DAA Interest Group and Discussion Group Manual
Index

Introduction ........................................................................................................... page 3
Background ........................................................................................................ page 3
Role of DAA staff ................................................................................................ page 3
Establishing an Interest Group ......................................................................... page 3
Membership of Interest Groups ....................................................................... page 4
Roles and Responsibilities .............................................................................. page 4
Convenor ........................................................................................................... page 5
Vice convener .................................................................................................... page 5
Secretary .......................................................................................................... page 5
Webpage Coordinator ..................................................................................... page 5
Newsletter Coordinator .................................................................................. page 5
CPD Event Coordinator .................................................................................. page 6
Discussion Forum Coordinator ....................................................................... page 6
Running an Interest Group ............................................................................. page 6
IG Committee ..................................................................................................... page 6
Annual Planning and budgeting ...................................................................... page 6
Annual Report .................................................................................................... page 7
Getting Members Involved ............................................................................. page 7
Advocacy ........................................................................................................... page 7
Funding Guidelines .......................................................................................... page 7
Recognition of member contributions ........................................................... page 8
Workplace Health and Safety ......................................................................... page 8
Timeline ........................................................................................................... page 8
Planning Continuing Professional Development Events ................................ page 9
Developing Education Resources ................................................................... page 9
PEN Pathways .................................................................................................... page 9
Resource Distribution ....................................................................................... page 9
Developing Your IG/DG Webpage ................................................................. page 10
Webpage responsibility .................................................................................... page 10
Webpage Content ............................................................................................. page 10
Changing your webpage ................................................................................ page 11
DAA Communications ..................................................................................... page 11
Interest Group Communications .................................................................... page 11
Newsletter ......................................................................................................... page 11
DAA Weekly Email ........................................................................................... page 12
Social Media .................................................................................................... page 12
IG Chapters ....................................................................................................... page 12
Role and Structure of IG Chapters ................................................................ page 12
Funding for IG Chapters ................................................................................ page 12
Meeting Dates, Times and Venues ................................................................. page 13
Establishing an IG Chapter .......................................................................... page 13
Communication at Chapter Level ................................................................ page 13
Discussion Groups ........................................................................................... page 13
Role and Structure of Discussion Groups ....................................................... page 13
Establishing a Discussion Group ................................................................... page 13
Communications ............................................................................................. page 14
Key Staff Contacts ........................................................................................... page 14
1 Introduction

1.1 Background

An Interest Group (IG) is a group of dietitians who are members of the Dietitians Association of Australia (DAA) who wish to network with other members in an area of professional interest or dietetic practice.

IGs offer members the opportunity to update knowledge and skills in a particular area of dietetic practice and to network with dietitians with similar professional interests.

DAA Discussion Groups (DGs) have been developed to assist members to communicate via a Discussion Forum. See also section 11.

IGs and DGs can only be formed at National level and must be established and operated in accordance with the Procedure for Operation of Interest Groups and Discussion Groups By-law (the By-law).

1.2 Role of DAA staff

DAA staff will provide administrative support, for the following:

- Promotion of events and meetings on the DAA website
- Managing CPD event registrations (see events manual)
- Inclusion of IG information in the DAA Newsletter and DAA weekly email news
- Inclusion of IG information on the IG pages of the DAA website
- Providing access to Discussion Forums and administering member access
- Assistance with budgeting
- Assistance with sponsorship process
- Promotion of IG/DG information on DAA’s social media channels (at DAA’s discretion)
- Supporting IG Convenors with Discussion Forum policy administration

Unless otherwise stated in this Manual, contact the Engagement and Development Manager (EDM) for IG enquiries.

2 Establishing an Interest Group

An IG may be established at a national level by any group of members who have an interest in a specific field of dietetics and nutrition and who meet or communicate as outlined in the By-law.

If considering establishing a new IG please read section 3 of the above By-Law.

In order to establish an IG you must submit a written proposal to the EDM, including the following information about the group:

- Demonstrated membership support from at least 100 members (copy of emails with name, member number and statement of support), unless already established as a Discussion Group
- Name of nominated convenor (one person only)
- Name of a vice convenor and at least 1 committee member
- Draft terms of reference in the appropriate format (Terms of Reference Template)
- An annual plan outlining proposed Key Performance Targets
- Statement briefly outlining how the IG focus and objectives comply with the [DAA strategic plan](#)
  - Including that the IG will operate nationally and is not covered by an existing IG
- Include rationale for developing the new IG ie why this topic is important to dietitians
- That the IG agrees to comply with DAA policy and procedures

Proposals will be considered for establishment by the DAA Board.

3 Membership of Interest Groups

IG membership is free and open to all DAA members.

As IGs are considered one of the many benefits of DAA membership, IG membership is limited to financial members of DAA.

Anyone who is eligible to be a DAA member, but is not a member, may not participate in IG activities. However, non-members can attend DAA IG CPD events provided they pay non-member rates.

Members can join, remove or suspend their membership of IGs and DGs via the DAA website in ‘Update personal details’ – ‘My Groups’.

Students are not permitted to join the Dietetic Educators IG or the Dietitians in Management IG.

4 Roles and Responsibilities

Each IG must have a Convenor, Vice Convenor and at least 1 committee member.

See [By Law](#) for details on terms of office.

The IG may also choose to have other delegated IG positions to share the workload and encourage active participation of IG members, for example, webpage coordinator, newsletter coordinator, CPD event coordinator, list serve discussion group coordinator, chapter coordinators, sponsorship coordinator.

Note: All active IG members who hold a position in the IG must complete and sign a [Declaration of Interest form](#) and send it to the Professional Development Administrator (PDA) upon taking up the position.
4.1 **Convenor**
The responsibilities of the Convenor of an IG include the following:
1. Submit IG position holder details and Declaration of Interest (DOI) forms to DAA Staff.
2. Managing and monitoring content of Discussion Forums as per the Discussion Forum Policy, or appointing another member to do so. This includes managing policy breaches (with EDM support were necessary)
3. Ensuring the IG webpage is accurate and up to date
4. Coordinating sponsorship (for IG events/activities) or appointing another member to do so
5. Coordinating IG events and projects or appointing another member to do so
6. Coordinating annual planning and budget submission to DAA staff.
8. Communicating with DAA staff, IG members, other DAA IGs and EDC Chairpersons
9. Ensuring adherence to IG By-laws
10. Planning and running meetings and/or IG teleconferences if held.
11. Coordinating the use of the IG teleconference code within budget.
12. Feedback to representatives on MEDAC (Member Engagement and Development Advisory Committee)
13. Liaising with IG Chapters – ensure current contact details are listed on IG webpage
14. Monitor chapter activity
15. Inform EDM of changes to position holders

4.2 **Vice convenor**
The Vice Convenor provides assistance to the Convenor. The immediate past Convenor should be encouraged to remain involved in the IG as support for the incoming Convenor.

4.3 **Secretary**
The responsibilities of the secretary may include:
1. Planning and organising meeting dates, times and venues
2. Preparing any meeting agendas/minutes

4.4 **Webpage Coordinator**
The responsibilities of the Webpage Coordinator may include:
1. Organising documents and information to be posted to the IG webpage of the DAA website eg. minutes, annual plan, position descriptions of the IG, meeting details
2. Ensuring contact details of position holders and meeting details posted on webpage remain current

4.5 **Newsletter Coordinator**
The responsibilities of the Newsletter Coordinator may include:
1. Writing or sourcing articles for the DAA Newsletter. See newsletter policy
2. Drafting content for inclusion on the DAA facebook page.
4.6 **CPD Event Coordinator**
The responsibilities of the CPD Event Coordinator may include:

1. Coordinating CPD events (face to face and webinars) in accordance with the [Events Manual](#) and the approved IG budget
2. Liaising with the [Professional Development Administrator](#) (PDA) regarding current events listing, advertising, registration, handouts and post event surveys
3. Arranging dates, venues, catering, AV equipment as required
4. In conjunction with the PDA arranging webinar needs as required
5. Arranging and liaising with speakers for CPD events

4.7 **Discussion Forum Coordinator**
The responsibilities of the Discussion Forum Coordinator may include:

1. Managing and monitoring the emails on Discussion Forums as per the [Discussion Forum Policy](#).

5 **Running an Interest Group**

5.1 **IG Committee**
- The IG committee should have regular meetings to plan and implement IG activities. Teleconference codes are available to facilitate committee members joining from around Australia and costs should be include in the IG budget.
- Agendas should be set for meetings to give structure and direction.
- Minutes should be taken and a public version can be placed on the IG webpage for all members to view.

5.2 **Annual Planning and budgeting**
- Annual Budget Planning is required to review and plan the needs and direction of the IG for the coming year.
- DAA staff will call for annual plans and budgets from each IG in July/August each year. See [DAA Finance Manual for Branch and IGs](#)
- All IG must achieve Key Performance Indicator targets each year see [By Law](#) for details
- Chapter plans are to be integrated and submitted by the IG Convenor with the National IG Plan
- Involve IG members in the planning process by having an email discussion brainstorming session to find out what they want from their membership of the IG and what they would like to achieve in the coming year.
- When developing the annual plan think about the priorities in your practice area.
- Examples include development of resources, PEN pathways, CPD at a national level, CPD events or workshops at DAA Conferences.

For advice on developing budgets contact [EDM](#).
5.3 **Annual Report**
- IGs will be required to submit to the Board an annual report each year.
- DAA Staff will distribute annual report templates in July and they are due back in December annually (see timeline).
- Reporting on Chapter activities should be incorporated into the National IG annual report. This should be completed well ahead of time to avoid late submission of the final document.

5.4 **Getting Members Involved**
IG activities will be more productive and rewarding if members are actively involved.

- Ask all members to raise items of interest on the Discussion Forum.
- IGs may survey the DAA membership for activity planning, please follow the [‘Distribution and advertising of research activities policy’](#) and discuss with the EDM if required.
- Recruiting volunteers
  - For jobs that don’t require expert knowledge, advertising that volunteers ‘don’t need to be an expert just willing to have a go’. This can attract people that want to volunteer however are concerned they don’t have enough expertise.
  - Some members feel more comfortable volunteering for a defined project and time period. This can attract volunteers that have limited time or an interest in a specific area.

5.5 **Advocacy**
Advocacy is a political process by an individual or group which aims to influence public policy and resource allocation decisions. All advocacy work conducted by IGs should reflect evidence based practice, the code of professional conduct and the statement of ethical practice.

Members of Interest Groups can advocate for nutrition and dietetic issues in several ways.

- Contributing to DAA submissions when invited through list serves or weekly emails.
- Nominating to be a representative for DAA on external committees.
- Advocating as an independent APD.
- Advocating as an IG. IG convenor should contact DAA Senior Policy Officer for submission templates and review of documentation before submission.

To find out information on DAA submission see the [submissions page](#) on the DAA website

5.6 **Funding Guidelines**
IGs do not have their own accounts. All monies received and debts incurred are those of DAA. The [Finance Officer](#) is responsible for routine management of all financial matters in relation to an IG. Refer to the [Finance Manual for Branch and IGs](#).

- **DAA funding**

  Requests for DAA funding to facilitate development of resources or other strategic activities should be submitted, fully costed with the IG Annual Plan and budget for consideration by the Board (October each year).
• **External Grants** can be applied for please discuss with the EDM before applying and read Grants policy in the finance manual.

• **Invoicing and Reimbursement of IG expenses**

See Finance manual

**Checklist for operation and processing of Branch and Interest Group accounts**

• **Sponsorship**

See Events manual

Sponsorship flow chart

Approval for adjustment to budgets should be sought from the EDM before expenses are incurred.

All questions regarding IG finances and budgets should be directed to the Engagement and Development Manager.

5.7 **Recognition of member contributions**

IG Convenors and DG coordinators will receive a certificate of appreciation at the relevant EDC General Meeting and on completion of services.

At the end of each year IG Convenors and DG coordinators are to post a thank you message to their respective list serves thanking all office holders and working group members. Specifically name each person and highlight their important contribution to the IG/DG.

IG Convenors can obtain an electronic certificate of appreciation template or statement of service template to utilise at their discretion. Please request from the Professional Development Administrator.

See also the Volunteer Recognition Policy

Consider nominating IG members for awards. See award information on the DAA website

5.8 **Workplace Health and Safety**

Please read the ‘Workplace health and safety policy for DAA volunteers’

5.9 **Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Activity</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for conference IG meeting preferences</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>EDM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference IG meeting preferences due</td>
<td>March</td>
<td>IG Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IG meeting at conference</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>IG Convenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budget, annual plan and annual report documents</td>
<td>July Week 4</td>
<td>EDM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>distributed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 6 Planning Continuing Professional Development Events

The planning of CPD events should form part of the IG annual planning process. Please refer to the [Events Manual](#).

- Refer to the [Budgeting for DAA Events Policy](#), the Event Budget Planner and the Operations Budget Planner.

### 7 Developing Education Resources

Producing education resources for dietitians, other health professionals and clients is one way the IG can share knowledge and expertise.

Education resources developed by IGs belong to DAA. IG resources can only be sold if they have DAA endorsement and profits from sales of resources will be received by DAA.

#### 7.1 PEN Pathways

IGs may submit a project proposal in the Annual Budget Planning process to develop PEN Pathways. DAA is not able to fund a project officer to complete a systematic literature review however DAA can fund IG teleconferences. Support for meetings and conference workshops may also be available. Sponsorship from DAA Corporate Partners or other companies/organisations for the development of PEN Pathways is not permitted. IGs may seek project officer funding from grant opportunities from other sources. Contact the EDM to discuss.

DAA no longer supports members to develop evidence based practice guidelines preferring to support PEN Pathway development.

#### 7.2 Resource Distribution

IG resources may be distributed in the following ways:

- Submission to DINER
- Listed in the DAA publications order form for sale to other health professionals or the public
- Advertised in the DAA Newsletter
• Sold at the Market Place or promoted at the DAA stand during the DAA National Conference or other CPD events

Any plans for printing resources need to be included in annual plans and budgets and undertaken in collaboration with DAA Staff.

8 Developing Your IG/DG Webpage

Each IG/DG has its own webpage on the DAA website for the benefit of all members.

8.1 Webpage responsibility

The IG convenor or DG coordinator is responsible for ensuring information contained on the IG/DG webpage is accurate and up to date. The IG convenor/DG coordinator may appoint a website coordinator to manage the IG/DG webpage.

8.2 Webpage Content

All IGs must post on their webpage:

• Terms of Reference
• Contact details of Convenor
• Contact details of Chapter Coordinators
• Meeting dates
• Minutes if any (of chapter meetings and national IG meetings) these are kept on the IG webpage for 2 years. After this time, they can be accessed by contacting DAA staff.

DG must post on their webpage the contact details of the coordinator and moderator.

Other suggestions include:

• A brief overview of the IG/DG can help members decide whether to join
• Meeting agendas
• IG contact list of position holders
• Reference lists
• Case studies
• Links to relevant evidence based websites (see website links policy)
• List of relevant resources with links to DINER (resources are to be housed on DINER not IG/DG webpages)
• FAQs

IG/DG webpage cannot include:

• Multiple Photos
• Product information/Brand names (or links to these)
• Non DAA event information
• Resources – these should be placed on DINER for all members to access
8.3 Changing your webpage
DAA staff will make the required changes to the IG/DG webpage. When information is ready for loading to the webpage, forward it to the Professional Development Administrator (PDA). Allow a minimum of one week for items to be placed on the site, longer at busy times.

Please be very specific about what you want changed and where the change is to be made. For small changes highlight words to be changed. The clearer the information given to DAA staff for loading the quicker and more accurate the job can be done.

Document format: Provide in Word document or PowerPoint, if documents contain links make them hyperlinked.

9 DAA Communications

9.1 Interest Group Communications
- IGs and DGs will communicate primarily via the IG/DG Discussion Forum.
- Drop box accounts can be set up by the IG convenor to assist with working on projects.
- All IGs are invited to conduct one free face to face meeting at the DAA National Conference held in May each year. Meeting room bookings will be called for in the March prior to the Conference by the EDM.
- Teleconferences and webconferencing may be used for planning, project development and IG meetings, provided cost are included in the IGs annual budget. The IG convenor is responsible for coordinating use of the IG teleconference code. Contact Engagement and Development Manager for IG specific teleconference code also see teleconference policy
- IGs and DGs can communicate (via DAA staff) on social media using DAA’s official social media channels only.

Chapters may wish to meet face to face on a regular basis (see Section 10).

9.2 Newsletter
The DAA Newsletter is sent to DAA members and some other stakeholders. Each issue of the Newsletter has a section where IG activities and articles may be included. This is a good way of reaching all DAA members, encouraging members to join your IG and alerting members to your IG’s activities and events. Articles can include items such as case studies with questions, clinical updates, journal article reviews, a report from a conference or CPD activity.

Deadlines
Deadlines for newsletter items are available on the DAA website.

Word Limit and Format
500 words per IG per article, refer to the DAA Newsletter Manual. Note: if pictures are included in the article the word limit will decrease. Use MS Word, Calibri font, size 11. See Appendix 1 ‘Guidelines to Authors’ in the DAA Newsletter Manual for the correct style. All images must be in .jpeg, .gif or .tif formats and NOT embedded in word documents.
Submiting Newsletter Items
Items for the Professional update section of the newsletter should be submitted by email to the Communications and Marketing Admin by COB on the advertised deadline date.

9.3 DAA Weekly Email
Emails are forwarded to DAA members on Mondays of each week, or as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

IG material to be placed on the weekly email must be authorised and submitted by the IG Convenor to the Communications and Marketing Admin by 12 noon on Wednesday.

All material must comply with the Policy for Direct Emailing DAA Members

9.4 Social Media
Items for inclusion in DAA’s official social media channels (such as Facebook), should be forwarded to the Communications Dietitian. Content will be uploaded at the discretion of DAA’s Communications and Marketing Unit.

For further information about DAA’s social media channels, please contact the Communications Dietitian

10 IG Chapters

10.1 Role and Structure of IG Chapters
- Chapters are part of a National IG
- The Chapter develops its activities in line with the National IG plan and in consultation with the IG convenor
- The Chapter will appoint a coordinator who will take the role of liaison with the IG Convenor, and will take responsibility for organisation of the Chapter
- Internal organisation of the Chapter should be developed to suit local needs
- Membership rules are the same as for the National IG
- The Chapter must comply with DAA policy and procedures
- IG Chapters report to the IG convenor

10.2 Funding for IG Chapters
Budget applications for events and Chapter activities will be made in collaboration with the National IG. Chapter requests must be incorporated into the annual National IG budget submission. The final budget submission is due to DAA by the first week of October each year. Coordinators are to ensure their requests reach the IG convenor well in advance of this to ensure the National IG budget submission is not late.

Only the IG convenor has authority to approve IG Chapter spending in line with the approved IG budget
10.3 Meeting Dates, Times and Venues
- Should allow maximum access for IG members (teleconferencing is available)
- Should be at minimal cost
- Should be timed to avoid clashes with other IG meeting times, i.e. communicate with other Chapter Coordinators
- Should be of a length and frequency to suit the needs of the group

10.4 Establishing an IG Chapter
To establish a Chapter there must be IG convenor support in the first instance. IG membership support for the chapter must be demonstrated and a volunteer must be willing to take on the Chapter Coordinator role. The IG convenor should discuss proposed IG Chapters with the EDM.

10.5 Communication at Chapter Level
Please note the following DAA Board directive “email communication between multiple members of an IG must not disclose members email addresses”. IGs should only use the list serves that are maintained by DAA staff. Chapters may wish to keep separate mailing lists for organising projects and events but they should use an external method that can guarantee confidentiality and privacy. Examples of external list serves include Yahoo Groups or Google Groups. Where possible the National list serve should be used for all IG Chapter communication in particular key activities such as calling for a new coordinator or distributing agenda/minutes.

DAA staff are unable to coordinate Chapter mailing lists.

Communication with DAA staff for actions such as website changes, weekly email articles, budget requests, reimbursement request, should go through the IG convenor.

11 Discussion Groups

11.1 Role and Structure of Discussion Groups
- Discussion Group (DG) membership is open to all DAA members including students
- The DG will appoint a coordinator and a moderator
- The Coordinator is responsible for
  - liaison with DAA staff
  - Supporting the Moderator in managing online forum discussions according to the list serve policy.
  - Ensuring the DG operates within DAA policies and procedures
  - Updating the DG webpage
- The moderator is responsible for
  - Ensuring the list serve policy is adhered to and addressing breaches as they occur.
- DGs will not participate in annual planning or budgeting
- DG key DAA staff contact is the EDM.

11.2 Establishing a Discussion Group
- Please read the procedure for operation IG and DG By-Law
- A DG may be established, at the Board discretion, by any group of members who have an interest in a specific field of nutrition
- In order to establish a DG you must submit a written proposal to the Engagement and Development Manager including the following information about the proposed DG:
  - Objectives, e.g. to provide a forum for discussion regarding <topic>
  - Name of proposed Coordinator and Moderator
  - Rationale of need for the DG
  - Support from at least 10 DAA members (copies of emails required)
- The DGs objectives must comply with the DAA Strategic Plan
- Proposals will go to the DAA Board for consideration

11.3 Communications
- DGs will be provided with a DAA Discussion Forum, activity on the Discussion Forum must comply with the DAA Discussion Forum policy.
- Items for inclusion in DAA's official social media channels (such as Facebook), should be forwarded to the EDM. Content will be uploaded at the discretion of DAA's Communications and Marketing Unit

12 Key Staff Contacts

Engagement and Development Manager
Contact for budget and policy queries, approval for budget changes during the year, list serve policy non-compliance issues, MEDAC queries

Professional Development Administrator
Contact for event management, webpage changes, notifying re committee position changes, list serve operational difficulties, submitting invoices and reimbursement forms for payment

Finance Officer
Contact to check if payments have been made

Communications and Marketing Administrator
Contact for weekly email inserts and newsletter articles submissions