



SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

extracted from 'bylaws v5.1'

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline the formation of Special Interest Groups and the role that they have in contributing to the policy positions of the AIEH and the professional development opportunities for members.

BACKGROUND

The Branches of the Institute have traditionally developed policy positions and designed professional training programs through group meetings of members. The Board has sought to formalise these groups within all Branches to enable the co-ordination and consistency of policy development and professional training design.

SCOPE

This policy is to apply to the operation of any SIG at Branch or National level.

DEFINITIONS

Nil

Policy

2.5.1 What are the SIGs?

The AIEH framework for professional practice includes the opportunity for involvement in the development of policy positions, professional tools and training programs for the environmental health profession. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are the formal group and meeting structure for members to become engaged in contributing to the following practice focus areas:

- **Professional Development**

Contributing to the AIEH Accreditation process for undergraduate degrees, provides representation on External Advisory Committees for Accredited courses, advocacy position on employment of EHOs at a State level, general promotion of profession within the State.

- **Disease Control**

Immunisation (& Vaccine), Outbreak Management, Investigation, Enforcement, Education, notifiable conditions, pediculosis (headlice), skin penetration, accommodation standards, vector borne disease.

- **Food Safety Management**

Standards (FSANZ, GMO, Health Claims, Nutrition, Labeling, Codes of Practice, Enforcement).

- **Environment Management**

Land, air, noise, water (waste, reuse, drinking), Health Risk Assessment, Toxicology, Catchment Management and Natural Resource Management.

- **Disaster Management**

Preparedness, planning, response and recovery.

- **Healthy Settings**

Tobacco, Shade, HIA, Planning (Community / Municipal Govt Planning, Town Planning

Development), OHS, Health Promotion, Healthy Choices / Cities.

- **Indigenous Health**

Specialist consideration of environmental health in indigenous community settings.

2.5.2 Purpose of SIGs

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) are networks of members that:

- provide the AIEH with groups of specialists that can lobby and comment on legislation and policies and advise government bodies at all levels;
- provide a data base on specialist areas that all members can access;
- provide a forum for members to meet and/or converse on their area of interest;
- develop professional standards of practice;
- develop professional tools;
- provide input into professional development opportunities; and identify and develop relevant practice policies;
- to increase the knowledge and skills of members in the specific professional practice areas.

A Special Interest Group comprises a Convenor and as many members that wish to join.

2.5.3 Operation of SIGs

- Each Branch Council is to establish SIGs in the above practice areas and identify the topics that will be dealt with by the SIG, relevant to their Branch.
- A Branch SIG Convenor is to be nominated by the members of the SIG.
- The SIG Convenors from each Branch will form the National SIG within each professional practice area, with the CEO as the nominal National SIG Convenor until the SIG appoints it own.
- Each Branch and National SIG is required to establish an appropriate meeting frequency and inform members of the details of the meetings including provision of agendas and minutes on the AIEH website.
- Branch and National SIGs can be conducted in a number of methods including face to face or via teleconference. It is the responsibility of each Branch and National SIG Convenor to determine in consultation with the members of the SIG the preferred meeting method.
- Branch and National SIGs are responsible for the formation of committees or working parties to address key issues as needs arise, including establishing the priorities and objectives of the group.
- SIGs are responsible for the formation and yearly updates of a policy statement on their area of professional practice and investigating the need and funding for research in their area of interest. SIGs are responsible for the identification and development of professional training and the development of professional tools.

2.5.4 Responsibilities of Branch SIG Convenors

- The Branch SIG Convenor is required to liaise with Branch Council and the Branch President regarding the strategic direction and priorities of the SIG.
- The Convenor is responsible for reporting on the activities (including financial) of the SIG to every Branch council meeting.
- The Convenor will also provide Branch Council with an annual report at the end of the Branch Council term.
- The Convenor is responsible for co-ordinating the priorities and activities of the SIG according to the AIEH Branch business plan strategies and objectives and ensuring that any financial requirements are expressed so that they can be considered in the budget development for the Branch.
- The Branch SIG Convenor is responsible for referring draft policies and issues on behalf of the SIG to Branch Council seeking formal adoption of all policies.
- The Branch SIG Convenor will liaise directly with the Branch President regarding any media requests.
- The Convenor is responsible for providing the CEO with relevant contact details in accordance with the AIEH Representatives Policy.

2.5.5 Responsibilities of National SIG Convenors

- The National SIG Convener will hold quarterly meetings with the Branch SIG Convenors.
- The National SIG Convener is required to liaise with each Branch SIG Convener and facilitates the co-ordination of national responses to national practice specific issues.
- The National SIG Convener is responsible for referring national draft policies and issues to the Board via the CEO for adoption.
- The National SIG Convener will liaise directly with the National President or CEO regarding any media requests.
- The National SIG Convener is responsible for providing the CEO with relevant contact details in accordance with the AIEH Representatives Policy.

2.5.6 Authority and Accountability

- Either the Branch Councils or the Board of Directors holds authority for the operation of SIGs accordingly.
- The SIG or its Convener does not have the authority to expend or commit funds or resources of the Institute without formal approval of the relevant parent body.
- Policy direction should be developed consistent with any precedential policy established by a parent body and all care taken to ensure that the Institute does not become exposed to any litigious circumstance.
- SIG Convenors and members are bound by the Code of Conduct to act in the interests of the Institute as expressed by the Board of Directors and any acts of negligence, misdirection or fraud will be deemed to be a breach of the Code.

2.6 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- AIEH Representatives Policy
- Travel & Allowances Policy
- Travel & Allowances Procedure