



DIETITIANS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

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18 February 2015

Ms Michele Simon  
Eat Drink Politics  
[michele@eatdrinkpolitics.com](mailto:michele@eatdrinkpolitics.com)

Dear Ms Simon,  
The Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) noticed your report 'Is the Dietitians Association of Australia in the pocket of big food?' released 17 February 2015.

### **DAA's Corporate Partnerships and Sponsorships**

DAA is a professional member organisation. Our top priority is supporting our members – the country's nutrition and dietetic professionals.

DAA recognises that Australians eat from the entire food supply – and due to this, we believe we need to work with groups from all sectors, including the food industry. This is a considered decision. We are committed to successful partnerships through careful management and policies, being transparent and maintaining independent views.

DAA's [Guiding Principles for engaging with DAA Partners and Sponsors](#) is available on the DAA website. These outline the current DAA processes specifically related to sponsorships, corporate partnerships and endorsements, and the rigorous evaluation and risk assessment process that DAA uses.

### **Factual errors: Eat Drink Politics post and accompanying report**

The report states that a DAA member was 'stripped of her credentials' and suggests that this was because she 'dared to speak out' about DAA's Corporate Partnerships. To us, this infers that DAA is gagging our members about discussing this issue. This is not the case.

The former DAA member mentioned in your post was not stripped of her credentials by the Association. A complaint was made against her by another member of the profession, regarding professional behaviour, through DAA's [formal complaints process](#). This person chose not to renew her DAA membership and Accredited Practising Dietitian (APD) status, thereby leaving the complaint unaddressed. At any time, this person may choose to address the complaint against her, and renew her DAA membership and apply to be reinstated to the APD credential.

The other major error in the post and accompanying report is the listing of Rebecca Boustead and Ann Marie MacKintosh as DAA Spokespeople. DAA finds this disappointing, when the names and biographies of our [21 spokespeople](#) are readily

and publicly accessible on the DAA website. Rebecca and Ann Marie are two of our 5,800 members, but they are not DAA Spokespeople and to report that they are is incorrect and misleading.

The section of the website you refer to – ‘APDs in the spotlight’ – is unrelated to DAA’s Spokesperson’s Program. Our Diverse World of Dietitians Initiative (or ‘APDs in the spotlight’ as you have termed it) aims to profile the wide range of roles in which Australian dietitians work. You will note that the ‘food industry’ category, under which Rebecca and Ann Marie are listed, is just one of 11 categories profiled on our website. We also profile APDs working in areas such as Indigenous health, public health and community nutrition.

As the leading food and nutrition organisation in Australia, DAA is committed to providing Australians with credible, science-based information on food and nutrition, in line with the recommendations of the Australian Dietary Guidelines. We believe we’re doing positive work to make a real difference to the health of Australians by helping and supporting them to eat better food, and working on policy and product development to improve the food supply.

Yours sincerely,  
Claire Hewat, AdvAPD  
CEO  
Dietitians Association of Australia