EARLY CAREER MHN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

Terms of Reference

1. **Purpose**

The primary purpose of the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses Early Career Special Interest Group (EC-SIG) is to support new graduates and early career nurses in their chosen career of mental health, provide a forum for the exchange of news, views and ideas in relation to beginning practice, and to provide a consultation avenue for the ACMHN regarding the emerging workforce by:

- Promoting careers in mental health nursing to key target groups (undergraduates, graduates, general nursing)
- Promoting the College and College activities to mental health nurses who are at an early stage of their career in mental health nursing, or to undergraduate, graduate and general nurses who may be considering a career in mental health nursing.
- Working with central office staff and friends/associates of the ECMHNSIG (nurse unit managers, faculty members, clinical facilitators and other relevant leaders, professional, academic or service provision bodies) to:
  - Explore and support the development and establishment of a range of pathways into mental health nursing.
  - Facilitate the availability of professional development and mentorship opportunities for mental health nurses who are at an early stage in their career.
  - Support and facilitate the engagement of early career mental health nurses in the College and College activities.
- Providing members of the College at an early stage of their career with a forum for exchanging news, views and ideas.

2. **Authority and accountability**

- The SIG operates within the framework of the ACMHNs general guidelines for Special Interest Groups.
- The College Board, pursuant to clause 6.4 of the College Constitution, has approved the ECMHNSIG and authorised the ECMHNSIG to act in accordance with the Terms of Reference.
- The ECMHNSIG operates in accordance with clauses 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.4, 6.2.5, 6.2.6. of the College constitution and 1.3.9. of the Bylaws, Policies and Guidelines.
• The ECMHNSIG makes decisions relating to the affairs of the ECMHNSIG, but decisions shall be subject to the College Board in matters affecting more than one special interest group or the interests of the College as a whole including overall strategic direction and policy of the College.

• The ECMHNSIG is accountable to the College Board through the Chair.

• The Chief Executive Officer maintains responsibility for financial decisions, business operations and day to day management and administration of the ECMHNSIG.

3. Membership

The membership of the EC-SIG shall consist of financial members of the College who are at an early stage in their career in mental health (e.g. new graduates to 5 – 10 years experience), or nurses who are interested in pursuing a career in mental health. Chair to record and collate membership with authority to delegate.

Non ACMHN members and elist

Non ACMHN members who are early career practitioners may be included in distribution of email via elist or other social media membership (not ECMHNSIG membership) and have access to the ECMHNSIG webpage on the ACMHN site. The CEO of the College shall have final discretion as to such matters. The e-list is for discussion of topics related to early career mental health nursing and also serves as the communication channel for members of the ACMHN Early Career Special Interest Group. The list is unmoderated in terms of pre-filtering but it is owned and monitored by the ACMHN and the ACMHN's e-list policy and usual rules of email etiquette apply.

Friends/Affiliates of the ECMHNSIG

College members who are well established in their careers and are interested in lending their support, networks and expertise to the role and activities of the ECMHNSIG will be able to become Friends/affiliates of the ECMHNSIG. Friends and affiliates of the ECMHN SIG may be invited to meetings of the ECMHN SIG and may offer additional support and advice as required.

4. Meetings

A meeting of the ECMHNSIG members is held at least once per year to elect office bearers. This is usually held in conjunction with the annual conference.

5. ECMHNSIG Executive Committee

An Executive Committee (the Committee) shall be elected by the ECMHNSIG at the Annual Members Meeting and will comprise of:

• A Chairperson (College member or Fellow)

• Other members as required according to the desired mix of expertise for effective Committee management.
The ECMHNSIG Committee manages the affairs and operations of the ECMHNSIG and advises the College Board of Directors on trends, policies and positions for the development and advancement of the special interest.

6. **Term of office of the ECMHNSIG Executive Committee**
   
   - Each member of the Committee shall serve three years.
   
   - Each member may serve up to two consecutive terms, not including any part term replacement served.
   
   - If at any time a vacancy occurs, the Committee may fill a vacancy for the remainder of that term.

7. **Conflicts of interest**

   - Conflicts or potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed by members of the ECMHNSIG at the commencement of each meeting.

   - Conflicts of interest will be managed in line with the College Constitution and meetings policy.

8. **Communication and relationships**

   - Decisions at a meeting of the ECMHNSIG Executive Committee will be made by consensus or a majority of members where consensus cannot be reached.

   - A quorum for ECMHNSIG Executive Committee meetings shall be consistent with that for the Board of Directors and the College meetings in general.

   - A short report from each meeting will be forwarded to the CEO for the information of the College Board.

   - The spokesperson for the Committee is the Chair or delegate nominated by the Chair.

9. **Financial management**

   - Finances are to be managed in accordance with established Financial Rules determined by the College.

   - Action to dissolve the ECMHNSIG shall be by a meeting of the members of the ECMHNSIG and consultation with the College Chief Executive Officer.

10. **Dissolution of the ECMHNSIG**

    - Written notice of the intention to dissolve the ECMHNSIG shall be forwarded to the College Chief Executive Officer as soon as practicable after the meeting.

    - The College Board of Directors may dissolve the ECMHNSIG for failure to comply with the College constitution and or rules.
11. **Review**

Terms of Reference are reviewed third yearly or as needed to reflect the College Constitution.

Approved by the ACMHN Board – 23rd October 2018

Due for review – October 2021