

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF HEADS OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME

The name of the association shall be "The Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work". The initials ACHSSW may be used as the short title for the association where abbreviation is appropriate.

2. INTERPRETATIONS

In this constitution, unless the context otherwise requires:

"COUNCIL" means The Australian Council of Heads of Schools of Social Work.

Membership of "HEADS OF SCHOOLS OF SOCIAL WORK" shall include Heads of Schools of all professionally accredited Social Work programs or, in the case where such programs are taught within a wider organisational unit, the person with direct overall responsibility for the academic Social Work discipline, or his/her nominee.

"SOCIAL WORK" is defined in the following way: 'Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work.' (International Federation of Social Workers Aug 6 2014).

"STATE" includes territory.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council is to promote the development of social work through study and research in relevant Faculties/Schools/Departments in universities throughout Australia by such means as

- a. Representing Heads and Schools to external bodies
- b. Providing a forum for exchange of information and ideas and promoting collaboration among Schools of Social Work
- c. Taking action on behalf of all Schools of social work education
- d. Liaising, cooperating and advocating with other bodies involved in regulating social work education and social workers including international organisations
- e. Developing a national and international profile for Schools of social work
- f. Promoting social work as a beneficial area of study
- g. Addressing national and international issues in social policy and social work that impact upon social work education

- h. Promoting positive public perceptions of social work and social work education
- i. Gathering data on the state of social work education, generally monitoring the state of social work education in Australia and the delivery of social work programs
- j. Promoting research on social work and social work education

4. MEMBERSHIP AND MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

Members of the Council shall be financial member universities represented by a Head of School of Social Work.

Each member university represented at ACHSSW meetings may nominate one person as its voting delegate, provided that the university is a current financial member of the Council.

The quorum for voting at ACHSSW meetings shall be one half plus one of the member universities of the Council.

5. OFFICE BEARERS OF THE COUNCIL

The office bearers of the Council shall be:

- a. President
- b. Secretary
- c. Treasurer

The President shall be elected from among the Heads of Schools of Social Work representing financial member universities of the ACHSSW and by the Council at the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year.

The Secretary shall be elected by the Council at the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year and shall keep and maintain administrative records of the Council, including a Register of Council members, and shall maintain communication with member universities through their representatives.

The Treasurer shall be elected by the Council at the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year and shall keep and maintain financial records of the Council.

Nominations for office bearers shall be called at least one month prior to the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year. Nominations received shall be declared at the beginning of the first day of the meeting. Further nominations may be received up to noon on the first day of the meeting. The election of office bearers shall be scheduled for the end of the first day of the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year.

The Executive shall comprise the officer bearers elected by the Council.

Office bearers shall hold office for two calendar years. Incumbent office bearers of the Council are eligible for re-nomination and election for one more term only.

If the office of President, Secretary or Treasurer becomes vacant, the Council may elect or may appoint from its members a person to fill the vacancy until the first ACHSSW meeting of the next calendar year

The quorum for conducting elections at the Annual Conference shall be shall be one half plus one of the member universities of the Council.

6. THE EXECUTIVE OF THE COUNCIL

There shall be an Executive responsible for the conduct of the affairs of the Council. The Executive shall have the power, subject to this constitution, to regulate its own proceedings.

The Executive shall comprise the office bearers elected by the Council.

The Executive shall have the power to direct the management of the Council's affairs and, subject to this constitution, shall regulate the Council's proceedings.

Ordinary meetings of the Executive shall be convened by the President at least four times per year. Ordinary meetings of the Executive may be held by electronic means such as teleconferencing or videoconferencing. Minutes of these meetings will be emailed to all members within a week following the meeting. The Secretary and Treasurer shall keep and maintain administrative and financial records of the Executive.

7. SERVICES

To fulfil the stated purpose of the Council, the Executive shall also organise-

- (a) the twice-yearly meetings of the Council, and
- (b) shall facilitate other services such as, but not limited to, collection of data on social work education in Australia, representation to external bodies and fostering of collaboration among Schools of Social Work.

8. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription fees to be paid by member universities shall be fixed at the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year. Annual subscriptions shall be paid on-a calendar year (January to December) basis and should be paid by March 31.

9. AFFILIATIONS

The Council may affiliate with such other bodies (local, State, national or international) as may be desirable in order to further its purposes.

10. FINANCE

Each member university shall bear the cost of attendance of its nominated representative at Council meetings. Secretarial and administrative costs of the Executive shall be met by the Council.

All other disbursements of money other than petty cash shall be by cheque or electronic transfer and authorised by two members of the executive.

An appropriate person who is not a member of the Council shall be appointed as the Council auditor at the Annual Meeting.

11. TRANSFER OF OFFICE

All books, records and assets of the Council, with the exception of Council affairs in the process of being finalised, shall be handed over to the incoming Secretary and Treasurer within twenty-one days of the first ACHSSW meeting of the calendar year and the balance shall be transferred within two months of the same.

12. VOTING RIGHTS

- (a) The President shall have both a deliberative vote and a casting vote at all meetings of the Council and the Executive. In general, it is expected that the President, when exercising the right of placing a casting vote, shall vote in favour of the status quo.
- (b) Executive members shall have the right to one deliberative vote on each issue being decided at an Executive meeting.

13. WINDING UP

In the event of changed circumstances in which continuation of the Council is no longer of interest or benefit to members, a three quarters majority of votes taken at an ACHSSW meeting may recommend to member universities disbandment of the Council. Such recommendation shall be communicated to all member universities and after the lapse of at least one month shall be considered at an Extraordinary Business Meeting of member universities of the Council. 21 days' notice of Extraordinary Business Meetings shall be given in all cases. If disbandment is endorsed at the Extraordinary Business Meeting the distribution of monies and other assets shall be determined concurrently. The quorum for conducting business at an Extraordinary Business Meeting shall be one half plus one of the member universities.

14. AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be made only by a three quarters majority of votes cast at a meeting of the Council. The text of proposed amendments must be presented in writing to the Secretary one month before the next meeting of the Council so that they may be sent with recommendations from the Executive Committee to all member universities 21 days before such a meeting.

15. DISPUTES AND MEDIATION

1. The grievance procedure set out in this rule applies to disputes under these Rules between-
 - (a) a member and another member; or
 - (b) a member and the Association.
- (2) The parties to the dispute must meet and discuss the matter in dispute, and, if possible, resolve the dispute within 14 days after the dispute comes to the attention of all of the parties.

(3) If the parties are unable to resolve the dispute at the meeting, or if a party fails to attend that meeting, then the parties must, within 10 days, hold a meeting in the presence of a mediator.

(4) The mediator must be-

- (a) a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
- (b) in the absence of agreement-

- (i) in the case of a dispute between a member and another member, a person appointed by the committee of the Association; or

- (ii) in the case of a dispute between a member and the Association, a person who is a mediator appointed or employed by the Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria (Department of Justice).

(5) A member of the Association can be a mediator.

(6) The mediator cannot be a member who is a party to the dispute.

(7) The parties to the dispute must, in good faith, attempt to settle the dispute by mediation.

(8) The mediator, in conducting the mediation, must--

- (a) give the parties to the mediation process every opportunity to be heard; and

- (b) allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party; and

- (c) ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties to the dispute throughout the mediation process.

(9) The mediator must not determine the dispute.

(10) If the mediation process does not result in the dispute being resolved, the parties may seek to resolve the dispute in accordance with the Act or otherwise at law.

16. CEASING MEMBERSHIP

(1) The membership of a university ceases on resignation or expulsion.

(2) If a university ceases to be a member of the Association, the Secretary must, as soon as practicable, enter the date the university ceased to be a member in the register of members.

17. DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

(1) Subject to these Rules, if the committee is of the opinion that a member has refused or neglected to comply with these Rules, or has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member or prejudicial to the interests of the Association, the committee may by resolution-

- (a) fine that member an amount not exceeding \$500; or

- (b) suspend that member from membership of the Association for a specified period; or

- (c) expel that member from the Association.
- (2) A resolution of the committee under sub-rule (1) does not take effect unless--
- (a) at a meeting held in accordance with sub-rule (3), the committee confirms the resolution; and
 - (b) if the member exercises a right of appeal to the Association under this rule, the Association confirms the resolution in accordance with this rule.
- (3) A meeting of the committee to confirm or revoke a resolution passed under sub-rule (1) must be held not earlier than 14 days, and not later than 28 days, after notice has been given to the member in accordance with sub-rule (4).
- (4) For the purposes of giving notice in accordance with sub-rule (3), the Secretary must, as soon as practicable, cause to be given to the member a written notice--
- (a) setting out the resolution of the committee and the grounds on which it is based; and
 - (b) stating that the member, or his or her representative, may address the committee at a meeting to be held not earlier than 14 days and not later than 28 days after the notice has been given to that member, and (c) stating the date, place and time of that meeting; and
 - (d) informing the member that he or she may do one or both of the following-
 - (i) attend that meeting;
 - (ii) give to the committee before the date of that meeting a written statement seeking the revocation of the resolution;
 - (e) informing the member that, if at that meeting, the committee confirms the resolution, he or she may, not later than 48 hours after that meeting, give the Secretary a notice to the effect that he or she wishes to appeal to the Association in general meeting against the resolution.
- (5) At a meeting of the committee to confirm or revoke a resolution passed under sub-rule (1), the committee must--
- (a) give the member, or his or her representative, an opportunity to be heard;
- and
- (b) give due consideration to any written statement submitted by the member;
 - and
 - (c) determine by resolution whether to confirm or to revoke the resolution.
- (6) If at the meeting of the committee, the committee confirms the resolution, the member may, not later than 48 hours after that meeting, give the Secretary a notice to the effect that he or she wishes to appeal to the Association in general meeting against the resolution.
- (7) If the Secretary receives a notice under sub-rule (6), he or she must notify the committee and the committee must convene a general meeting of the Association to be held within 21 days after the date on which the Secretary received the notice.
- (8) At a general meeting of the Association convened under sub-rule (7)--
- (a) no business other than the question of the appeal may be conducted; and
 - (b) the committee may place before the meeting details of the grounds for the

resolution and the reasons for the passing of the resolution; and
(c) the member, or his or her representative, must be given an opportunity to be heard; and
(d) the members present must vote by secret ballot on the question whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked.

(9) A resolution is confirmed if, at the general meeting, not less than two thirds of the members vote in person, or by proxy, in favour of the resolution. In any other case, the resolution is revoked.

18. CUSTODY AND INSPECTION OF BOOKS AND RECORDS

All accounts, books, securities and any other relevant documents of the Association must be available for inspection free of charge by any member upon request.

19. SEAL

(1) The common seal of the Association must be kept in the custody of the Secretary.

(2) The common seal must not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the committee and the affixing of the common seal must be attested by the signatures either of two members of the committee or, of one member of the committee and of the public officer of the Association.

20. ALTERATION OF THE RULES

These Rules and the statement of purposes of the Association must not be altered except in accordance with the Act.

21. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The committee may determine the date, time and place of the annual general meeting of the Association.

22. NOTICE OF GENERAL MEETINGS

The Secretary of the Association, at least 14 days, or if a special resolution has been proposed at least 21 days, before the date fixed for holding a general meeting of the Association, must cause to be sent to each member of the Association, a notice stating the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be conducted at the meeting.

23. QUORUM AT GENERAL MEETINGS

Eleven members personally present (being members entitled under these Rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the conduct of the business of a general meeting.

24. ADJOURNMENT OF GENERAL MEETING

- (1) The Chairperson of a general meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of a majority of members present at the meeting, adjourn the meeting to another time at the same place or at another place.
- (2) A meeting may be adjourned—
 - (a) if there is insufficient time to deal with the business at hand; or
 - (b) to give the members more time to consider an item of business.
- (3) No business may be conducted on the resumption of an adjourned meeting other than the business that remained unfinished when the meeting was adjourned.
- (4) Notice of the adjournment of a meeting under this rule is not required unless the meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, in which case notice of the meeting must be given in accordance with rule 22.

25. VOTING AT GENERAL MEETING

- (1) On any question arising at a general meeting—
 - (a) each member who is entitled to vote has one vote; and
 - (b) members may vote personally or by proxy; and
 - (c) except in the case of a special resolution, the question must be decided on a majority of votes.
- (2) If votes are divided equally on a question, the Chairperson of the meeting has a second or casting vote.
- (3) This rule does not apply to a vote at a disciplinary appeal meeting conducted under rule 17.

26. PROXIES

Each member is entitled to appoint another member as a proxy by notice given to the Secretary no later than 24 hours before the time of the meeting in respect of which the proxy is appointed.

27. VACANCIES

The office of an officer of the Association, or of an ordinary member of the committee, becomes vacant if the officer or member-

- (a) ceases to be a member of the Association; or
- (b) becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Law; or
- (c) resigns from office by notice in writing given to the Secretary.

28. FUNDS

The funds of the Association shall be derived from entrance fees, annual subscriptions, donations and such other sources as the committee determines.

Approved unanimously at a full meeting of the Council, 2 February 2005, Bunbury, Western Australia. Updates approved unanimously at a full meeting of the Council, 11 August 2016, Sydney, New South Wales.