projects, and advocate for change - leading to better, more responsive healthcare.

## The Role of the Code

The Medicines Australia Code of Conduct sets the ground rules for how companies engage with patients and patient organisations. It encourages positive, transparent relationships but also reinforces the law: companies cannot promote prescription medicines to the public, nor patients or patient organisations. This ensures communication stays ethical, non-promotional, and focused on patient safety.

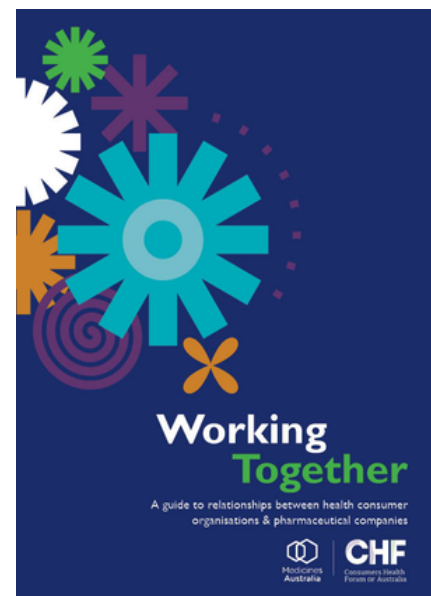
## Principles for Collaboration

**The Working Together Guide (WTG)** outlines the principles that underpin strong partnerships between patient organisations and the pharmaceutical industry.

These include:

- Respecting and valuing the patient perspective
- Having a clear purpose
- Maintaining independence
- Acting with transparency and accountability
- Upholding integrity
- Respecting confidentiality

These principles make sure patients have a voice in how healthcare solutions are developed while keeping relationships ethical and balanced.



For a more detailed understanding of how the pharmaceutical industry and patient organisations work together, please visit the **Working Together Guide** available on the [Medicines Australia website](https://www.medicinesaustralia.org.au/working-together).

# Practical Things to Keep in Mind

## Timeliness

Collaboration takes time. Companies often need compliance and legal reviews, and patient groups may face their own delays. Allowing enough time ensures decisions are well considered.

## Contracts and Proposals

Legal contracts are a useful tool to make sure that there is a clear agreement about collaboration on projects. Proposals may need changes to meet compliance requirements, and companies generally can't fund activities that have already started.

## Local and Global Differences

All companies in Australia must follow Australian law and the Code, but each has its own internal rules, often shaped by global policies. If something isn't clear, it's always worth asking.

Funding Requests: Processes differ as some companies use portals and formal templates, others accept letters of request. Each company has its own way of approving, paying, and reporting funding.

## Confidentiality

Sometimes confidentiality agreements are needed to protect sensitive information. This is common practice across many sectors and helps build trust.

## Trust and Transparency

Transparency about funding is critical for public trust. Companies must publish any financial support they make to patient organisations, and the Code sets strict standards to ensure openness and accountability.