

Specialist Working Group

Terms of Reference

Overview

The Specialist Working Groups (SWGs) were established to provide support to the National Immunoglobulin Governance Advisory Committee (NIGAC) and the National Blood Authority (NBA) with respect to clinical considerations for the Immunoglobulin (Ig) Governance Program in each of the speciality areas of Haematology, Immunology, Neurology and Transplantation. Representation is sought from additional speciality areas (E.g. Rheumatology, Dermatology) as required.

Role

The SWGs:

1. Provide specialist clinical advice, feedback and make recommendations regarding changes to the *Criteria for the clinical use of immunoglobulin in Australia* (the *Criteria*).
2. Provide specialist insight and advice on the development and commissioning of clinical treatment guidelines, research projects, consensus statements or other knowledge development in areas where prescribing variations exist with the potential for inappropriate use or regarding emerging areas of clinical practice.
3. Define the relative prioritisation of each indication for eligibility during times of product shortage.
4. Identify and recommend improvements to education and training regarding Ig and its use and provide education of clinicians regarding the Ig Governance Program, as required.
5. Provide advice and feedback regarding system values and modifications to the Ig authorisation and outcomes database (BloodSTAR).
6. Provide advice and contribute to Performance Improvement activities including the review of data and reports and identify, make recommendations and take action regarding opportunities for continuous improvement.
7. Contribute to the national body of knowledge and the broader Ig Governance Program including liaising as part of the national network of committees (including with NIGAC, other SWGs, and jurisdictional Ig interest groups) as required.
8. Participate in specialist networks that may provide approval for use in specific conditions as required.
9. Receive advice from jurisdictional clinical stakeholders regarding the *Criteria*.

Establishment and support

The SWGs are established as standalone committees supported by the NBA. Additional resources and support are provided when required including specialist expertise for health economic assessments, epidemiological and other analysis. The SWGs will establish working relationships with each other and the network of national and jurisdictional committees and will provide regular updates through the Chair to NIGAC regarding progress against their work program.

Membership

The membership of each SWG will comprise:

Member	Nominating organisation or process
Chair - Medical Specialty Representative Member of NIGAC	NBA will seek nominations from SWG members, NIGAC or other relevant association. NBA will appoint each SWG Chair after considering nominations.
<p>Medical Specialty Representatives*: Each SWG must have a minimum of 5 members and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Representation from both adult and paediatric specialities (where relevant) – Members from at least 4 jurisdictions <p>*Persons with clinical expertise and appropriate qualifications to consider the clinical appropriateness, safety and cost effectiveness of Ig, including comparative outcomes of different therapies.</p>	<p>NBA to appoint members based on consultation with Jurisdictional government health departments and other relevant stakeholders.</p> <p>Each relevant SWG will include at least 1 representative from the relevant society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Neurology Group - Australian and New Zealand Association of Neurologists (ANZAN) – Haematology Group - Haematology Society of Australia and New Zealand (HSANZ) – Immunology Group - Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) – Transplantation Group - Transplantation Society of Australia and New Zealand (TSANZ)
Representative of national authoriser	Australian Red Cross Blood Service
NBA Representatives	Work Program development in line with government objectives and the broader Ig Governance program. Administrative support

Chair

The Chair's main role is to provide leadership to the SWG, and to ensure that SWG carries out its functions effectively and efficiently. Together with the NBA, the Chair will participate in the development of the SWG agenda and to ensure meetings are properly run.

The Chair's roles and responsibilities are as follows:

- a. ensure the proper and efficient conduct of SWG meetings;
- b. manage conflict of interest, confidentiality and other probity issues as necessary;
- c. liaise with the NBA to ensure SWG has the necessary information and resources to undertake its responsibilities effectively;
- d. foster SWG coherence and unity; and
- e. direct SWG discussions to use time effectively to address critical issues related to Program activities.

Proxies, subcommittees and expert advice

Proxies for each SWG Chair will be identified through the initial nomination and selection process. For other members, a proxy may be nominated as required.

The SWGs may request the establishment of further working groups or additional members for specific purposes. The SWGs may also request the assistance of other clinical specialists for advice on matters relating to specific conditions, or other expert advisers.

Frequency of meetings and teleconferences

Meetings will usually be held every three months via teleconference. Face-to-face meetings may be required and where possible, will be linked to annual scientific meetings or similar. Additional teleconferences may also be organised including for urgent single-issue advice.

Duration of membership

Appointments to SWGs will be for a period of three years, with the possibility of reappointment. The process of reappointment may be staggered over a period of time to provide for continuity of membership, and incumbent appointments may be extended for this purpose.

Conflicts of Interest

All members (representatives and experts) are required to declare any conflicts of interest that may bias their input. The Chair examines conflicts of interest and makes decisions as to the member's ongoing participation or any limitation to participation. Conflict of interest declaration forms are to be updated annually, and as new conflicts arise.

Remuneration and allowances

The NBA will make best endeavours to ensure that members are not out of pocket when providing services to the working groups. Sitting fees will be paid at rates equivalent to the those set by the Remuneration Tribunal Determination for holders of part-time public office. Expenses associated with travel will be managed in accordance with the NBA's travel policy for third parties.