



## **HUMAN GENETICS SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA**

ARBN. 076 130 937 (Incorporated Under the Associations Incorporation Act)

The liability of members is limited

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## Guidance

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The Human Genetics Society of Australasia, acting through its federal body or through the agency of its branches, aims to advance human genetics best practice and education for professionals and the wider community\*.

*\*Communities or community is a term used in this document in the broadest sense and may refer to health professionals, special interest groups, consumers, the international community, etc.*

According to its Constitution, the Society aims to:

- to promote the establishment and maintenance of high ethical standards among persons working in Human Genetics;
- to promote the establishment of high standards of professional practice among persons working in Human Genetics;
- to advance professional and lay education in the field of Human Genetics;
- to promote and facilitate the training and ongoing professional development and recognition of those engaged in the field of Human Genetics;
- to provide for the certification and voluntary registration of genetic counsellors;
- to promote research in the field of Human Genetics;
- to develop and maintain policies and position statements to support best practice in the delivery of health care and the ethical implementation of new genomic technologies;
- to promote public awareness and understanding of Human Genetics

Education and training **within** the Society is conducted through its branches, special interest groups (SIGs), committees, events and conferences. The Society's **Education Foundation** provides funds for Committees, branches, and special interest groups (SIGs) to provide educational, networking or other activities for the benefit of HGSA members.

Through its **Boards of Censors**, the Society develops guidelines for the training and continuing education for members in the fields of genetic counselling and diagnostic genomics, and recommends certification for those who meet the requisite standards.

The Society also has a dedicated committee for education advice, production and review of position statements, and review of consultation documents and proposed educational Society activities. Subsequent endorsement of statements, documents or proposed activities can only be provided by the HGSA Executive.

### **Education, Ethics and Social Issues Committee (EESIC)**

EESIC includes HGSA members with genetics- and genomics-related expertise in areas of academic professional education, community education, ethical issues, psychosocial issues, legal issues, clinical genetics, genetic counselling and consumer representation.

One of EESIC's key roles is to anticipate, identify and respond to relevant issues in human genetics and genomics about which the HGSA may be expected to have expert knowledge to contribute to community debate and policy formation. EESIC promotes professional and community engagement with ethical and social issues in human genetics and genomics both within and outside the HGSA.

#### ***EESIC's roles to support the aims and members of the HGSA***

Where opportunities arise, the Committee, or members of the Committee, may:

- Review and/or develop policies and guidelines and provide expert advice and guidance to the HGSA on the educational, ethical and social issues associated with human genetics and genomics
- Promote engagement around genetics and genomics education and ethical issues – and awareness of related resources and activities – to members at the HGSA Annual Scientific Meeting, and other events as appropriate
- Develop appropriate assessment rubrics in reference to relevant theories and frameworks to ensure all research or proposed education activities are equitably reviewed, e.g., abstracts submitted for the Annual Scientific Meeting
- Provide advice on applications to the Education Fund, and the design and assessment for relevant education, ethical and social issues training programs offered by the HGSA
- Develop and review HGSA policy statements relating to HGSA members and public education, ethical and social issues in genetics and genomics.

#### ***EESIC's roles beyond HGSA***

Where opportunities arise, EESIC members may provide expert advice, specialist input and exchange of information to review national and/or international policies, consultation documents and/or guidelines and provide expert advice and guidance representing the HGSA on the educational, ethical and social issues associated with human genetics and genomics. Audiences may include:

1. **Public:** Recognise the importance of human genetics education and engagement, including ethical and social issues, for society as a whole, including contributing to public education in human genetics.
2. **Government, colleges and/or bodies:** avail of opportunities to promote genetic literacy in government and actively contribute to government consultations regarding ethical, psychosocial and educational issues in genetics.
3. **Secondary and tertiary education:** avail of opportunities to advise on, contribute to, participate in, and/or facilitate genetics and genomics educational programs, including

engagement with ethical and psychosocial issues. Encourage updated capabilities, competencies and/or curriculum developments for human genetics to be included in a range of subjects offered at the junior and senior levels across science and humanities.

- 4. Continuing professional education:** Provide advice on competencies, curriculum design and assessment for relevant education, ethical and social issues training programs offered by other organisations and/or institutions. The action of the Society in this regard is complementary to other existing national and state-based human genetics-focused education programs and courses.

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