

# **Constitution of the Religious Studies Teachers' Association of Aotearoa New Zealand (RSTAANZ)**

## **1. The Association**

The name of the Association shall be the Religious Studies Teachers' Association of Aotearoa New Zealand Incorporated (RSTAANZ). This will be hereafter referred to as 'the Association' for the purposes of this document.

The letters RSTAANZ are the recognised contraction for the name of the Association.

## **2. Objectives of the Association**

The objectives of the Association shall be:

- 2.1. To promote the study and teaching of Religious Studies;
- 2.2. To provide a forum for those interested or engaged in teaching Religious Studies to express views, exchange ideas and share knowledge;
- 2.3. To represent professionally, the views of teachers of Religious Studies;
- 2.4. To develop and promote professional learning opportunities for teachers of Religious Studies;
- 2.5. To liaise with individuals, groups and other associations with an interest in promoting the study of religion and the aims of Religious Studies.

## **3. Membership of the Association**

Membership of the Association shall be open to:

- 3.1. Institutional members: Institutions involved with Religious Studies that are Schools, Universities or similar organisations may, on application, in writing, to the secretary of the Association and, on payment of the appropriate membership subscription, become institutional members. Religious Studies staff of institutions with institutional membership will have full membership rights.
- 3.2. Individual members: An individual working in the Religious Studies teaching/education field may, on application in writing to the secretary of the Association and on payment of the appropriate membership subscription become an individual member.
- 3.3. Honorary members: The Association Executive may invite people whose service to religious studies is deemed worthy to become Honorary Members of the Association. Such membership may be Associate, offered on a two-year basis, or Life membership. Associate membership will be ratified at the annual meeting of the Association. There shall be no membership subscription payable by Honorary members.

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- 3.4. Membership of the Association shall be subject to the payment of the appropriate membership subscription that shall be determined annually by the Association Executive.
- 3.5. An updated register of members shall be maintained by the public officer of the Association. A copy of the register of members shall be made available at all meetings of the Association.
- 3.6. Voting rights in the affairs of the Association shall be apportioned to all financial members on the basis of:
  - 3.6.1. one vote per individual member;
  - 3.6.2. one vote per institutional membership (providing that the voting representative of the institutional member is identified at the beginning of a meeting).
- 3.7. Where the actions of any member are determined to be, persistently prejudicial to the objectives of the Association or the interests of its members, that member may be expelled from the Association.
- 3.8. Expulsion from the Association shall be by a majority vote of the members in attendance at a special general meeting after a recommendation of the Executive.
- 3.9. Cessation of membership. Membership of RSTAANZ ceases when: a member tenders a written resignation or the member fails to pay the annual dues for the year without an acceptable explanation to the RSTAANZ committee.

**4. Executive**

- 4.1. The Association Executive shall consist of:
  - President;
  - Vice-President;
  - Secretary;
  - Treasurer;
  - Three other members.
- 4.2. The two highest polling candidates from non-Catholic schools are elected by right.
- 4.3. The highest polling South Island candidate is elected by right.
- 4.4. No two Executive members can be from the same institution.
- 4.5. In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the membership of the Executive, the Executive may invite a member to fill that vacancy, providing that the vacancy is then declared open for nominations at the next Annual General Meeting of the Association.

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- 4.6. The functions of the Executive shall be to promote the objectives of the Association and to act on matters referred to it by members.
- 4.7. The duties of Executive members are as follows:
- 4.7.1. The President shall chair all meetings of the Association and represent the Association in all professional forums. The President shall also have the casting vote in any and all votes taken by the Executive or the members of the Association. The President shall also be a signatory to the Association's accounts. The Association will have a common seal which will be kept with The President or President's nominee. The seal will be used to ratify documents used in the circumstances of the Association.
  - 4.7.2. The Vice-President shall fulfil the duties of the President in her/his absence. The Vice-President shall also be a signatory to the Association's accounts. The Vice President is not elected as he/she is the most recent past President.
  - 4.7.3. The Secretary shall maintain a register of all formal correspondence to and from the Association as well as the minutes, attendance and apologies of all meetings of the Executive and the Association. The Secretary shall also be a signatory to the Association's accounts.
  - 4.7.4. The Treasurer shall maintain the financial records of the Association as per Clause 7 of this Constitution.
  - 4.7.5. All other Executive members shall perform duties in the administration of the Association as determined by the Executive. These duties may include maintenance of the Association's website and/or social media communications.
  - 4.7.6. The Executive may establish a secretariat to assist in these duties. The President may request the secretariat to attend such meetings as the Executive deems appropriate.

**5. Meetings of the Association**

- 5.1. The Association shall conduct an Annual General Meeting each calendar year at which:
- 5.1.1. An audited financial statement shall be presented to the members;
  - 5.1.2. A report on the activities of the Association shall be presented to the members;
  - 5.1.3. Any other business conducted shall have been notified to the membership in writing with no less than fourteen (14) days' notice;
  - 5.1.4. The new Executive shall be appointed in an election year.
  - 5.1.5. The auditor for the following year is appointed.
- 5.2. The Association may conduct General Meetings from time to time to discuss or further its objectives. Notice of General Meetings will be given 21 days prior to the meeting.

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- 5.3. A quorum for a General or Annual General Meeting shall include not less than half of the members of the Executive and not less than ten per cent (10%) of other members of the Association. Members can be present in person or by representative (proxy).
- 5.4. The Executive shall meet no less than twice (2 times) each year, at such time and place as the Executive shall determine. One of these meetings shall be face-to-face. A quorum at any such meeting shall be not less than four (4) members including not less than two (2) of the President, Secretary and Treasurer.

## **6. Elections**

The members of the Executive shall be elected for a period of two years with the option of being re-elected at the AGM, or, between AGMs by a process to be determined by the Executive. The normal (two-yearly) election of Executive members will be conducted according to the following procedures:

- 6.1. Nominations for positions on the Executive will be called for by means of an email circular to all financial members by the end of April.
- 6.2. Online or email ballot papers will be circulated to all financial members during the months of May and June, together with a brief statement supplied by each candidate.
- 6.3. At least twenty-one days must elapse between the dispatch of ballot papers and the deadline for the receipt of all ballot papers by the secretary.
- 6.4. The election must be completed each year before the Annual General Meeting. This will take part at the biannual conference.
- 6.5. Election results shall be announced at the Annual General Meeting, and by group email or newsletter to all financial members of the Association.
- 6.6. The President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be decided by the executive at the first meeting. The immediate Past President shall automatically be appointed Vice President.
- 6.7. The functions of the Executive shall be to promote the objectives of the Association and to act on matters referred to it by members.
- 6.8. Any vacancy on the Executive shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the co-opting of the necessary person by the Executive. (See 4.5)
- 6.9. Members of the Executive must be members of the Association.

## **7. Finances and Property**

- 7.1. The income and property of the Association however derived, shall be applied solely towards the promotion of objectives and purposes of the Association and no portion shall be paid or transferred, directly or indirectly, by dividend, bonus or otherwise to any member of the Association.

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- 7.2. The Association shall be financed by a subscription of either an institution or an individual, the amount to be set by the AGM. The Association Treasurer is to send out yearly accounts to members - either institutions or individuals.
- 7.3. It shall be the responsibility of the Association Treasurer to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of all financial transactions of the Association, which shall be reported in the form of a summary balance sheet at each Executive meeting and an audited statement at the Annual General Meeting. The Treasurer shall be the primary signatory to the Association's accounts.
- 7.4. The financial year of the Association shall be the year 1 July to 30 June of the following year.
- 7.5. An Auditor shall be appointed at the Annual General Meeting. No member of the Executive shall be appointed as Auditor.
- 7.6. The Association shall have the power to:
- 7.6.1. Purchase, acquire and receive any real or personal property which shall be held on behalf of the Association and sell, transfer or demise and otherwise deal with any real or personal property of the Association.
  - 7.6.2. Collect funds, raise loans, and solicit, receive, enlist and accept subscription donations, bequests and other financial aid.

**8. Indemnity**

- 8.1. No office bearer, delegate or member of a committee or other group working for the Association shall be liable for the acts or defaults of any other person working for the Association or for any error of judgement on his part or for any loss or damage resulting from his duties unless it be by dishonesty or wilful negligence on his part.

**9. Changes to the Constitution**

- 9.1. These may be made only at the Annual General Meeting of the Association provided that:
- 9.1.1. notice of intention to do so is given in writing to all members one month prior to the meeting; and
  - 9.1.2. at least a seventy-five per cent (75%) majority vote agrees with the change.
- 9.2. No amendment will be made to Clauses 7, 8, and 9 without the Inland Revenue Department's approval.

**10. Dissolution**

- 10.1. The Association shall be dissolved upon the vote of a two-thirds (2/3) majority of members present at a Special General Meeting convened to consider such question,

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and that resolution is confirmed at a subsequent General Meeting called together for that purpose and held not earlier than thirty (30) days after the former meeting.

10.2. Upon a resolution being passed in accordance with Clause 10(a) of this Constitution, all assets and funds of the Association on hand shall, after the payment of all expenses and liabilities, be handed over to such organisations having similar aims and objects to those of the Association as a simple majority of the delegates present at the above named General Meeting shall decide.

10.3. No addition to or alteration of the Dissolution Clause shall be approved without the Inland Revenue Department's approval.