

**Senior Managers of  
Australian and New Zealand  
Forensic Laboratories**

**and the**

**National Institute of  
Forensic Science**

**Criteria For Management of and Support to  
Specialist Advisory Groups (SAG's)**



Revised July 2010

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# SPECIALIST ADVISORY GROUPS

## BACKGROUND

Specialist Advisory Groups (SAG's) have been established under the auspices of SMANZFL. There are eight groups:

- Medical Sciences;
- Biology;
- Chemical Criminalistics;
- Document Examination;
- Field and Identification Sciences;
- Toxicology;
- Illicit Drugs; and
- Electronic Evidence.

The SMANZFL Executive has responsibility for the promotion of and advice to the SAG's. Specific sponsorship of each of the Groups is the responsibility of a designated member of the Executive or co-opted SMANZFL member as determined by the Executive. The SMANZFL sponsor role is to provide corporate and mentor support for the SAG Chair, attend the SAG meeting and communicate SAG outcomes to SMANZFL in conjunction with the Chair.

See Appendix 1 for details.

The purpose of each individual SAG is to:

Promote science excellence in SAG disciplines by influencing decisions on:

- technical systems/advice;
- research and development;
- training;
- quality;
- legislative policy/framework;
- communications/representation.

### Technical Systems/Advice

- source of technical advice to - SMANZFL Executive, NATA, FSAAC, NIFS;
- development of standards, databases, reference collections;
- consumer issues - bulk purchasing.

### Research and Development

- identify research priorities;
- co-ordinate the application for funding from NIFS;
- evaluate conferences, meetings, (pre and post).

### Training

- identify training priorities;
- co-ordinate the application for workshop funding from NIFS;
- organise and run training workshops.

## **Quality**

- Proficiency Review (PRC's);
- proficiency tests/trials;
- development of standards, databases and reference collections;
- continuous improvement;
- validation studies;
- external audit - peer review;
- benchmarking.

## **Legislative Policy/Framework**

- input to development of policy - carry out practical tasks;
- input into legislation;
- development of common reporting standards;
- development of guidelines for case reporting;
- human resource advice.

## **Communications/Representation**

- networking:
  - resource re unusual or different cases;
  - reference point.
- literature review/currency/role of newsletter;
- external links with similar/equivalent technical advisory groups;
- lobby;
- representation at international working groups etc;
- evaluate conferences, meetings, (pre and post).

## **SMANZFL**

### **Reporting responsibility**

Each SAG meets annually contingent on the submission of an approved agenda. (see later for detail).

Minutes of the meeting must be submitted to the SMANZFL Chair prior to the annual SMANZFL meeting and published on the SAG Website upon ratification by the SAG (within six weeks of the last day of the meeting).

**The date and location of the next SAG meeting must be included in the minutes of each SAG meeting.**

Between annual meetings the SAG will remain in contact throughout the year to ensure that action items and issues which arise during the year are dealt with in a timely manner.

SAG's interact with:

- SMANZFL executive - primary reporting;
- NATA, FSAAC - primary responsibility to NATA (formal);
- NIFS - formal contact through Chair;
- International Working Groups - report annually to executive, direct contact/relationship with WG's;

- Laboratory/line management - influence decision making/lobbying. Inform management of discussion/decisions;
- Industry groups - individual contact on issues such as bulk purchase, equipment register etc;
- Educational establishments - provision of advice on courses, members of industry reference groups.

## **Organisation**

Each SAG elects a Chair for the term of two years. The SAG Chair may be re-elected for a further term. In addition, the SAG elects a Deputy Chair. The Deputy Chair does not automatically fill the Chair's position, once the Chair's term expires or they stand down, but it is highly recommended that they stand for election. The organisation from which the Chair originates may nominate a second person to represent the organisation.

The current and immediate past Chairs of each SAG are shown in Appendix 1.

The hand over from one SAG Chair to the next occurs on 1 January in the year following the election of the new Chair. The outgoing Chair should actively involve the incoming Chair, with respect to the activities of the SAG until hand over.

Upon hand over, the outgoing chair will supply the incoming Chair with copies of all SAG minutes, mailing lists etc.

SAG Chairs are to attend the annual SMANZFL meeting to:

- Report on the SAG activities for the year using the SAG reporting template (Appendix 2); and
- To provide discipline specific advice on other agenda items.

A SAG may form subcommittees or technical working groups or focus groups to address specific issues. These may be standing committees or groups (eg Scientific Working Groups (SWG's)) or topic specific.

Organisations eligible for representation at the SAG meetings are listed in Appendix 3. Other organisations/persons may attend at the invitation of the SAG Chair in consultation with the SMANZFL sponsor. Staff of the local government forensic science providers or persons who provide a service for the government are strongly encouraged to attend as observers.

For SAG's, other than the Medical Sciences SAG, the organisation's representative will be the official representative of that organisation. The SAG representative should therefore be the Section Head or a senior person given full responsibility to make decisions on behalf of that organisation.

The representation of the Medical Sciences SAG differs. This SAG represents the fields of odontology, anthropology, entomology and mortuary management. Membership of the SAG represents the disciplines rather than jurisdictions. To that end, each discipline should have at least two representatives with total membership to be limited to 12 people. However, each jurisdiction should be represented on the SAG.

The term of a SAG representative is at least one year (i.e. from one annual meeting to the next), but can be ongoing. This ensures that action items from the meeting and issues which arise during the year are dealt with in a timely manner and that SAG business continues throughout the year, out of session.

Each organisation's representative will be the official representative of that organisation. The SAG representative should therefore be the Section Head or a senior person given full responsibility to make decisions on behalf of that organisation.

Only official SAG representatives are eligible to vote. It is highly recommended that where possible, SAG should discuss issues and come to a consensus position. A formal vote should be seen as a last resort only. Where a vote is necessary, voting would be on a jurisdictional basis (i.e. one vote for each jurisdiction represented). The SAG chair does not have a casting vote.

It is essential that the SAG representatives are a conduit for information from their organisation/discipline/jurisdiction to the SAG and from the SAG to their respective organisation/discipline/jurisdiction.

## **NIFS SUPPORT TO SAG's**

Each SAG meets annually, **provided that there is an approved agenda**. NIFS provides support to the SAG's in addition to attendance of Chairs at the SMANZFL Executive Meeting, in the following way:

### **Annual SAG Meetings**

NIFS will fund SAG meetings to a **maximum** of the following amounts.

A 21 day advanced purchase airfare for the Chair, Chairs of SWG's (where appropriate) the SMANZFL Sponsor and each Australian organisation's official SAG representative. Note, if the airfare is not purchased as an advanced fare or cheaper, the individual's organisation will be billed the difference.

\$500 is allocated for meeting costs and catering at \$30/head/day for the official SAG representatives, Chair, SWG Chairs and SMANZFL Sponsor and invited guests.

Funding for attendance of presenter(s) will be in addition and considered on a case by case basis.

NIFS would need to consider the venues of **all** the SAG meetings, before agreeing to fund more than one meeting in either New Zealand and/or Perth and/or Darwin.

As with all NIFS sponsored meetings, the SAG's are encouraged to consider holding their meetings in varying locations from year to year.

Locations of past meetings are listed in Appendix 4.

**NOTE:** A registration fee (max \$300) for each delegate may be charged to assist in meeting the cost of any SAG meeting.

Meetings in Melbourne, Adelaide and Sydney \$150  
Meetings in Canberra, Hobart and Brisbane \$200  
Meetings in Perth, Darwin and New Zealand \$300\*

\*Note there should be only one meeting per year held in Perth, Darwin or New Zealand

**Items for the SAG meeting agenda are submitted on a proforma (Appendix 5) six weeks prior to the meeting. The Chair of SMANZFL and the SMANZFL Sponsor will approve the agenda, prior to funding being made available.**

Once approved, the SAG agenda will be circulated to all SAG members and other SAG Chairs for their information and in time for the receipt of comment prior to the meeting.

These arrangements satisfy the requirement of the Guidelines for Conference Arrangements by the Conference of Commissioners of Police, Australasia and the South West Pacific region.

NIFS does not organise meeting venues, accommodation, catering or the agenda. This responsibility is that of the SAG Chair or their nominee.

Meeting venues should be considered in light of the cost. Where a local forensic science provider or other government department has appropriate facilities available, these should be used in preference to hiring facilities.

#### **Maintenance of SAG Websites**

The content of each SAG Website is the responsibility of the SAG.

NIFS will post all contributions to the sites as soon as practicable after receipt of the material.

#### **Maintenance of SAG List Serves**

NIFS maintains the infrastructure for e-mail list serves for each SAG. The membership of each list serve is the responsibility of the SAG.

Membership of the list serve may be broader than just SAG members.

NIFS will add e-mail addresses to the list as soon as practicable after receipt and authorisation of the addition.

#### **Attendance at International Working Group Meetings**

NIFS provides financial support (up to \$2,000) for a maximum of two SAG representatives per annum to attend critical meetings of an international working group to present the Australian view.

The SAG's can nominate an International Working Group to be attended by completing an application form (Appendix 6). Applications must be sent to NIFS at least six weeks before the departure date. Late applications may be considered, however, they may not be fully funded. The nomination to NIFS must include the endorsement of both the relevant SAG Chair and the relevant SAG sponsor

NIFS in consultation with the SMANZFL Chair/SMANZFL Executive will decide on the applications and their priority.

Within three months of returning, attending practitioners must provide a written report to:

- Their laboratory Director;
- NIFS; and
- SAG Chair/SAG sponsor.

The report must include:

- An executive summary;
- A report on the meeting attended;
- The key outcomes; and
- Personal, organisational and national benefits.

## Appendix 1

<b>2010 SAG Chair</b>		<b>2010 Mentor</b>	<b>Immediate Past Chair</b>
<b>Biology</b>	Pam Scott	Gavin Turbett	Pam Scott
<b>Criminalistics</b>	Tony Peter	Ross Vining	Sarah Benson
<b>Documents</b>	Carolyn Bird	TBA	John Ganas
<b>Field &amp; Identification Sciences</b>	Cheryl Brown Eric Davies (Firearms SWG) Peter Condoleon (Fingerprints SWG) Rob Cairnduff (Crime Scene SWG) Paul Sheldon (Shoe & Tyre Mark SWG) David Veldhoen (BSPA SWG)	TBA	Bill Crick
<b>Toxicology</b>	Dimitri Gerostamoulos	Keith Bedford	Tania Prolov
<b>Illicit Drugs</b>	Andrew Camilleri	TBA	Methsiri Edirisinghe
<b>Electronic Evidence</b>	Tim Thomas	John Scheffer	Graeme Kinraid
<b>Medical Sciences</b>	Jodie Leditschke	Stephen Cordner	

## Appendix 2

### SAG reporting template

Insert SAG meeting details		
Report Layout		<i>Items Discussed</i>
Main Topic	Subheadings	
<b>Quality Issues</b>	Uncertainty	
	Method Validation	
	Instrument Validation	
	Collaborative Trials	
	Proficiency Tests	
	Quality Controls	
	Standards	
	NATA	
<b>Process Issues</b>	Packaging	
	Transport	
	Continuity	
	New procedures	
	New Equipment	
	New Technology	
	Statistics use	
<b>Data Base Issues</b>	Data bases maintained	
	Proposed databases	
<b>Activity Data</b>	Case trends - crime types	
	Case trends - volumes received	
<b>Case Issues</b>	Precedents - Interesting Cases	
<b>Legal &amp; Legislative Issues</b>	New Legislation	
	Suggested Changes	
	Observed Trends	
<b>Counter Terrorism Activities</b>	Initiatives	
	Trials conducted/needed	
<b>Training &amp; Education</b>	Workshops Conducted	
	Workshops Planned	
	Workshops Proposed	
	Course work developed	
	Uni/TAFE Collaborations	
	Seminars/Symposiums/Conferences	
<b>Research Activities</b>	NIFS Innovation Strategy Participation	
	Current Projects	
	Proposed Projects	
	Individual State Initiatives in Research Promotion	
	Collaborations	
	Publications	
<b>Resolution Summary</b>		
<b>Meeting Agenda</b>	Attached as Appendix	

## Appendix 3

The following organisations are eligible to be represented at the designated SAG meetings and to receive NIFS funding.

Biology	Victoria	Victoria Police Forensic Services Centre (VPFSC) Victorian Institute of Forensic Medicine (VIFM)
	NSW	Division of Analytical Laboratories (DAL) NSW Institute of Forensic Medicine NSW Police, Forensic Services Group (FSG)
	ACT	AFP
	Queensland	Queensland Health
	Northern Territory	NT Police, Forensic Services
	Western Australia	PathWest
	South Australia	Forensic Science SA (FSSA)
	Tasmania	Forensic Science Service Tasmania (FSST)
	New Zealand	ESR Forensic
Criminalistics and Documents	Victoria	VPFSC
	NSW	DAL FSG
	ACT	AFP
	Queensland	QLD Police, Forensic Services Queensland Health
	Northern Territory	NT Police
	Western Australia	ChemCentre WA Police, Forensic Services
	South Australia	FSSA
	Tasmania	FSST Tasmania Police, Forensic Services
Field & Identification Sciences	Victoria	VPFSC
	NSW	FSG
	ACT	AFP
	Queensland	QLD Police
	Northern Territory	NT Police
	Western Australia	WA Police
	South Australia	SA Police, Forensic Services
	Tasmania	Tasmania Police

Toxicology	Victoria	VPFSC VIFM
	NSW	DAL FSG
	ACT	ACT Government Analytical Laboratory
	Queensland	Queensland Health
	Western Australia	PathWest
	South Australia	FSSA
	Tasmania	FSST
	New Zealand	ESR Forensic
Illicit Drugs	Victoria	VPFSC
	NSW	NSW AGAL DAL FSG
	ACT	ACT Government Analytical Laboratory
	Queensland	Queensland Health
	Northern Territory	NT Police
	Western Australia	ChemCentre
	South Australia	FSSA
	Tasmania	FSST
	Botanist	
	New Zealand	ESR Forensic
Electronic Evidence	Victoria	VPFSC
	NSW	FSG
	ACT	AFP
	Queensland	QLD Police
	Northern Territory	NT Police
	Western Australia	WA Police
	South Australia	SA Police
	Tasmania	Tasmania Police
	New Zealand	New Zealand Police

		Odontology	Anthropology	Entomology	Mortuary Management
<p><b>Medical Sciences</b>  The membership of this SAG differs from that of the other SAG's. The SAG represents the fields of odontology, anthropology, entomology and mortuary management. Membership of the SAG represents the disciplines rather than jurisdictions. To that end, each discipline should have at least two representatives with total membership to be limited to 12 people. However, each jurisdiction should be represented on the SAG.</p>	Victoria				
	NSW				
	ACT				
	Queensland				
	Northern Territory				
	Western Australia				
	South Australia				
	Tasmania				
	New Zealand				

## Appendix 4

	<b>Biology</b>	<b>Criminalistics (&amp; Documents)</b>	<b>Document Examination</b>	<b>Electronic Evidence</b>	<b>Field &amp; Id Sciences</b>	<b>Illicit Drugs</b>	<b>Toxicology (+ Drugs)</b>	<b>Medical Sciences</b>
<b>1996</b>	Sydney	Sydney			Adelaide		Brisbane	
<b>1997</b>	Wellington	Canberra			Melbourne		Canberra	
<b>1998</b>	Perth	Brisbane			Melbourne		Wellington	
<b>1999</b>	Melbourne	Hobart			Brisbane		Hobart	
<b>2000</b>	Adelaide	Queensland		Brisbane	Hobart	Perth	Melbourne	
<b>2001</b>	Canberra	Adelaide		Melbourne	Perth	Sydney	Adelaide	
<b>2002</b>	Hobart	New Zealand		Canberra	Sydney	Darwin	Canberra	
<b>2003</b>	Queensland	Sydney		Adelaide	Darwin	Adelaide	Melbourne	
<b>2004</b>	Darwin	Perth		Perth	Adelaide	Brisbane	Brisbane	
<b>2005</b>	Brisbane							
<b>2006</b>	Sydney	Melbourne		Sydney	Melbourne	Melbourne	Sydney	
<b>2007</b>	Melbourne							
<b>2008</b>	New Zealand	Canberra	Melbourne	Hobart	Melbourne	Sydney	Melbourne	Adelaide
<b>2009</b>	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Adelaide	Darwin	Adelaide	Melbourne	Sydney
<b>2010</b>	Adelaide	Hobart	Melbourne	New Zealand	Sydney	Brisbane	Sydney	Melbourne

Appendix 5

**SMANZFL Specialist Advisory Group (SAG)**  
Standard Format for Preparation of Discussion Papers and Draft Resolutions

Meeting of SMANZFL \_\_\_\_\_ SAG  
(insert name of SAG)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Location and Date of Meeting)

**ITEM:** A brief heading in upper case to identify the topic of the paper

.....  
.....  
.....

**SUBMITTED BY:** Name of person/organisation and location

.....  
.....

**SUBJECT MATTER & ANALYSIS:** Supply sufficient information in clear concise terms for an adequate understanding of the subject and to allow an appropriate response to be made

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**RECOMMENDATION:** State explicitly the action sought to be taken

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**DRAFT RESOLUTION:** State explicitly how the recommendation is to be achieved, by whom in what time frame

.....  
.....  
.....

**Appendix 6**

**NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FORENSIC SCIENCE**

**Application Form For Attendance At  
International Scientific Working Group**

The closing date for applications is **six weeks prior to departure date.**

**LATE APPLICATIONS MAY NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

**1. DETAILS OF PROPOSED ATTENDEE**

Name: .....

Position: .....

Area of Expertise:.....

Business Address:.....

.....

Phone: .....

Fax: .....

E-mail: .....

Please attach a brief history of the proposed attendee's professional activities over the last five years.

**2. NOMINATED MEETING FOR ATTENDANCE (include reason for nomination)**

Name of meeting:.....

Location of meeting:.....

Date of meeting:.....

Key issues for discussion .....  
(Bullet points)

▪ .....

▪ .....

▪ .....

**3. LIKELY BENEFITS TO THE AUSTRALIAN FORENSIC COMMUNITY OF ATTENDANCE AT MEETING** (bullet points)

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

**4. ITINERARY**

Please attach a proposed itinerary which includes the following :

- dates of meeting to be attended;
- \* approximate flight details;
- \* cost of fares.

\* NIFS is happy to assist in obtaining details if required.

**5. COMMENTS AND CERTIFICATION BY HEAD OF AGENCY/INSTITUTION**  
(Applications will not be considered if this section is not completed)

**Certification**

I certify that this application for attendance at .....  
has the support of this agency/institution. Salary/leave is granted for the  
duration of the meeting and associated travel.

Signature: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

**Comments in Support of Application**.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Caveats, if any**.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**6. COMMENTS AND CERTIFICATION BY SAG CHAIR**

(Applications will not be considered if this section is not completed)

**Certification**

I certify that this application for attendance .....  
has the support of the ..... Special Advisory  
Group.

Signature: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

**Comments in Support of Application**.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**7. RETURN DETAILS**

The original of this application must be received at the:

National Institute of Forensic Science  
Level 6, Yarra tower, World Trade Centre  
637 Flinders Street  
MELBOURNE VIC 3005

**not less than six weeks prior to proposed departure date.**

## Appendix 7



## WORKSHOP PROPOSAL FORM

Closing date: last Friday in September

Submitted by:	
Priority Number (if more than one proposal is submitted)	
Title	
Type	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical Issues <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Training – Non Assessed <input type="checkbox"/> Education/Training - Assessed (Please ✓ appropriate type)
Issue(s) to be addressed	
Outline of goals/objectives	
Proposed learning outcomes (if appropriate)	
Relevant assessment criteria (if appropriate)	

Recommended educational provider (if appropriate)	
Special requirements	
Please detail any safety issues which may be required during the planning and conduct of the workshop	
Proposed presenters (please give full details, including experience/expertise)	
Duration (please attach detailed timetable)	
Other sources of funding considered/applied for	
Amount of support requested from NIFS	
Suggested date and venue	

Indicative costing (excluding one airfare/jurisdiction supplied by NIFS)	
Name and contact details of organisers	