



# NZOPA

## POSITION STATEMENT

These position statements have been developed to address issues of particular significance to the Membership, and the Orthotics & Prosthetics profession. The position statement underpins the strategic direction of the Association and its response to Government policies, new developments in the health sector and other issues that impact on the Membership, and the Orthotics and Prosthetics Profession. These position statements are to be seen as a living document and to be reviewed periodically as needed or as the O & P landscape changes in New Zealand.

New Zealand  
Orthotics &  
Prosthetics  
Association

# NZOPA Position Statements:

## **Contract Limitations with Transparency:**

The NZOPA recognizes the importance of allowing funders the flexibility to choose the best providers for delivering Prosthetics and Orthotics (P&O) services to the public, based on a list of approved merits. We respect the funder's prerogative to make these selections in the best interest of patients.

To promote a diverse and competitive landscape within the P&O industry, we advocate for transparency in the decision-making process. This includes not allowing a single provider, whether independently owned or operated by a larger business entity, to hold an excessive\* number of exclusive contracts for the provision of funded P&O services. Specifically, contracts granting exclusive rights to provide services within specific geographical regions across New Zealand should be subject to careful consideration.

\*(In the context of contract limitations, when we say that a provider should not hold an "excessive" number of exclusive contracts, it means that they should not have an unreasonably high or dominating share of such contracts. The exact threshold for what is considered excessive may vary depending on the specific situation and industry standards, and it often involves a subjective judgment based on the circumstances)

Furthermore, we encourage funders to disclose the rationale for their decisions when providers lose contracts or tender bids. This practice ensures that providers are aware of the basis for contract awards or rejections, fostering transparency and understanding within the P&O sector.

In this way, we strike a balance between respecting the funder's role in selecting service providers and promoting diversity and transparency in the allocation of contracts, ultimately benefiting P&O patients and the profession as a whole. As well as offering transparency in where service providers are lacking and allowing us as NZOPA to offer training and development to improve and enhance providers and allowing for continuous improvement of services being provided to patients.

This revised statement emphasizes NZOPA's advocacy for a balanced and competitive market in P&O services while highlighting the importance of fair contract terms for the benefit of both providers and patients.

**Diversity of Service Providers:** NZOPA advocates for a diverse and competitive landscape in the provision of orthotic and prosthetic (P&O) services to benefit both consumers and the continued advancement of the P&O profession.

As the leading representative association for Prosthetics and Orthotics in New Zealand, NZOPA recognizes the importance of maintaining a balanced and competitive market. To ensure fairness, ethics, and accessibility for P&O patients, we recommend the following principles:

**Market Balance:** NZOPA promotes a healthcare ecosystem where no single provider, whether commercial or non-commercial, should have an overwhelming dominance by holding a majority of service provision contracts. This ensures that no single entity has undue control over the P&O sector.

**Percentage Limit:** NZOPA suggests that no single provider, regardless of ownership structure, should hold more than 50% of the exclusive contracts for funded services, whether provided through Public Health, Private Health Insurers, or ACC. This safeguard is particularly relevant when these contracts grant exclusive rights to serve specific geographic regions within New Zealand.

**Promoting Competition:** It is our belief that encouraging the participation of multiple providers in any given region or for specific services is not only ideal but ethical. This approach benefits consumers, suppliers, funders, and providers by fostering competition and ensuring diverse options for P&O care.

**Fair Contract Terms:** NZOPA remains committed to advocating for fair and equitable contract terms within the orthotic and prosthetic profession. We recognize that unfair terms can hinder patient access and limit the diversity of service providers. By promoting fair contract terms, we aim to create an environment where providers can deliver quality care while sustaining their practices.

As seen in NZOPA's position statement, these organizations may issue statements that express their stance on certain issues, including fair contract practices. While these statements are not binding, they can influence stakeholders' perceptions and decisions.

It's important to note that professional associations influence rather than dictate contracts. The actual negotiation and agreement of contracts typically occur between individual service providers (e.g.: orthotic, and prosthetic professionals) and entities like healthcare providers, insurers, or government agencies. However, the guidance and support provided by professional organizations can help ensure that members are informed, empowered, and equipped to negotiate fair and ethical contracts that align with best practices within their profession.