

AIFST BRANCH COMMITTEES & SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

OPERATING PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Australian Institute of Food Science and Technology (AIFST) is a national independent voice and network for Australia's food industry professionals.

Our **purpose** is to unite food industry professionals in the science of feeding our future.

Our **mission** is to advance and inspire all food sector professionals through education, collaboration, and recognition to champion a robust, innovative science based Australian food industry to meet future food needs.

To ensure AIFST can fulfil its purpose and deliver against our purpose and mission, the organisation has a network of Branch and Special Interest Groups which recognise the role members can play in supporting other members and contributing to the success of the Institute and industry.

The *Operating Principles and Guidelines* provide guidance to members to ensure there is a consistent approach in how we operate, providing confidence to members around what they can expect from their AIFST membership and assurance that their membership fees are spent in a way that offers the most value.

Definitions

Branch – overall state membership focus and liaison between National Office and state membership.

Special Interest Group (SIG) – based around shared interests/expertise of members across Australia. Special Interest Groups operate at a national level, however they can form sub-committees in a state, where relevant.

BRANCHES AND SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIG)

The function of a Branch or SIG is to underpin a national, engaged AIFST membership by harnessing the knowledge of AIFST members who wish to add value and contribute vital knowledge, expertise/advice and support to the AIFST membership and Australian food industry by providing input and guidance on information and services for members.

The Branches that exist within AIFST are:

1. Queensland
2. New South Wales
3. Victoria
4. Western Australia
5. South Australia
6. Tasmania

The Special Interest Groups that exist within AIFST will include:

7. Food Microbiology
8. Sensory and Consumer Science
9. Innovation and New Product Development
10. Young Professionals
11. Nutrition
12. Consultants
13. Cook Chill
14. Food Engineering (AFEA)

The specific functions and role of the Branch Committees and SIGs are to:

Branches

- Actively work with AIFST to deliver social and information events, updates and activities by harnessing knowledge and industry networks.
- Identify social and information events, updates, and activities to assist AIFST members to build their professional industry network or maintain the industry currency of members.
- Act as an AIFST Champion within both member and non-member networks and within the wider Australian and global food industry promoting the benefits of the organisation and acting as a champion for membership.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

- Provide input and guidance to AIFST to ensure the appropriate information relevant to current practices and needs for food industry professionals is delivered via mechanisms such as, but not limited to: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses, events, online updates (i.e. podcasts/webinars) and information briefings (i.e. member updates/factsheet) within AIFST resource capabilities.
- Share real-time industry news and updates with AIFST that may be of relevance for distribution to AIFST members more broadly or drive the need for AIFST to develop a new service or offering that will generate increased value for members in line with the current Strategic Plan.

SECRETARIAT

AIFST will provide Secretariat support for all activities of the Committees and SIGs.

The AIFST Secretariat will attend the meetings (usually via the Zoom conference facility) and ensure meeting minutes are recorded and maintained.

The AIFST Secretariat will act as the point of contact for all event and membership enquiries.

The AIFST Secretariat is also responsible for approving all expenses, reimbursements, or bookings on behalf of a Committee/SIG.

The AIFST Secretariat will be responsible for ensuring communication of any activities.

MEETING SCHEDULE

Committees/SIGs are recommended to meet on a quarterly basis via face-to-face or teleconference as determined by the committee or SIG in consultation with the AIFST Secretariat. Additional meetings may be held on an as-needs basis.

The AIFST Secretariat will, where possible, distribute meeting material seven (7) days prior to meetings and provide meeting minutes and actions seven (7) days post all meetings.

ANNUAL CALENDAR & BUDGET

Each Committee/SIG is required to prepare an annual calendar of proposed meetings, events, and activities for the year.

All calendars and budgets will be reviewed and finalised by AIFST.

There is the allowance for flexibility around implementation of plans due to changes in priority and circumstance, however all efforts will be made by Committee/SIGs to ensure an appropriately developed three-month rolling plan is delivered to underpin the value offering for AIFST members.

All activities are required to breakeven or generate a surplus. This means all individual events and activities are required to, at a minimum, cover costs through registration income and sponsorship.

An event budget is required to be prepared, reviewed, and approved by the AIFST Secretariat before any event bookings can be made.

AIFST may, at its discretion, host other events, activities, and meetings outside of the Committee/SIG developed annual calendar such as CPD events for the benefit of members.

FINANCES & EXPENSES

All finances are centrally managed by AIFST. Any approvals for payments and expenses are to be managed by the AIFST Secretariat in line with the approved budget. The financial outcome of each specific event will be reported by the AIFST Secretariat to the Committee/SIG on a quarterly basis.

AIFST does not prepare individual Committee/SIG financial reports. An event-specific budget report/reconciliation will be provided as part of the quarterly (March, June, September, and December) reporting process by the AIFST Secretariat.

POLICY FOR SIGNING CONTRACTS

Committee/SIG members are not authorised to sign any documentation on behalf of AIFST and all bookings related to an event (i.e., venue, catering, speakers) require confirmation by the AIFST Secretariat.

AIFST LOGO USE

Distribution and use of the AIFST logo require approval by the AIFST Secretariat. Committee/SIGs are not authorised to provide the AIFST logo to any third parties or approve its use in any printed or electronic material including AIFST material. Should a Committee/SIG member receive such a request this should be sent on to the AIFST Secretariat to be managed.

REVIEW

The *Operating Principles and Guidelines* will be reviewed annually to ensure they continue to deliver value to AIFST members. Members will have the opportunity to provide feedback as part of the annual review process to assist AIFST in ensuring all programs offer value and operate as efficiently and effectively as possible.

A Branch or SIG committee is able to make a request to the AIFST CEO for an amendment to some or part of their operating functions as outlined with the Operating Principles and Guidelines. This request is made with the objective of working to ensure the best value and return for AIFST members.

A request will be reviewed where it clearly articulates:

- a) the amendment request and how this differs from the requirement within the Operating Principles and Guidelines
- b) the rationale and substantiation for how the amendment generates greater value and return for AIFST members, and
- c) clearly demonstrates the impact on AIFST members if the amendment was not considered.

An amendment request should come from the Branch Committee or SIG marked 'Attention AIFST CEO' via aifst@aifst.com.au. An amendment request will be reviewed within 10 days from date of receipt.