



# Special Interest Groups

## Establishment and ongoing operation

GUIDELINE 6

### Purpose

This guideline is about the formation and operation of a special interest group (SIG). The application form is included as an appendix.

ACNN supports special interest groups to provide continuous networking and information-sharing on a specific topic or area of interest to a subset of members. The SIG's focus must be on an area of interest for neonatal nurses and neonatal nursing, and relate to the philosophy and mission of ACNN. SIGs operate under the aegis of ACNN and are an important component of member activities.

### Section 1. SIG formation

A SIG with a national focus may be formed by a group of at least five financial members of ACNN. The name of a special interest group is based on its particular interest, for example, Education SIG, Nurse Practitioner SIG.

SIG activity encompasses establishing and maintaining a membership, meeting at regular intervals, holding an annual meeting for the purpose of planning activity for the coming year and confirming a committee, contributing to the quarterly newsletter, and submitting an annual report for each calendar year.

The roles of the SIG operating committee are specified in Section 2 below. SIGs are also expected to conform to the current ACNN Strategic Plan and Sustainable Committees document (Policy 13).

Applications to establish a SIG are submitted to the National Executive via the National Secretary at [theseecretary@acnn.org.au](mailto:theseecretary@acnn.org.au)

Applications must include the following elements (see appendix).

- Terms of reference (TOR), including aims, objectives, meeting schedule and proposed activities over the first 12 months
- Proposed operating committee that includes a minimum of five members to fill the roles of chairperson, secretary, treasurer liaison and at least two ordinary committee members
- Current phone, email and signature of each operating committee member

### Approval and provisional period

Upon approval of application, the SIG will commence a provisional period of one year to achieve the following requirements.

- An established membership
- Successful undertaking of proposed activities as set in the application
- Holding of an annual meeting in association with the ACNN national annual conference, unless the starting date of the provisional year is too close to the conference date for arrangements to be made
- Submission of a report within one month of the end of the provisional year

At the end of the provisional year, the National Executive will review provisional SIG activity against the application terms and approve or not approve the SIG for ongoing operation.

The National Executive may elect to extend the provisional period for up to six months, if the SIG has not fulfilled its TOR, proposed activities and/or is not meeting its responsibilities as set out in the Sustainable Committees document and Strategic Plan.

## Section 2: SIG operation

SIGs may meet as often as they wish to achieve their aims. Meetings may be informal, but decisions must be recorded in meeting minutes so that they may be placed on the website for members to access.

### Operating committee and roles

Operating committee members hold their positions for 12 months and can re-nominate each 12 months.

Operating committee positions become vacant at the SIG annual meeting held in conjunction with the ACNN Annual Conference. Committee applicants must be current financial members by 30 June each year.

Preferably, SIG members should apply for committee membership before the annual meeting. However, nominations may be put forward and accepted at the meeting.

Role	Responsibilities
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenes and chairs meetings</li> <li>• Works with the Secretary to prepare the meeting agenda</li> <li>• Works with the Secretary and committee to prepare the annual report</li> <li>• Works with the committee to plan activities in line with the ACNN Strategic Plan</li> <li>• Works with the committee to meet the requirements of the Sustainable Committees document</li> </ul>
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the key communication link between the National Executive, ACNN Secretary, Executive Support Officer (ESO) and the SIG committee members</li> <li>• Holds the SIG email address and is responsible for receiving and sending SIG emails</li> <li>• Works with the Chairperson to draft emails to be sent to SIG and/or all ACNN members</li> <li>• Arranges meetings in consultation with the Chairperson</li> <li>• Records minutes at meetings</li> <li>• Sends minutes to the ESO for distribution to SIG members and uploading to the members' area of the website</li> <li>• Has access to the SIG Dropbox folder and is responsible for sharing the documents in Dropbox with the committee members</li> </ul>
Treasurer Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liaises with the National Treasurer and/or Assistant Treasurer regarding all financial requirements</li> <li>• Prepares financial summary for SIG meetings as agreed by the committee (i.e. for each meeting/for every second meeting)</li> </ul>
Ordinary Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integral member of the operating committee, attends at least 80 per cent of all SIG meetings</li> <li>• May take on a role as determined by the committee, such as being responsible for liaising with the ESO on keeping the SIG's website page up to date, or leading the development of a factsheet for the SIG (for promotional purposes), or to represent the SIG at a National Executive Forum meeting in line with the Sustainable Committees document</li> </ul>

**Annual reviews and confirmation or removal of ongoing status**

SIGs are reviewed each calendar year by the National Executive based on each year's activity report, TOR review, projected plans, and compliance with the ACNN Sustainable Committees document and Strategic Plan.

The National Executive reserves the right to disband a SIG should the SIG be unable to maintain an adequate membership, form a committee, perform to its TOR or achieve its proposed activities, or meet its responsibilities as set out in the Sustainable Committees document and Strategic Plan.

**Financial responsibilities**

At the beginning of each financial year the SIG is allocated a budget from ACNN central funds for operating costs (e.g. to host workshop/meeting) – presently \$1000 – and funds for establishing a scholarship relevant to the purpose of the SIG (presently \$8000). Funding is dependent on the overall funds available for the support of SIGs.

There is an expectation that activities undertaken by the SIG will be cost-neutral: that is, a delegate fee will be charged to cover presenter expenses, venue hire and catering costs. Any profit from activities or unused budget allocation will remain available to the SIG for future activities.

The SIG is required to operate within its allocated annual budget, as approved by the National Executive. The SIG must not incur any debt to ACNN.

**SIG committee responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the SIG committee are to operate and carry out initiatives in line with the current ACNN Strategic Plan and the Sustainable Committees document, attend bi-monthly forum meetings with the National Executive, contribute to the quarterly newsletter and submit an annual report.

All materials, including but not limited to, newsletters, flyers, or letters of promotion or fundraising, must be formatted on ACNN templates, available from Dropbox or the ESO. All materials must be approved by the National Executive before release or distribution.

**National Executive responsibilities to the SIG**

- Financial, administrative and technical support
- Guidance, governance and development support
- Meeting support via electronic means (Zoom) or at the ACNN conference

## APPENDIX

## Application to form a special interest group

**Date of application***Enter date of application here***Proposed name of SIG***Enter proposed name here***Focus and purpose***Describe focus and purpose of SIG***Terms of reference***Give aims and objectives, meeting schedule, and details of proposed activity for provisional year of operation.***Provisional committee nominations**

Role	Name	Mobile	Email
Chairperson			
Secretary			
Treasurer liaison			
Ordinary members (min 2)			

**Declaration**

We have read and undertake to comply with the conditions of the current version of ACNN Guideline 6: Establishment and ongoing operation of special interest groups.

**Signatures**

Chair

Secretary

Treasurer liaison

Ordinary members