Overview
The Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation (Healthway) was established under the Western Australian Tobacco Act 1990 to replace tobacco advertising at sport and arts events.

Since its foundation, Healthway has provided funds through its sponsorship program for sporting, arts and community activities.

Healthway’s sponsorship of sport, arts and community events originally targeted the removal of tobacco funding and smoking at events. More recently, Healthway’s sponsorship has targeted countering alcohol, fast food and sport betting companies influence at recreational events.

In addition to the Sponsorship program, Healthway also provides grants to organisations engaged in health promotion programs and funds health promotion research.

To provide detail of Healthway’s effectiveness, a series of reports have been generated:

- Sponsorship
- Organisational and workforce capacity development
- Health promoting structural and policy changes at sports, arts and community events
- Health Promotion Research Translation

The focus of this report is on the History of effectiveness of the sponsorship program.

Healthway’s sponsorship approach

- Since 1992, The Western Australian Health Promotion Foundation (Healthway) has been offering health sponsorship funding to sport, arts and community groups in exchange for opportunities to promote a health promotion message (for example, “Be Active”, “Quit” “Smarter than Smoking”, “Alcohol. Think Again”) and the provision of healthy environments (for example, non-smoking venues; safe alcohol serving practices and healthy food options) [1].

- There is no other equivalent comprehensive health sponsorship program nationally or internationally. Attempts to implement components of the Healthway sponsorship program have occurred to some extent by all other international health promotion foundations and several government and non-government entities. Healthway’s sponsorship model is considered an exemplar nationally and internationally.
Sponsorship is different to advertising with sponsorship focused more on alignment with the activities in which individuals are involved, allowing them to naturally develop positive attitudes towards the sponsor [11].

Unlike commercial sponsors, health sponsors typically promote a lifestyle message relying on conscious processing, comprehension and cognitive elaboration to be effective [4].

Health message sponsorship is thought to work by sheer exposure leading to familiarity and positive feelings about a health message, a positive affect transfer from the event to the sponsor and an increased salience of a belief [4, 12].

Underpinning much of the evidence for health message sponsorship [2, 4, 13] is the hierarchy of effects model, whereby exposure to the health message at a sponsored event, has been shown among audience members to result in increases in awareness, comprehension, acceptance, behavioural intention and action [12, 14, 15].

As shown in Figure 1, cognitive impact is a term widely used in health promotion to describe the underlying communication process that explains the effect of health message exposure in terms of participant awareness of a health message through to behavioural action [14]. As reflected in the model, awareness is the first and ‘easiest’ stage of behaviour change, with the proportion of people typically diminishing for the subsequent stages of comprehension, acceptance, behavioural intention and action [14].

• Community sport and arts settings offer considerable potential as places to promote a wide range of health-related behaviours through sponsorship [2-5].

• From a health promotion settings approach, sponsorship can contribute to building health message awareness and support that may motivate health behaviour and create a receptive climate for healthy public policy [2, 6,7].

• Healthway’s Sponsorship program has a focus on two industry sectors, arts/community and sport/racing. These industries provide access to a range of recreational pursuits by a wide variety of the population, including Healthway priority groups.

• Within the arts industry, Healthway’s sponsorship support focus is on community arts and culture activities, such as festivals, theatre/dance productions, concerts, exhibitions and workshops and where there is significant opportunity to change behaviours and environments to improve health.

• Within the Sports and Racing industries sponsorship support is targeted towards community organisations and others for programs and events within the sport, racing and active recreation areas where there is a significant opportunity to change behaviour and environments to improve health.

• A key focus of the sponsorship program is the number of people reached through each project/event, particularly from priority groups. Amongst other considerations, sponsored organisations are offered sponsorship based upon the anticipated number of participants and audience/spectators attending sponsorship activities. The sponsorship program considers the number of individuals who are exposed to sponsored events, although multiple exposures by individuals are important.

• In addition to the number of people engaged in Healthway sponsored events, sponsored organisations also deliver project/events that provide increased opportunities for active participation, with a preference for participation of Healthway priority groups.

• Sponsored organisations identify specific strategies that will increase opportunities for active participation, and how the participation of Healthway priority population groups will be maximised.

• Once awarded a sponsorship contract, funded organisations liaise with Healthway to agree upon the promotional strategies to be delivered as part of the sponsorship agreement. The level of promotional activity is directly related to the funded amount provided by Healthway.

How does health sponsorship work?

• Sponsorship is believed to work in a number of different ways. Traditional definitions of sponsorship are built around the exchange of cash or kind to gain access to the commercial potential associated with a venue, event, team or person [8].

• More modern applications of sponsorship suggest it is an extremely versatile platform, which enables communication to and connection with a wide range of stakeholder groups and in the process achieves a variety of corporate brand objectives [9, 10].
Objectives of the sponsorship program

- Healthway’s sponsorship program objectives have remained relatively stable for the past two decades. In the first phase of the program between 1992 and 1994, the primary goal was to replace tobacco sponsorship with health messages.

- Since 1994, the sponsorship program has continued to offer sponsorship funding for a range of health promotion benefits. With modifications to their relative importance at different times, the sponsorship program’s key objectives have been:
  1. To encourage healthy lifestyles through the effective promotion of health messages relating to Healthway priority areas (Message Promotion);
  2. To facilitate opportunities for priority population groups to participate in healthy activities, with either physical activity and/or social engagement benefits (Healthy Participation);
  3. To facilitate structural and policy change within organisations and venues to create healthy environments (Structural reform); and
  4. To reduce the promotion of unhealthy messages or brands which undermine Healthway objectives.

Delivery of sponsorship by Healthway

- Healthway accepts applications for sponsorship from sport, community and arts organisations throughout the year.

- Groups seeking sponsorship funding from Healthway are required to demonstrate the ability of the sponsorship to reach at risk population groups, engage in sport, arts or community activities, and provide opportunities to promote a health message and supportive environments.

- On average approximately 700 sponsorships are awarded annually across sport, arts and community events held in metropolitan and regional areas of Western Australia.

- Since 2006, the average size of sponsorship grants was $15,465 (Range $0 to $2.1 Million). Average board approved funding per project reached a high in 2007 and has significantly dropped since 2011 ($=3.611, p=0.001).

- Prior to 2012, on average $18,385 was allocated to 767 projects per year. The average funding value dropped to $9,335 in 2012 (721 projects) and $9,695 (464 projects) in 2013.

- Since 2006, small projects have been in health promotion, with larger projects in physical activity and tobacco control. Overall, smaller funded sponsorships target a greater proportion of the least disadvantaged populations, with larger funded organisations the most disadvantaged.

- Healthway attempts to match specific health messages to sponsored activities based on the setting or the audience demographics (for example, outdoor events with sun protection messages; contemporary music events with alcohol prevention messages; surfing events with anti-drug messages) and uses combinations of naming rights, signage, branding, merchandise, announcements, social media, web based promotions and player endorsements to promote health messages [5].

- Healthway promotes a range of different health messages at sport and arts events in areas including tobacco control, nutrition, physical activity, sun protection, safe alcohol consumption and mental health.
Health Sponsorship strategies

• Each sponsorship agreement contains details of the promotional strategies to be undertaken by the sponsored group. For sponsorships valued at less than $5000 the requirements typically include naming rights, health message logo placement on appropriate material, and the promotion of the message at events.

• For sponsorships valued at more than $5000 there is an expectation there will be increased promotional strategies relative to the level of funding provided.

• Built on the evidence of sponsorship effectiveness, most sponsorship agreements are based around the implementation of several core activities. The combination of large perimeter signage, PA announcements, logos/messages on official clothing and endorsement by key individuals during sponsorship events has been shown to produce a high level of health message awareness amongst people attending events.

• The use of event specific strategies/activations has also been shown to increase awareness amongst people attending the event at a diminishing rate of return. Research has also shown that the more core strategies implemented the greater the awareness of the health message across small and large sponsorship events.

• Evidence from the evaluation of the sponsorship program over a number of years suggests that even sponsorships with limited funding (under $5000) can effectively raise health message awareness if there is appropriate signage, announcements and endorsement, as well as limited sponsorship competition from other sponsors.

• Sponsorship strategies linked to statewide, or national health promotion campaigns have also been adopted, as sponsored health messages are reinforced and supported across a wider range of environments. For example, current sponsored health messages such as “Live Lighter” and “Alcohol Think Again” are statewide campaigns promoted at sponsored events.

Reach of the sponsorship program

• Since 2006, Healthway projects have created opportunities for over 25.6 million adults (47%), 4.7 million seniors (9%), 8.5 million children (15%), and 7.8 million youth (14%) to be exposed to health promotion messages on alcohol and drug misuse, nutrition, mental health, injury prevention, overweight and obesity, physical activity, sun protection and tobacco. Importantly, over 4.1 million exposures were anticipated within rural communities (7%), 2.8 million within disadvantaged communities (5%) and 1.4 million within Indigenous communities (3%). Figure 2 outlines the number of potential exposures for people attending Healthway sponsored events.

Effectiveness of the sponsorship program

• The sponsorship program has been systematically evaluated for its effectiveness since inception. The evaluation is built upon a graduated evaluation framework, whereby all sponsored organisations complete evaluation components at levels commensurate with their funding level.

• The framework comprises three levels appropriate for evaluating health promotion programs; (1) implementation, (2) short term impact and (3) longer term outcomes. The requirements are progressive, in that projects assigned to a level, must complete the requirement at that level and all levels below.

• Standard instruments have been designed which record the output

Figure 2: Number of potential exposures by year
measures from each project using a self-administered online questionnaire completed by grant recipients. A summary of the graduate evaluation framework levels and their output measures are presented in Table 1.

Measurement of sponsorship

- Since 1992, the impact of the Healthway sponsorship program has been assessed through the collection of information amongst people engaged in sport, racing, arts and community events.

- At selected Healthway sponsored events throughout a calendar year, spectators, audience members and participants are approached and asked to complete a survey on their awareness of the sponsored health message.

- People aware of the sponsored message are asked at the time of completing the survey a series of questions in relation to their awareness, comprehension, acceptance, intention and any action taken as a result of exposure to the health message.

- During each 12-month period of data collection data is collected amongst approximately 2500 people from 35 events. Since 1992, there have been 12 periods when data has been collected and reports presented in each case.

Impact of the sponsorship program

- The impact of the sponsorship program can be measured in a number of ways; how the health message is received by people attending sponsored events, as well as how the environment supports the message being promoted to facilitate healthy behaviour.

Health message awareness and intentions to act

- The proportion of attendees who were aware of the health message gives an indication of those who have been receptive to hearing about health in a recreational setting. As shown in Figure 3, since 1992, around seven out of ten people attending an event reported being aware of the message.

- The number of people who have thought about doing something related to the message has steadily increased since 1992, from around one in twenty people to around one in five people in 2015. Similarly, those who actually reported engaging in a related behaviour increased from one percent in 1992 to around 15% in 2015.

Table 1: Evaluation level, value, type of grant, evaluation type and output measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>$ Amount of the Grant</th>
<th>Type of Grant</th>
<th>Evaluation Type</th>
<th>Output Measure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>≤ $5000</td>
<td>Promotional</td>
<td>Basic</td>
<td>Contractual compliance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Priority population and geographic area reach</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Health policy implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>≥$5,001</td>
<td>Promotional</td>
<td>Process/impact</td>
<td>Engagement exposure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Structural</td>
<td></td>
<td>Health promotion activity</td>
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<td>Partnerships</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Sustainability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 3</td>
<td>≥$50,001</td>
<td>Promotional</td>
<td>Impact/outcome</td>
<td>Cognitive/attitudinal participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Structural reform</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Structural</td>
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<td>Healthy environment impact</td>
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At each event evaluated by the monitor, an audit of evidence of environmental support is conducted. Overall, cigarette smoke was either smelt or smoking was seen at around one third of events, with around eight in ten events displaying non smoking signage (Figure 5).

Free water was provided at one half of events in 2012/13 with this increasing to around two out of three in 2014/15 and nearly all events that provided alcohol had low strength options available. Among the events that offered food, the provision of low-fat foods, fruit and vegetables were also strengthened in 2014/15.

Among those that occurred outdoors, over half of events provided sun protection in the form of either shade and or sunscreen provision.

As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of organisations with health related supportive policies in place has increased as a result of receiving Healthway sponsorship.

Sponsorship Strategies
- A wide range of sponsorship strategies have been used to promote health messages. Evidence from field surveys shows that several key strategies is important to ensure a high level of health message awareness. Figure 4 shows the relative distribution of sponsorship strategies.

Creating supportive sponsorship environments
- Sponsored organisations are required to introduce a range of environment supports at each event, particularly around tobacco control, alcohol, healthy food options and sun protection.

Since 1992, around seven out of ten people attending an event reported being aware of the message.
Health messages such as Sun Smart and Act, Belong Commit are positive messages that can be acted upon at relevant sponsored events. They outperform all other health messages on intention and action measures.

• Health messages promoting cessation of health behaviours, such as reducing alcohol consumption perform less well.

• Although sponsorship strategies cannot be considered in isolation from each other, there is consistency in where people recall seeing or hearing sponsorship health messages.

Lessons from the sponsorship program (1992-2015)

• Healthway’s sponsorship program is evidenced based and continuously evolving. A rigorous evaluation and reporting on the program has been central to its longevity and adaptation to prevailing trends.

• Since 1992, there have been numerous lessons learnt from research conducted in the field that has influenced and shaped the current sponsorship approach.

• The activities of the sponsorship program can be grouped into three main components: health message promotion; healthy participation; and structural reform.

Sponsorship message promotion effectiveness

• The strength of the sponsorship program is underpinned by ensuring a high proportion of people attending sponsorship events are aware of the health message. Once aware, the setting and strength of the health message determines how impactful the sponsorship is on future health related intentions and behaviours.

• Messages that promote a positive health behaviour that can be enacted easily consistently perform better on intention and action measures.
The promotion of health messages at regional events is often the only sponsored message. Sponsorships of less than $5000 have been shown to be effective when simple signage and announcement are implemented. Research has shown that at this level of funding, there is little competition for message promotion and the value of the sponsorship funding to the organisation is meaningful in relation to their overall operational budget [22, 23].

Sponsored groups in remote areas are capable of promoting the sponsored health message with little support and delivering comparable sponsorship message awareness to larger metropolitan based sponsorships [22].

Aboriginal Sponsorships are most likely to be successful if the health message is developed locally and part of an arts, sport and cultural collaboration [24].

The appropriateness of currently promoted community wide health messages to Aboriginal groups to elicit meaningful change is questionable. Attempts to create specific health messages for Aboriginal groups have been developed periodically with meaningful impact. An alternative theoretical approach to developing and delivering health message sponsorship to Aboriginal groups should be explored.

Commercial sport sponsorship has become increasingly sophisticated over the last five years, especially in capitalising on opportunities to interact with spectators before, during and after events. The use of social media has rapidly expanded commercial agency opportunity to build their brand alongside events.

Once people are exposed, the strength of the health message to elicit an intention and potential action outcome becomes important. Different health messages are known to generate intention and action responses in relation to how they are framed (positive/negative) and the ease in which people can act upon the health message.

Having a supportive environment that compliments the promoted health message is important to ensure congruency in the mind of people attending the event.

The use of prominent signage around grounds, visible merchandise, player/official branded clothing, public announcements and personal endorsement have been key strategies to ensure health message awareness has remained at above 65% at monitored events [17,18].

The cost-effectiveness of individual strategies is largely unclear and the adoption of at least four (signage, merchandise, announcement and endorsement) strategies has been promoted consistently as the minimal required to achieve suitable levels of awareness [17,18].

The sponsorship program relies on a pure exposure model that was appropriate in the early days of Healthway. The model may now require updating to a more sophisticated sponsorship model, incorporating aspects of event affiliation, sponsor “fit” and “sincerity”.

Repeated exposure to a sponsored health message at a series of events or performance has shown to be cumulative in raising awareness amongst people attending. This is related to increased exposure, and reinforcement of associations between the event and sponsored health messages [19,20].

Health promotion community campaigns delivered by other agencies provide a level of awareness of sponsored health messages prior to people attending events. This has benefited the sponsorship programs awareness raising efforts, but also means that the sponsorship program needs to distinguish its impact from that of the wider campaign activities.

The use of sponsorship simply as a mechanism to promote health messages undervalues the extent to which people attending are more susceptible to accept advertising messages.

The promotion of multiple health messages at an event does not impact awareness of commercial sponsors, but dilutes the effect of the health sponsorship messages being promoted [21].

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Changes in the commercial sponsorship environment have resulted in a re-evaluation of the theoretical approaches to the pure exposure model of health sponsorship.

Commercial sponsors expend considerable resources on developing a “fit” with a sport art or community event. Health messages promoted at Healthway sponsored events have a more natural positive “fit” and perceived sincerity than commercial sponsors of sport/ community and arts events. There is a considerable advantage to be exploited from health messages at sport, arts and community events beyond greater exposure to the message.

The framing of sponsored health messages is crucial to their likely effectiveness in influencing behavioural intention and action within a sponsorship environment.

Positively framed messages aimed at reinforcing or the uptake of a positive health behaviour perform better than health messages that are negatively framed and promote the cessation of an unhealthy behaviour [17,18,25].

Health messages promoted at sponsored events where the relevant action can be performed, such as sun safety (applying sunscreen) and Act Belong Commit (attending community events) consistently return the highest cognitive impact across sport, arts and community events [17,18,25].

The selected health message, how it is framed and the intended action require different sponsorship approaches and potentially a longer term investment to shift attitudes. For example, promoting alcohol reduction, smoking cessation and illicit drug use require alternative approaches to health behaviour change [26].

Sponsorship and children
- Sponsoring children’s events has been effective in raising awareness of health message awareness. The effective use of “brand” sponsorship within the Smarter than Smoking youth anti-tobacco program offered a comprehensive suite of health promotion activities to complement the sponsorship program [27,28].
- It is not possible to isolate sponsors of unhealthy brands from children, even if they are removed from sight during children’s activities. This extends to sponsorship of adult sporting teams, especially high profile state and national teams.
- Parents do not want their children exposed to alcohol, fast food or gambling sponsorship, but understand these sponsors provide funding important to the financial viability of local sport and community events [29].
- Influencing the culture of local sport, arts and community events to be healthy activities, without mixed messages of unhealthy products/ brands remains a challenge given the pervasive involvement of fast food, soft drink and other unhealthy products.
- Parents have expressed a high level of concern on the influence on their children with the current level of gambling related sponsorship and advertising and elite sport [29].

Participation Grants
- Participation in healthy activities has been an important strategy, particularly with children. No evidence exists of the benefit of offering participation grants, without the requirement of health message sponsorship.

Offering participation funding without an associated health message undervalues the sponsorship leveraging opportunity and normalisation of participation with a health message promoted.

Structural Support
- Early evidence of sponsorship effectiveness was focused upon the requirement to have tobacco control messages matched with environments that supported the promoted health behaviour.
- Establishing evidence of public support for the introduction of smoke free policies and sporting venues was crucial for advocating for their introduction amongst politicians and senior administrators.
- Health behaviours cluster together and the majority of people exhibit multiple unhealthy behaviours. Ensuring health messages are matched with appropriate environmental supports amongst behaviours that cluster together remains a challenge given the pervasive involvement of fast food, soft drink and other unhealthy products.
- Parents have expressed a high level of concern on the influence on their children with the current level of gambling related sponsorship and advertising and elite sport [29].

A strategy of preparing spectators for the venue becoming smoke free relies on evidence of public support and sponsorship activities were built around the introduction of the new smoke free status.

Once smoke free policies are introduced into a venue/event, evidence has consistently demonstrated high support for the introduction of smoke free policies with little negative consequences to the event.
• Field studies were conducted to count the number of cigarettes smoked during sport spectating and the potential reduction in exposure to tobacco if venues were to become smoke free [31]. In 1996, Subiaco Oval became smoke free and there was overwhelming support for this decision [32].

• Following evidence of public support for Subiaco Oval becoming smoke free, there was considerable momentum for other sporting venues to introduce similar smoke free policies and political will to make this occur [31,32].

• This approach of developing an evidenced based support for Healthway to introduce a range of health policies has been the adopted approach for introducing policy change at sport, arts and community events. In part, the resistance to introducing smoke-free policies has been the potential negative impact on attendance at events and therefore commercial risk. Evidence from venues where smoke free policies have been introduced has consistently shown that this does not eventuate [33-36].

• As recently as 2011, evidence was gathered on public opinion towards the introduction of smoke-free large public places, with the Perth Zoo, Adventure World and the Perth Royal Show all introducing smoke free policies as part of Healthway sponsorship agreements. [37].

• Efforts to introduce smoke-free policies at all sponsored events were introduced in 2000 as part of requirements for receiving Healthway funding. For organisations that agreed with the policy requirements Healthway funding became accessible.

• There were organisations that were unable at the time to accommodate the policy requirements and therefore did not apply for funding [38]. Healthway attempted to facilitate the development of Health related policies for organisations that did not have them in place.

• However, many organisations simply replicated the policy templates without the process of policy development. Meaningful policy implementation requires a commitment to the process of policy development, so that acceptance of policies and implementation occur throughout the organisation.

• The success of introducing smoke free policies has been the model for how to introduce a wide variety of policies. However, the introduction of healthy food and alcohol restrictions has been most challenging for Healthway and the approach has not always been successful.

• Healthway demonstrated that offering Healthy foods was a viable option at the Western Australian Trotting Association Perth Meeting by introducing their own healthy food stall [39]. The outlet was both popular and profitable at this venue and while the vendor did not continue the results were used as a model for future initiatives in this area.

• Commercial food vendors are less likely to modify their food offerings if they believe it will reduce their profit. How Healthy foods are assessed and modified to be a healthy option was not always successful [40]. At the Perth Royal Show, several products classified as “Green”, or healthy were analysed for their content and found to be unhealthy. In practice, the preparation of foods at festivals was not standardised and food intended to be a healthy options, was less healthy than advertised. The delivery and control of healthy foods is more complex in non-controlled environments.

• Healthy food options alone may not be adequate to modify existing expectations about food choices. Even people intending to buy healthy foods often are unable to purchase healthy options, or are influence by the unhealthy options available.

Conclusions and recommendations on the effectiveness of Healthway’s sponsorship program

• There remains no other equivalent sponsorship program nationally or internationally that can claim the level of influence in how spectators and organisations have engaged in the promotion of health message at recreational events.

• The amount of unhealthy commercial sponsorship exposure Western Australians have not been exposed to as a result of the Healthway sponsorship program is an important outcome of the program. Another important outcome is the high health literacy of people attending Healthway sponsored events.

• Based upon the results of the sponsorship monitor, 7 out of every 10 people attending a Healthway sponsorship event will be exposed enough to recall the specific sponsored health message promoted at that event [17,18,25].

• Furthermore, the sponsorship monitor also demonstrates that people attending sponsored events are hard to reach populations who are typically at high risk of exposure [30].
• Amongst people aware of sponsored health messages 4 in 10 intend to make a behaviour change as a result of their exposure to the health message at the event they attended [17,18,25].

• Approximating, 1 in 10 attending a Healthway sponsored event indicate they have taken a relevant action as a result of their exposure to a sponsored health message at the current or previous event [17,18,25].

• Similar to commercial companies that incorporate sponsorship as one part of their overall marketing strategy, Healthway’s sponsorship program is part of broader efforts to influence the community. These include policy and structural changes to improve access to healthy environments where people recreate.

• Healthway’s health messages rely on wider community campaigns to provide opportunities for people exposed at Healthway sponsored events to take action as a result of health message led intention. Wider campaign messages and strategies do not always lend themselves to an exposure based sponsorship approach.

• Over a long period of time Healthway’s sponsorship program has become integrated into the recreational activity presented by Western Australian organisations. Over this time people attending events expect to see and hear health messages and have supporting health environments.

• In almost all cases when sponsored organisations support the adoption and implementation of health related policies and practices, such as smoke free venues, there is evidence of sustainability of policies and little evidence of patron dissatisfaction, or likelihood of unwinding of these policies. When policies are perceived to be incongruent, or not supported by patrons, such as the sale of alcohol, or fast food at events, there is a greater likelihood of policy resistance and reversal following the funding period [37,41].

• Over the last few years the sponsorship program has adopted a commercial approach, shifting its focus from a health promotion approach. As a consequence the potential return on investment may not have eventuated in terms of leveraging the benefits of the sponsorship arrangement.

Future considerations and directions

• Sport, arts and community events represent a unique opportunity to engage and exploit the relationship people have when they are recreating. There are very few better opportunities to access at risk groups within the population when they are susceptible to receive health messages.

• In addition to promoting health messages, the sponsorship program has demonstrated it can be a powerful advocate for changing the culture of sport, arts, and community events in relation to becoming smoke free, reducing alcohol consumption and providing healthy food options. These longer term benefits of engaging sport, arts and community events from grass roots level to professional sport and arts organisations places Healthway in a unique position to introduce meaningful change.

• Healthway sponsorship/funding should comprise at a minimum the promotion of a health message, through promotional strategies and the introduction of supportive health related policies.

• When a pure exposure approach to sponsorship is adopted, the prominence of sponsorship messages and their endorsement and announcement remain key strategies to improving health message awareness.

• Different sponsorship approaches are required to build upon the sponsorship message “Fit” and “Sincerity” with the sponsored event. New communication strategies to engage with people prior to the event, while they attend, and post the event should be developed as part of a comprehensive sponsorship approach.

• Historically, sponsorship activities have been focused on the event. While this remains an important component of the sponsorship strategy, the use of social media
can extend the sponsorship promotional opportunities prior, during, and following the sponsored event.

- Promotion of the sponsorship relationship should be considered a valued outcome and built into a comprehensive sponsorship approach. Building positive associations between a sponsored event and health message is important, particularly in the context of children’s sport, arts and community events.

- The commercialisation of sport, arts and community events by companies that sell unhealthy products has the greatest potential in the influence of children’s perceptions of what comprises healthy engagement in sport, arts and community events. Offering an alternative perspective through a comprehensive sponsorship program holds significant potential for continued impactful influence with current and future generations.

- Creating healthy supportive environments in which children can recreate without direct influence from unhealthy product branding or purchasing. This outcome also aligns with parent’s support for the removal of unhealthy sponsorship and associated activities at children’s recreational activities.

- Countering unhealthy messages associated with sport, arts and community events is a powerful method to creating a supportive healthy perception of how to engage in recreational activities. Promoting a healthy alternative at recreational venues has potential to positively influence how people expect to behave, for example, in relation to their alcohol consumption and healthy food purchasing.

- The Healthway sponsorship program already provides wider community health campaign access to at risk population groups that may not otherwise be reached. There exists greater scope to use sponsorship arrangements to value add to the broader community campaign outcomes through the exploitation of people’s affiliation with sport, art and community events.

- Periodically reviewing the theoretical approach to the sponsorship program has been important in ensuring it has remained relevant. It is appropriate to rethink the theoretical approach to sponsorship.

- In addition to promoting health messages, the sponsorship program has demonstrated it can be a powerful advocate for changing the culture of sport, arts and community events. In addition to promoting a health message, an emphasis on promoting the association with recreational activities and health is a focus.

**Four take out points**

- **Sponsorship of sport, arts and community events offers unique opportunities to positively influence community health, particularly hard to reach members of the community.**

- **Healthway should avoid being a named sponsor and allow the health message to be prominent.**

- **The goal of the sponsorship program to realign community expectations of the environment in which they recreate and counter the unhealthy brand associations (alcohol, fast food, gambling) that are currently entrenched in the communities psyche needs to be clarified.**

- **An evidenced based approach to the health sponsorship program needs to be continued.**