

# AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF HEADS OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION INC

## CONSTITUTION

### 1. NAME

The name of the association shall be "Australian Council of Heads of Social Work Education Inc", formerly known as "The Australian Council of Social Work Education Inc". The initials ACHSWE may be used as the short title for the association where abbreviation is appropriate.

### 2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Council will be to:

- (a) Further Social Work education and research in Australia;
- (b) Promote active cooperation of the institutions represented on the Council with one another, and with universities and other higher education institutions, professional and other learned bodies in Australia and elsewhere;
- (c) Consult on matters of mutual concern to members of the institutions which they represent and, where appropriate, the adoption of common policies; and
- (d) Represent Social Work higher education providers and their needs to Federal and State governments, higher education bodies, the Social Work profession and the wider community.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility for membership of ACHSWE shall include Australian universities or other higher education institutions which teach professionally accredited Social Work programs, from which graduates are eligible to be recognized as satisfying the accreditation authority's requirements for admission to entry level practice. Member organisations will be represented by a Social Work academic who has direct overall responsibility for the academic Social Work discipline. No university or other higher education institution may appoint more than one person to represent them and vote at meetings of ACHSWE. When an organisation's nominated member is unable to attend a meeting, an alternate person may attend as a proxy and hold the voting rights of their organisation.

Universities or other higher education institutions which have Social Work programs which have been accredited, who are not members but wish to become so, should write to the Secretary indicating their desire to join ACHSWE. Membership will be confirmed upon receipt of payment of the annual subscription.

Universities or other higher education institutions which are seeking accreditation of a Social Work program may write to the Secretary seeking observer status, but will not be entitled to vote at meetings.

#### 4. SUBSCRIPTIONS

The annual subscription fees to be paid by member organisations shall be fixed by the Council. Annual subscriptions shall be paid on a calendar year (January to December) basis and should be paid by 31 March.

Member organisations more than 12 months in arrears will be deemed to have resigned from the Council.

#### 5. MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council will meet at least twice annually. When possible, meetings will be scheduled to be held in conjunction with national or international events of interest to members, such as conferences on Social Work or Social Work Education.

Meetings can be held in person or utilising alternative modes of communication.

Notice for all meetings shall be at least 28 days and in writing.

The order of business may be determined by the members present at the meeting.

The first meeting each year will include the Annual General Meeting at which any elections for office bearers will be held. An annual financial report will be provided to members at this meeting.

Minutes of Council meetings will record the following:

- (a) the names of those present at the meeting and the organisations they represent;
- (b) the business considered at the meeting;
- (c) any resolution on which a vote is taken and the result of the vote;
- (d) any matter for consideration in which those present or the organisations they represent has a material personal interest.

Each member organisation of ACHSWE is eligible to vote at meetings provided they are a current financial member of the Council.

In order to promote transparency, the President will call for disclosure of conflict of interests, on issues that are to be the subject of a vote.

The quorum for voting at ACHSWE meetings shall be one half plus one of the financial members of the Council.

Except in cases noted elsewhere in this Constitution the question must be decided on a majority of votes. Voting will be by show of hands (or equivalent public declaration in meeting held online) unless otherwise stated in this Constitution.

If votes are divided equally on a question, the President (or Secretary if they are chairing the meeting) has a second or casting vote.

The President 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 if there is insufficient time to deal with one or more items of business. As to where and how the Council meets to consider these items will be decided by a majority vote of those present.

## 6. 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 financial members at the first ACHSWE meeting of the calendar year and will chair Council meetings. The President will act as spokesperson for the Council and sign any letters or statements on its behalf on matters which have either been the subject of a formal resolution of the Council or when the President has canvassed opinions within the council and has reason to believe that the views to be advanced are those of a substantial majority of members. This capacity may be delegated to the Secretary, or other members of the Executive as appropriate.

The Secretary shall be elected from among the financial members the first ACHSWE meeting of the calendar year and shall keep and maintain administrative records of the Council including minutes of meetings. The Secretary shall maintain communication with members, including providing notice of forthcoming meetings and distribution of minutes of previous meetings. In the absence of the President, the Secretary will chair Council meetings.

The Treasurer shall be elected from among the financial members at the first ACHSWE meeting of the calendar year and shall keep and maintain financial records of the Council, including a register of financial members. The Treasurer will prepare financial statements to be distributed to members.

Office bearers are responsible for the custody of all accounts, securities, records and any other relevant documents and must ensure that these are available for inspection free of charge by any member upon request within a reasonable timeframe.

Nominations for office bearers shall be called at least one week prior to the first ACHSWE meeting of the calendar year. Nominations received shall be declared at the beginning of the first day of the meeting. If insufficient nominations have been received in one or more categories, further nominations for those positions may be received up to midday on the first day of the meeting.

Office bearers shall hold office for two calendar years provided they remain members of the Council, unless they resign from the position by giving notice to the remaining office bearers in writing, die, become insolvent or are removed by a resolution of the Council.

Incumbent office bearers of the Council are eligible for re-nomination, provided they have not served for more than one term in the same position.

If the office of President becomes vacant, the Secretary assumes the role of President and the remaining Executive Members can appoint a Council member to fill the vacancy of Secretary until the first ACHSWE meeting of the next calendar year.

If the office of Secretary or Treasurer becomes vacant, the remaining Executive Members can appoint a Council member to fill the vacancy until the first ACHSWE meeting of the next calendar year.

## 7. 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 and any co-opted persons.

The Executive may co-opt one other member of Council until the first ACHSWE meeting of the following year, if the Executive determine that specific knowledge or expertise is required by the Executive to advance the priorities of the Council.

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

- (a) 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 Social Work Education program providers.

## 8. FINANCE

Member organisations shall bear the cost of attendance of its nominated representative at Council meetings.

The Executive is authorized to open and operate a bank account on behalf of the Council. The annual subscriptions and any other income, such as grants, donations or fees for service, will be paid into this account by the Treasurer and will be disbursed as agreed by the Council. The account will at all times be maintained in credit.

The income and property of the Council, however derived, will be employed solely towards the promotion of the Council's objects and no part of that income and property will be paid or transferred by way of profit to members of the Council. However, nothing in this Constitution is to be taken as preventing the following:

- (a) The payment in good faith of reasonable remuneration to any officer or employee or member of the Council, in return for any services actually rendered by the Council;
- (b) The payment of interest on any loans by members of the Council or their institutions to the Council at a rate not exceeding the reference rate quoted

by the (insert name of bank used by the Council); or

- (c) The payment of a market rent or less for premises demised or let by any member to the Council.

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

## 9. DISSOLUTION

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 ACHSWE meeting may recommend to members organisations disbandment of the Council. Such recommendation shall be communicated to all members and after the lapse of at least one month shall be considered at an Extraordinary Business Meeting of the Council. A minimum of 21 days' notice of Extraordinary Business Meetings shall be given in all cases. If dissolution is endorsed at the Extraordinary Business Meeting the distribution of monies and other assets shall be determined concurrently. The amount which remains after dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities having been paid, shall be distributed to any organisation which has similar objectives and which has rules prohibiting the distribution of its assets and income to its members. The quorum for conducting business at an Extraordinary Business Meeting shall be one half plus one of the financial members of the Council.

## 10. AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by a special resolution approved by three quarters of members at a special general meeting of the Council. Members must be notified in writing of proposed changes at least 21 days before such a meeting, as well as date, time and place of the meeting, and that amendments will be proposed as a special resolution.

## 11. DISPUTES AND MEDIATION

The grievance procedure set out in this rule applies to disputes under these Rules between-

- (a) a member and another member on matters pertaining to the objectives of the ACHSWE; or
- (b) a member and the Executive; or
- (c) a member and the Council.

In the case where one of the parties to the dispute is the Executive, the President will represent the Executive.

In the case where one of the parties to the dispute is the Council, the President will represent the Council.

The parties to a dispute must attempt to resolve the dispute between themselves within 14 days of the dispute coming to the attention of each party.

If the parties to a dispute are unable to resolve the dispute between themselves within 14 days, the parties must within 10 days:

- (a) notify the Executive of the dispute; and
- (b) agree to or request the appointment of a mediator; and
- (c) attempt in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation.

The mediator must be:

- (a) a person chosen by agreement between the parties; or
- (b) in the absence of agreement, the Executive will nominate a mediator.

A mediator appointed by the Executive may be a member, former member, or non-member of the Association but must not be a person who

- (a) has a personal interest in the dispute; or
- (b) is biased in favour of or against any party.

The mediator, in conducting the mediation, must

- (a) give each party every opportunity to be heard;
- (b) allow due consideration by all parties of any written statement submitted by any party;
- (c) ensure that natural justice is accorded to the parties throughout the mediation process; and
- (d) must not determine the outcome of the dispute.

## 12. CEASING MEMBERSHIP

The membership of a university or other higher education institution ceases on receipt by the Secretary of a written resignation, expulsion, or no longer teaching professionally accredited Social Work programs from which graduates are eligible to be recognized as satisfying the accreditation authority's requirements for admission to entry level practice.

If an organisation ceases to be a member of the Council, the Treasurer must, as soon as practicable, amend the register of members.

## 13. DISCIPLINE, SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION OF MEMBERS

If any member of the Council is of the opinion that another member has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member or prejudicial to the interests of the Council, they may move a special resolution to suspend that member from membership of the Council for a specified period or expel that member from membership of the Council.

Any such special resolution must be provided in writing to the Secretary more than 21 days prior to a meeting of the Council and must state the grounds on which

suspension or expulsion is warranted.

The Secretary must ensure that all Council members are sent the text of this special resolution at least 21 days prior to the Council meeting at which it is to be discussed

At the Council meeting where the special resolution is tabled, the meeting must:

- (a) give the member, or their representative, an opportunity to be heard;
- (b) give due consideration to any written statement submitted by the member;  
and
- (c) vote by secret ballot whether to confirm or to revoke the resolution.

Any special resolution to suspend or expel a member requires not less than two thirds of the members voting in favour of the resolution. In any other case, the resolution is revoked.

*Approved unanimously at a full meeting of the Council on 22 October 2021. This replaces the previous Constitution adopted 2 February 2005, Bunbury, Western Australia and updated at a full meeting of the Council, 11 August 2016, Sydney, New South Wales.*