

# Framework Document and Membership Application



## What is the APP-HRF Group Inc?

In 2006, the Advanced Practicing Podiatrists - High Risk Foot (APP-HRF) Group evolved from the Melbourne High-Risk-Foot Clinics Collaboration. These podiatrists recognized the need to promote and develop this area of specialty podiatry practice, for the benefit of the Podiatry profession and the public. APP-HRF Group has been registered as a business with a Tax File Number and Australian Business Number. The group is now an Incorporated Association with model rules.

The APP-HRF Group Inc. recognises that diabetes foot complications are just one (albeit large) area of conditions that characterise “high-risk” foot status. This document refers to diabetic foot disease, as it is the primary focus of our advanced practicing podiatrists.

The APP-HRF Group Inc. is a national specialty podiatry group that welcomes members who are interested and working in the area of the diabetes foot. Current members are a mix of Levels 1 through to 3, according to the tiered structure outlined in this document, and represent a variety of settings including tertiary and regional hospitals, community health, academia, private practice and research.

The APP-HRF Group offers a structured, tiered membership that reflects the level of practice of the podiatrist. This allows podiatrists to apply for membership at the appropriate level and if desired, work towards achieving a higher level by gaining skills and experience, pursuing professional development, higher qualifications and mentorship over time.

A committee of up to 9 people, including a core group of 4 executive positions, manage the business of the APP-HRF Group on a voluntary basis. An AGM is conducted annually with formal elections for the committee positions, if required. The committee then elect to the executive positions from the committee, and appoint the newsletter editor.

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The Level system of membership of this group supports the broader agenda of the APP-HRF Group for a recognisable and distinguishable tiered podiatry structure for the profession.

To date, the podiatry profession has no recognized credentialing of podiatrists working in the assessment and management of people with diabetes.

In Australia, people with diabetes wanting to access a podiatrist for a foot health assessment have no means of determining those podiatrists who have an interest or expertise in the diabetic foot. Podiatrists need to have the appropriate knowledge and skill in order to provide care as per the National Evidence based guidelines for the Management of Type 2 Diabetes; Detection and Prevention of foot Problems in Type 2 Diabetes. [Australian Centre for Diabetes Strategies, Prince of Wales Hospital Sydney for Diabetes Australia Guidelines Development Consortium 2005], the Australian Podiatry Council's, Diabetes Foot Guidelines (2001) and the NHMRC guidelines.

Due to the changing nature of podiatry training over the last 25 years, current practicing podiatrists have varying levels of undergraduate and postgraduate diabetes related foot health assessment and diabetes management skills. All accredited undergraduate podiatry courses adhere to competency standards as detailed by the Australian and New Zealand Podiatry Accreditation Council. The competency standards document outlines the generic and occupation-specific competencies that are required to ensure safe and effective podiatry services. The competencies are based on knowledge, skills and professional qualities (Podiatry Competency Standards for Australia and New Zealand (ANZPAC) 2009). These standards are focused on the broad functions of the podiatrist in assessing, diagnosing, treating and preventing disorders of the lower leg and foot due to developmental or acquired abnormalities, injury or disease. There are no specific competencies surrounding evidence-based assessment of the diabetic foot, but there are evidence-based guidelines.

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The APP-HRF Group views the credentialing of podiatrists in diabetes related foot assessment and management as a necessary professional development in order for the public and health care practitioners to identify appropriate clinicians to refer to. To this end, the APP-HRF Group will be working closely with Australasian Podiatry Council and other agencies to establish acceptable criteria and guidelines for formal credentialing based on the framework of this group.

**Further, a more formal credentialing framework is proposed to be developed consistent with advanced training and mentorship.**

## **Benefits of membership**

Podiatry management of the person with a high-risk foot presents a challenge, even to the experienced clinician. The aetiology and complex nature of many high risk foot pathologies requires clinicians who are involved in the management of people with high risk feet to maintain a high level of knowledge, skill and competency in multiple areas of Podiatric practice, including but not limited to wound management, medical co-morbidities, neurovascular assessment, investigations (pathology, radiology), pharmacology, the role of other health professionals, advocacy and care co-ordination. Podiatric researchers in the field of diabetic foot disease lead, support and contribute to the work of clinicians and so are highly valued colleagues. Thus, the term “advanced practice podiatry” fits with the demands of this specialist area.

**Membership offers access to the support of experienced colleagues, a quarterly newsletter, tailored professional development with reduced registration fees and the opportunity to have an active role in developing a sustainable model for Podiatric specialisation and recognition. Other benefits will follow as the group develops and expands. Our website is operational [www.app-hrf.com.au](http://www.app-hrf.com.au) but undergoing re-development.**

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All members have voting rights at the AGM. Membership fees are payable annually by July 31.

## Membership fees

Initial and ongoing membership fee: **\$100\***

\* be paid by 31 July of each financial year to ensure voting rights at the AGM.

## Framework

The APP-HRF Executive believes that this framework has the following benefits:

- 1) Enabling a greater number of Podiatrists with an interest in the diabetes foot to gain entry-level membership to the group.
- 2) Streamlining the application process. Applicants will need to justify their application for a particular tier according to their level of practice with a covering letter, detailed CV and ONE letter of professional reference for Level 1 and 2 applications, TWO letters of professional reference for Level 3 applications. The Executive of the APP-HRF Group has the authority to adjudicate on applications.
- 3) The tiered structure of the APP-HRF Group will add support and substance to the discussions with APodC and other agencies / organisations regarding the future of specialty podiatry.
- 4) The tiered structure will be a way of promoting credentialed podiatrists through our group.

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## Level 1

A Level 1 member is a Podiatrist working in the area of diabetes related foot problems, or with an active interest in developing their skills in this field.

Although it is currently early days for the APP-HRF Group, the executive are developing a mentoring model that will offer interested Level 1 members the opportunity to access a more experienced mentor (Level 2 or 3) who will work with them to develop and implement a professional development plan to achieve a higher level of membership standing. A Level 1 member can hold Committee positions but not Executive positions of APP-HRF Group.

A Level 1 member is a Podiatrist who:

- a) Has a minimum qualification in Podiatry as per the requirements of the Podiatry Board of Australia.
- b) Can perform basic evidenced based diabetes foot health assessment with the knowledge to accurately interpret and communicate the findings, and tailored education program. A basic assessment is according to evidence-based guidelines.
- c) Can identify and access pathways of care for the patient with a diagnosed high-risk foot.
- d) Holds a current certificate in basic life support.
- e) Maintains appropriate and relevant professional development (detailed on CV)
- f) This level of membership is NOT related to years of practice.

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## Level 2

A Level 2 member Podiatrist has greater demonstrated clinical, education and/or research expertise in the high-risk foot field. They are available to mentor Level 1 Podiatrists. A Level 2 member also receives the aforementioned benefits of Level 1 membership. A Level 2 member does not yet meet the criteria for Level 3 membership. A Level 2 member can hold Committee positions and Executive positions of APP-HRF Group.

A Level 2 member is a Podiatrist who, in addition to the criteria set out in Level 1:

- a) Undertake a more thorough evidenced based diabetes foot health assessment with the knowledge to accurately interpret and communicate the findings, and provide a tailored education program.
- b) Can follow evidence-based guidelines for assessment, investigation and management of pathology related to the high-risk foot, and has demonstrable wound management experience (as detailed in CV).
- c) Can identify and access pathways of care, including but not limited to, appropriate timely referrals to a specialised foot care centre.
- d) Holds a current certificate in basic life support.
- e) Can demonstrate ongoing relevant professional development.
- f) Has completed **7 years** of relevant clinical practice.

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## Level 3

A Level 3 member Podiatrist has extensive clinical, educational and/or research expertise in the area of diabetes foot complications. This expertise is acknowledged as such and may include the words 'Advanced Practicing Podiatrist- High-Risk Foot' in their professional papers.

The Level 3 Podiatrist is required to set the benchmark for advanced Podiatry practice in the field of diabetes foot management, and be well regarded by their peers. They are expected to mentor to Level 1 and Level 2 Podiatrists and maintain a strong commitment to and support of the APP-HRF Group. A Level 3 member also receives the aforementioned benefits of Level 1 and 2 memberships. A Level 3 member may hold Committee or Executive positions of the APP-HRF Group.

A Level 3 member is a Podiatrist who, in addition to the criteria set out in Levels 1 & 2:

- a) Demonstrates commitment to advancing Podiatry practice in the high-risk foot through active education, research, publication or academia.
- b) Can perform comprehensive evidenced based diabetes foot health assessment with the knowledge to accurately interpret and communicate the findings, and provide a tailored education program.
- c) Can perform evidence based wound assessment and management and has advanced wound care knowledge and expertise (10 years of clinical practice).
- d) Provide comprehensive evidence based management, including pharmacology, for foot related foot pathologies in people with complex medical conditions.
- e) Holds Podiatry Board of Australia prescribing endorsement.
- f) Works or has experience as part of an inter-professional environment in managing diabetic foot disease and utilizes evidenced-based clinical pathways.

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- g) Holds a certificate of competency in basic or advanced life support.
- h) Is competent to mentor Level 1 and 2 podiatrists.
- i) Can demonstrate ongoing relevant professional development.
- j) Has completed 10 years relevant clinical experience.

## Summary

The APP-HRF Group offers many opportunities for Podiatrists interested in establishing professional links with peers with expertise in the management of the high-risk foot. There is also the opportunity to develop expertise and skills in the management of this complex and challenging patient group in a supported and structured environment.

For further information or to discuss a membership application in detail, please contact the President of the APP-HRF:

**Dr Shan Bergin**  
**President, APP-HRF Group**  
PO Box 29  
Kew 3101  
  
T: 03 9554 8465  
F: 03 9554 1516  
E: [app-HRF@ozemail.com.au](mailto:app-HRF@ozemail.com.au)



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Thank you for your interest in applying for membership of the APP-HRF Group Inc.

Please complete the following steps in order to ensure the application process can proceed efficiently.

1. Tick the appropriate box for **New Member** or **Renewal**
2. Tick the appropriate box for **Membership Level**
3. Complete all member details on the attached “Letter of Application” form. Your email address will be the point of contact for this group so please ensure it remains up to date.
4. If you are a **New Member**, check you have the following documents ready and up to date:
  - a. Letter of application with justification for a particular level (as per the **Framework** Document)
  - b. Detailed CV
  - c. Reference letters (at least one from a Podiatrist) according to which level you are applying for (as per Framework document – ONE referee for Level 1 and 2, TWO referees for LEVEL 3)
  - d. At this point you may send membership fees (\$100) in the form of a **cheque** together with your application (payable to “Advanced Practicing Podiatrists – High Risk Foot Group”).

**If you choose the direct debit option, PLEASE WAIT UNTIL YOU RECEIVE AN INVOICE WITH A REFERENCE NUMBER from our Treasurer WHICH YOU WILL NEED TO CITE. Your direct debit payment is then required within 14 days.**

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Acc Name: Advanced Practicing Podiatrists – High Risk Foot Group

Bank Name: ANZ                      BSB: 013-345                      Acc Number:  
4838-83353

**REFERENCE NUMBER MUST BE INSERTED**

5. Send these documents to the **APP-HRF Group Membership Officer** either
  - a. by email to \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. by post to P.O.Box 29, Kew 3101
  
6. Following step 4, you will receive an email acknowledgement of your application, and a receipt if you have paid by cheque.
  
7. Your initial application is then assessed and, if no further information is required, ratified at a committee meeting.
  
8. A membership certificate is then issued.
  
9. The whole process from receipt of application to issuing a certificate should take no more than 35 days.

To the Membership Officer,

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Please consider my application for:  Renewal  New Member

I wish to be considered for:  Level 1  Level 2  Level 3 Membership

If renewing membership, have you received e-newsletters / PD notices / correspondence from this Group since you joined/last renewed? YES / NO

Date	
Surname	
First name(s)	
Home address	
Postcode / State	
Phone (business hours)	
Phone (home)	
Phone (mobile)	
Email address	
Employer	
Position	
Practice address	

I have included the following documents (please tick):

- Letter of application
- CV
- Reference letters
  
- Payment by cheque in the amount of \$100
- No payment by cheque. I prefer to wait for a reference number and make a direct deposit.

Please complete the following statement and sign below.

I, (insert name) \_\_\_\_\_, hereby confirm that all information provided is a true and accurate record. I agree / do not agree (delete which is not applicable) to make my email address (only) available to relevant third parties (sponsors, researchers, related organisations).

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_