

## By-Laws

The following By-Laws are and shall be approved and/or from time to time added to, amended, deleted, or rescinded at an Annual Convention or by the National Council and shall be read in conjunction with the Constitution and may not conflict with it. In the event of a conflict then the Constitution shall take precedence.

### **Nomination of Officers and Voting Procedures**

1. a) **Nominations:** shall require a short Curriculum Vitae and photograph of the candidate as well as a short statement of intent from the candidate. A call for such nominations may be made through the magazine "Theosophy in NZ" and nominations shall reach the election officer by 30<sup>th</sup> June of that year.
- b) **Voting:** where there are more than two candidates, then the vote shall be cast on a preferential basis.

#### Procedure:

##### Office Manager's Mail-out

This mail-out shall include voting papers, short curriculum vitae and photo of each candidate, a candidate statement (no longer than one page) and a stamped return envelope. An explanation of the preferential voting process (if applicable) will also be enclosed.

#### Summary of the process:

- 1) Call for Nominations in March edition of Theosophy in NZ.
- 2) Nominations to be in by 30<sup>th</sup> June.
- 3) Voting papers to be sent out to members in the first week in July.
- 4) Voting papers to be returned by members no later than 31<sup>st</sup> July.
- 5) Vote results announced in September edition of Theosophy in NZ.

### **Administration Officers**

2. The National President is charged with the overall administration and delegation of the Society's activities. All other officers would report to the NP.
3. The NP ensures that the NZ Section is kept in tune with the International Section and also undertakes to represent the NZ Section at General Council meetings.

### **Inter-branch Transfer of Membership**

4. The Secretary of the Lodge to which a member transfers is responsible for sending the upper portion of the transfer form to the Lodge from which the member is transferring, and on receipt of confirmation that the member is financial advise the Lodge committee, then subject to the Committee accepting the transfer, sending the lower portion to National Headquarters for the maintenance of HQ records.

### **Working Groups**

5. There shall be at least 6 permanent working groups which shall include the following:
  - Editorial Advisory Working Group
  - Funding Opportunities Group
  - Publicity Group
  - Education and Training Group
  - Network and Outreach Group
  - Convention Planning Group

### **Referendum By Laws**

6. a) Prior to members initiating a referendum, they shall have communicated and discussed their concerns, if appropriate, with their Branch President; then with the National President; then with the National Council, and the discussion with the National Council shall be electronically recorded. If they feel they have not had their concerns adequately addressed, they may proceed with initiating a referendum, and begin the formal application process.

b) **Application Criteria**

- i. The applicants shall fill out an application form, which can be obtained from the National Headquarters. The application must be submitted to the National President, in accordance with the following application criteria.
- ii. To initiate a referendum the signatures are required of 25% of the membership currently in good standing over the three designated education regions, with Headquarters members assimilated into the regions.
- iii. Each member initiating the referendum must legibly state their name, postal address, and name of Lodge/Branch to which they belong, or if they are Headquarters members, and sign the application form with their usual personal signature.
- iv. The referendum statement must then be presented to the National President not less than forty (40) days prior to the next National Council meeting.
- v. The referendum requires a written background statement of cause, not exceeding 500 words.
- vi. The referendum also requires a question/proposition, whose wording is expressed only in a single, unambiguous sentence, which can be reasonably and logically answered 'For' or 'Against'.
- vii. The referendum application shall be accompanied by a sum of money sufficient to pay the costs to the Society for the printing and postage involved in submitting a referendum to the membership of the Society, which sum shall be fixed as a contingency expense in the budget, but shall not be less than \$1,500.00.
- viii. The referendum question/proposition may not be defamatory, frivolous, vexatious or outside current legislation.

c) **Distribution and Voting**

- i. The Management Team shall appoint a Returning Officer, who may be but need not be, the Office Manager, to carry out the implementation of the ballot. They shall also appoint two Scrutineers to act as required in accordance with Rule 6d)i. The Returning Officer and Scrutineers shall maintain the confidentiality of the result until the outcome is announced by the National President.
- ii. The voting shall take place by postal ballot. Only members in good standing for no less than 24 consecutive months immediately prior to the date of voting shall be eligible to vote, as defined in Rule 8a).
- iii. Notification of the referendum will be given in the next published edition of *TheoSophia* following the National Council meeting at which it was approved for distribution.
- iv. The official papers for the referendum, as detailed in Rule 6c)v. below, shall be forwarded to eligible voters not more than 21 working days following the mail-out of the relevant issue of *TheoSophia*.
- v. The voting paper shall quote the approved wording of the referendum question, show the date of closing of the ballot, and provide a box for a 'For' tick and a box for an 'Against' tick. It may contain a unique computer-generated identification number for verification and to avoid duplication, but shall not be traceable to the voter. It shall be accompanied by the background statement of cause, as per 6b)v, and a corresponding counter-statement.
- vi. In addition to the requirement of 6c)v. there shall be clear instructions for the completion and return of the voting paper as follows:

"Do not sign or otherwise identify yourself on the voting paper. Clearly mark only one of the boxes with a cross or tick to indicate your decision 'For' or 'Against' the

question/proposition. Place the completed voting paper in the smaller envelope marked "Ballot" and that in the addressed return envelope provided, and post it in time to reach the National Headquarters in Auckland before the designated closing date for voting returns."

- vii. On receipt at National Headquarters, the envelopes marked 'Ballot' shall be placed unopened in a ballot box, which itself shall not be opened until after 4.00 pm on the day advertised on the voting paper and in *TheoSophia* as the closing date; after which no further envelopes may be accepted for the count. The ballot box shall be in the care of the Returning Officer, and shall be kept in the locked archive room.

d) **The Count**

As soon as convenient after the closing and no later than the morning after the official closing date (as advertised):

- i. The two scrutineers will together open the ballot box in the presence of the Returning Officer. They will then count the total number of voting forms that show clearly the intention of the voter: rejecting any which do not, which shall be declared invalid; where there is any doubt the Returning Officer shall make a final decision. The number of valid votes and of invalid (if any) shall be noted by the Returning Officer.
- ii. If the number of valid votes is less than the minimum required by Rule 6e), the referendum shall be declared "Lost". No further counting shall be done and the voting papers shall be replaced in the ballot box until they are ordered destroyed as provided in 6f)i.
- iii. Having ascertained the minimum percentage of voters who have cast valid votes, the scrutineers shall divide the voting papers into two piles, those 'For' and those 'Against'. When the number of votes 'For' has been counted the number of such votes shall be calculated as a percentage of the total eligible votes and if it is equal to or greater than the required figure as provided in Rule 6e), then the referendum shall be declared *Carried*, or if less, then the referendum shall be declared *Lost*.
- iv. The Returning Officer shall then advise the National President of the finding as soon as practicable and at most within 24 hours of the conclusion of the count.
- v. The National President will verify the result and certify it as correct.

e) **The Threshold**

For the referendum to be successful the threshold of 75% of all members eligible To vote shall have voted in favour of the question/proposition, otherwise it shall be lost.

f) **Outcomes**

- i. If successful, as per Rule 6e), the referendum shall become legally binding 30 days after being certified by the National President and all votes destroyed, save in any case where the Constitution specifies further approval to be required.
- ii. The results shall be published in the next edition of *TheoSophia*, after they have become legally binding in accordance with Rule 6f)i above.
- iii. If the outcome of the referendum is successful the monies lodged for printing and posting shall be fully reimbursed to the claimant.
- iv. That there is a time limit of three (3) years from the known outcome of the referendum taking place before another referendum relating to the same or similar issue can be resubmitted fully or partially by either party or new parties.

g) **Number of Referendum**

- i. One referendum may be submitted in any financial year.