



CAUTHE Special Interest Groups: Discussion paper

By Dr Wendy Hillman and Prof Karen Smith
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Executive summary

This discussion paper reviews CAUTHE's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and outlines the role of SIGs within the association as well as making recommendations for their future development.

SIGs are research and/or teaching related groups and there are currently five active SIGs: Critical Approaches; Event Studies; Information & Communication Technologies; Risk, Crisis & Recovery Management; and Teaching & Learning.

Developing strategies to increase engagement and involvement in SIGs was a recommendation in the CAUTHE 2019 Membership Survey Report. This review should also inform the work on the next Strategic Plan.

Recommendations

1. Promote and involve SIGs in CAUTHE activities such as the Mid-Year Meeting (MYM) and PhD/ECR programme at the Conference.
2. SIG coordinators to engage in promoting SIGs through regular CAUTHE communications.
3. SIG coordinators and CAUTHE Executive member to meet annually (at the Conference or another time/online) to share plans and activities, including succession planning.
4. Encourage members at all levels of membership to consider forming new SIGs, including investigating founding a PhD SIG. Encourage non-members of SIGs to become members.
5. CAUTHE Executive to investigate opportunities to collaborate with SIGs/thematic groups in other Australasian and international organisations (both where there are overlaps with CAUTHE SIGs and where CAUTHE does not currently have a SIG in an area).
6. Add SIG enrolment to membership/conference registration/renewal form to promote awareness and engagement in SIGs as well as generate SIG membership information.

1.0 Introduction

CAUTHE's Special Interest Groups (SIGs) aim to provide interaction between members, other associations, and affiliates in Australia, New Zealand and beyond. SIGs are research and/or teaching related groups and there are currently five active SIGs, each run by two or three co-coordinators.

Developing strategies to increase engagement and involvement in SIGs was a recommendation in the CAUTHE 2019 Membership Survey Report. This review also fits with elements of the CAUTHE Strategic Plan (2016-2021) and should inform the work on the next Strategic Plan:

- Leadership – Section 1.1 - Increase membership and participation by the Association
- Engagement – Section 2.1 - Strengthen and support the annual research conference, PhD scholar, Early Career Researcher (ECR) and Mid-Career Academic (MCA) workshops
- Engagement - Section 2.2 - Foster engagement of Special Interest Group members

This paper outlines status of SIGs within CAUTHE and makes recommendations for the future development of SIGs within the association.

2.0 CAUTHE and SIGs

SIGs have been an important part of CAUTHE for around 15 years. SIGs provide a forum for tourism, hospitality and events knowledge engagement, creation and dissemination, and encourage academics to work collaboratively. They are member-led groups, each has co-coordinators, and they draw their core membership from CAUTHE associate and student members, but potentially may include those from outside of CAUTHE¹.

CAUTHE supports the SIGs in various ways, including via communications, inclusion in the annual conference, by financial support and through website and social media presence.

- Communication channels: primarily include the CAUTHE website and social media channels, member news and the twice-yearly CAUTHE newsletter.
- Annual conference involvement: in addition to providing support for hosting SIG meetings at the annual conference, SIGs are invited to be involved in the paper review process and in the management of paper presentation tracks.
- Financial support: in the 15 years between 2009-2020 CAUTHE budgeted between \$2,000-\$5,000/year (average \$4,000/year) financial assistance to help SIGs host meetings or symposia. Of this budgeted amount, \$15,070 (average \$1,000/year) was spent in response to SIG applications for funding. The [Symposia guidelines and funding application](#) outlines the key steps to apply for funding for SIG activities. The SIG Coordinator (currently Wendy Hillman) represents the SIGs on the Executive Committee and provides regular reports on their activities.
- Website and social media presence: each SIG is represented on one of CAUTHE's [Special Interest Groups](#) web pages, which are maintained by the Secretariat. SIG coordinators also maintain their own LinkedIn group and/or Facebook page.

Table 1 provides links to the SIG webpages, year of establishment, coordinator information and links to social media pages.

¹ In [proposing a new SIG](#), "It is expected that all members of the proposed SIG will be CAUTHE members; or if not members, that they will join CAUTHE on approval of the SIG." However, once established, others (including lapsed CAUTHE members) may be included in SIG activities.

Table 1: CAUTHE Special Interest Groups

SIG (with webpage link)	Established	Coordinators	Facebook	LinkedIn
Critical Approaches	2008	Erica Wilson, Professor, Southern Cross University Jennie Small, Honorary Associate, University of Technology Sydney Candice Harris, Professor, Auckland University of Technology	Critical Approaches in Tourism and Hospitality - 69 members	
Event Studies	2011	Leonie Lockstone-Binney, A/Prof, Griffith University Martin Robertson, A/Prof, Edinburgh Napier University	Event Studies Special Interest Group – 42 members	
Information & Communication Technologies	2016	Marianna Sigala, Professor, University of South Australia Ian Yeoman, A/Prof, Victoria University of Wellington	Special Interest Group on Technologies – 10 members	
Risk, Crisis & Recovery Management	2012	David Beirman, Senior Lecturer, University of Technology Sydney Joanna Fountain, Senior Lecturer, Lincoln University		Tourism Risk, Crisis and Recovery Management – 74 members
Teaching & Learning	2009	Mieke Witsel, Senior Lecturer, Southern Cross University Tamara Young, A/Prof, University of Newcastle Niki Macionis, Lecturer, The University of Queensland	Teaching and Learning Special Interest Group – 40 members	Teaching & Learning Special Interest Group – 65 members

CAUTHE members can propose a new SIG using the [SIG guidelines and application form](#). The form outlines the requirements for establishment of the SIG, which involves approval by the CAUTHE Executive Committee. The CAUTHE Executive may assess the viability of a SIG in the event that there is no activity in a two-year period, and SIGs may themselves choose to wind-up. Previous SIGs include [Emerging Markets](#) (2012 – 2019), [Volunteering & Tourism](#) (2009 – 2018), and [Transport & Tourism](#) (2012 – 2015) that are now no longer active.

In the CAUTHE 2019 Membership Survey, SIGs were the fourth-ranked membership benefit (out of 14), with 67% of respondents rating SIGs as an important or very important benefit. SIGs were the ninth ranked in terms of activities it is important that CAUTHE is involved in, although this was still 80% of respondents rating SIGs as an important or very important activity. However, engagement with SIGs was lower, with only 42% of the same respondents having been a member of a SIG in the previous two years.

3.0 Why are SIGs important for CAUTHE?

To provide context to examining the role of SIGs in CAUTHE and options for their future development, we can draw on research on group belonging and identity. CAUTHE's SIGs sit with Peteraf and Shanley's (1997) definition of strategic group identity as "...a set of mutual understandings, among members of a cognitive intra industry group, regarding the central, enduring, and distinctive characteristics of the group" (p.166). Albert and Whetten (1985) and Whetten (2006) suggest that identity is the key, distinguishing and prevailing feature of an organisation: It is how the association responds to the question "who are we as an organisation?" Organisations communicate narratives about who they are, where they have come from, and where they are going - written communication, advertisements, recruitment practices, association newsletters, planning forums, lobbying efforts, and so on, can be seen as narratives of changing authenticity and astuteness (Cheney, 1992, 1983)². An identity narrative "allows the organization to draw coherence from its past and establish direction for the future" (Kimberly, 1987, p. 233).

Even though there are palpable comparisons between distinctiveness at the personal and combined levels, there are also some key distinctions regarding identity development and maintenance procedures, how change can be carried out, and how multiple identities (membership of both the overarching association and at least one SIG) can be articulated concurrently (Ashforth et al., 2008 p. 328; Pratt, 2003; Corley, Gioia & Fabbri, 2000; Gioia, 1998). Therefore, this gives members the ability for those with similar interests to find each other and work together under CAUTHE's broad banner.

A distinctiveness between each SIG focuses on the responsiveness of association members to gaining membership of a given SIG, prompting their interpretation of the group and the association, modifying aspirations, and thereby influencing patterns of collaboration and communication within and between SIG groups and the association. Because CAUTHE influences the thinking of SIGs' decision-makers, it most likely shapes the objectives, activities, and outcomes of each SIG. The CAUTHE Executive also influences actions and results since it shapes the locus and nature of the overall association and SIG interactions (see Peteraf & Shanley, 1997).

² For example, the Iso-CHATS facilitated by Anne Hardy and Tamara Young, are an excellent example of this engagement.

4.0 Developing CAUTHE SIGs

In order to strengthen and stabilise CAUTHE membership and enhance numbers, the SIGs could be utilised to further enhance and grow overall CAUTHE membership, and to contribute to activities during the Annual CAUTHE Conference, and during the MYM.

4.1 Strategies to improve membership and marketing of SIGs

Marketing of SIGs, and thus recruitment of new members, could be undertaken via already scheduled CAUTHE activities. The success of these activities would be dependent upon the involvement of SIG coordinators who would be responsible for the facilitation of the marketing and communication between CAUTHE, the CAUTHE Executive and the attending possible new recruits. A session could be held at the Annual CAUTHE conference. This could be explored as part of the pre-conference activities, and as part of the day encompassing PhD, ECR and MCA workshops; or, run in conjunction with this and/or other activities. The session could be facilitated and presented as an open session with participants from across the CAUTHE membership and other affiliated organisations (the Iso-CHATS is an excellent example here). The marketing of the seminars could be undertaken through the CAUTHE social media channels and by word-of-mouth (see Louw, Turner & Wolvaardt, 2018).

When individuals clearly identify with their relevant chosen association (in this case, CAUTHE), their purpose of existence is tied to the association's existence. This bond has at least two outcomes. One outcome includes interpersonal nuances - robust affinity encourages improved collaboration with other association members as part of the structural group (i.e., from within SIG membership) and intensified competition with non-members of SIGs, and indeed CAUTHE. Additionally, members direct further energy toward responsibilities that contribute to co-members (SIGs) and to the association (Dutton et al., 1994, p. 254) (for example, raising the profile of SIGs, see 4.2).

Recommendation 1: Promote and involve SIGs in CAUTHE activities such as the Mid-Year Meeting (MYM) and PhD/ECR programme at the Conference.

4.2 Raising the Profile of SIGs amongst the membership

A greater awareness of SIGs and their activities could be achieved by scheduled contributions to the CAUTHE Newsletter on a rotating basis. The contribution could consist of interviews with past and present members of each SIG, or news from within the SIGs. Furthermore, contributions could be written by the SIG coordinators, other members of each SIG, academics, and industry stakeholders with an interest in a particular SIG, or other invited individuals. This would be a way forward in attracting non-members of SIGs to become members

Recommendation 2: SIG coordinators to engage in promoting SIGs through regular CAUTHE communications. This would include encouraging non-members of SIGs to also become members

4.3 Leadership of SIGs and succession planning

SIGs appear to be an effective strategy to increase membership and solidarity within CAUTHE among academics and PhD students. This finding is key because it will create a clear path for PhD, ECR and MCR members to follow in the footsteps of their mentors and current leaders and coordinators, and to ensure the continuance of CAUTHE and subsequent SIGs into the future. "A foundation phase with high levels of academic support by those already qualified is needed to allow student leadership to emerge" (Louw, Turner & Wolvaardt, 2018, p. 1). Further, 'shadowing' of current coordinators by identified 'up and coming' coordinators would also be of benefit to both categories, as it would put in place an identified succession plan for each of the SIGs.

There is also potential to provide more of a community for SIG coordinators, to recognise their leadership and to create stronger links to CAUTHE and between SIGs.

Recommendation 3: SIG coordinators and CAUTHE Executive member to meet annually (at the Conference or another time/online) to share plans and activities, including succession planning.

4.4 Developing new SIGs

While SIGs can be established by any member of CAUTHE, they have generally been proposed and led by more senior academics who are already qualified or interested in a particular research and/or teaching area and who understand the necessity of exploring strategies to improve interest in their particular SIG within CAUTHE (see Louw, Turner & Wolvaardt, 2018). PhD students or junior/new members of CAUTHE may feel reluctant to take this step, perhaps because they believe they do not have enough experience in an area, they may not see themselves of being of significant status within the CAUTHE ranks, or they may be time poor. Encouraging PhD and/or early career academics to play a more active roles in existing SIGs (e.g., as co-coordinators) or as proposers of new SIGs could provide leadership and professional opportunities for these members, as well as potentially identifying emerging topics and areas of research and teaching interest.

Related to this, a PhD SIG could enable a student-led community for CAUTHE student members.

Recommendation 4: Encourage members at all levels of membership to consider formation of new SIGs, including investigating founding a PhD SIG.

4.5 Partnership with SIGs in other organisations

Of CAUTHE's Kindred Associations, ANZALS has a Health & Leisure Group and SMAANZ runs a [mentoring programme](#), but neither has extensive SIGs and there is an opportunity to develop our reciprocal relationships and promote involvement of CAUTHE SIGs to the members of our kindred associations.

A review of other association membership organisations identifies more extensive special interest group or thematic groups (see Appendix 1). Although this may be a result of a larger membership basis, there could be further opportunities to collaborate with SIGs in other associations, for example on joint events or initiatives³. SIGs that may be of interest to our domains include:

Academy of Marketing

- Arts, Heritage, Non-profit & Social Marketing
- Consumer Psychology & Cross-Cultural research
- Place Marketing & Branding
- Sustainability
- Tourism Marketing

ANZAM

- Indigenous Issues
- Operations, Supply Chain and Services Management

ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research)

- Cultural Tourism
- Gastronomy and Tourism
- Business Tourism
- Events
- Volunteer Tourism
- Dark Tourism
- Heritage Tourism and Education
- Space, Place, Mobilities in Tourism
- Urban Tourism
- Visual Tourism

³ There have been previous collaborations, but these appear to have been less of a feature in recent years. For example, in 2012 the Critical Approaches SIG were part of a joint-CAUTHE/ANZALS/SMAANZ symposium *Making a Difference in Leisure, Sport, Tourism and Hospitality*. In 2014, the Teaching & Learning SIG reported that members have been actively involved in networking and assisting other kindred organisations and networks including the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI), the BEST Education Network and THE-ICE.

- Climate Change and Tourism

Recommendation 5: CAUTHE Executive to investigate opportunities to collaborate with SIGs/thematic groups in other Australasian and international organisations (both where there are overlaps with CAUTHE SIGs and where CAUTHE does not currently have a SIG in an area).

4.6 SIG membership records

Generating an annual and accessible list of members of each SIG would also enable CAUTHE, the SIG coordinators and the Executive SIG coordinator as well as and other interested colleagues to contact, interact and collaborate with one another through a common forum. Numbers of members of each SIG could also be reported on at the MYM or AGM, as an incentive for others to join, establish or engage with SIGs in general.

When joining the Academy of Management applicants also sign up for membership of two SIGs at the same time. This could be implemented within CAUTHE as part of the membership application/renewal to raise the profile and the number of SIGs.

Recommendation 6: Add SIG enrolment to membership/conference registration/renewal form to promote awareness and engagement in SIGs as well as generate SIG membership information.

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Appendix 1: SIGs or thematic groups in other associations

Academy of Management - Division and Interest Groups (DIGs) – Members can join two DIGs as part of their membership, with additional DIG membership available for a small additional fee

[https://aom.org/network/divisions-interest-groups-\(digs\)](https://aom.org/network/divisions-interest-groups-(digs))

- Careers
- Conflict Management
- Critical Management Studies
- Entrepreneurship
- Gender and Diversity in Organizations
- Health Care Management
- Human Resources
- International Management
- Management Consulting
- Management Education and Development
- Management History
- Management, Spirituality, and Religion
- Managerial and Organizational Cognition
- Operations and Supply Chain Management
- Organizations and Management Theory
- Organizational Development and Change
- Organizational Behaviour
- Organizational Communications and Information Systems
- Organizational Neuroscience
- Organizations and the Natural Environment
- Public and Nonprofit
- Research Methods
- Social Issues in Management
- Strategic Management
- Strategizing Activities and Practices
- Technology and Innovation Management

Academy of Marketing – Special Interest Groups

<https://www.academyofmarketing.org/sigs/>

- Arts, Heritage, Non-profit & Social Marketing
- B2B
- Brand, Identity & Corporate Reputation
- Consumer Psychology & Cross-Cultural research
- Consumer Research with Social Impact
- Digital Marketing & Analytics
- Entrepreneurial & Small Business Marketing
- Ethics & Marketing
- Fashion Marketing & Consumption
- Marketing Education
- Marketing of Higher Education
- Place Marketing & Branding
- Political Marketing
- Services & CRM
- Sustainability
- Tourism Marketing
- Visual Methods

ANZALS

<https://www.anzals.org.au/>

- Health & Leisure

ANZAM – Special Interest Groups

<https://www.anzam.org/research/special-interest-groups-sigs/>

- Emotion and Cognition
- Health Management and Organisation
- Indigenous Issues
- Mixed Methods Research
- Operations, Supply Chain and Services Management

ANZMAC

None established as yet (see <https://anzmac.wildapricot.org/ANZMAC-Strategy>)

It was discussed in 2017, but since then, there has been no mention of developing SIGs since.

ATLAS (Association for Tourism and Leisure Education and Research)

<http://www.atlas-euro.org/groups.aspx>

- Cultural Tourism
- Gastronomy and Tourism
- Business Tourism
- Events
- Volunteer Tourism
- Dark Tourism
- Heritage Tourism and Education
- Space, Place, Mobilities in Tourism
- Urban Tourism
- Visual Tourism
- Climate Change and Tourism

SMAANZ

<http://smaanz.org/mentor-program/>

- Mentor Program