

The Australasian Society for General Relativity and Gravitation

CONSTITUTION

Adopted 14th February 1996; Amended 1st March 2000; 10 December 2013

Name and Objects of the Society

1.

- (i) The name of the Society is ‘The Australasian Society for General Relativity and Gravitation’ (‘The Society’).
- (ii) In this Constitution, ‘Australasia’ is defined to consist of Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the islands of the South West Pacific.

2. The objects of the Society are as follows:

- (i) The promotion and extension of Gravitation physics and the theory of General Relativity throughout Australasia.
- (ii) The promotion and extension of the interaction between workers in experimental and theoretical areas of General Relativity and Gravitation throughout Australasia.

3. To further the above objects, the Society may undertake activities including but not limited to:

- (i) holding or participating in the holding of conferences, meetings, workshops, seminars, lectures or other events for the purpose of hearing and discussing communications from members of the Society and visitors introduced by them.
- (ii) sponsoring meetings of members of the Society and others for the purpose of furthering research in General Relativity and Gravitation.
- (iii) encouraging by any appropriate means the participation and involvement of young scientists in the activities of the society.

Members

4. The Society consists of four classes of members, namely Ordinary Members, Institutional Members, Student Members and Reciprocal Members.

5.

- (i) Any person may upon application be admitted by the Committee as an Ordinary Member of the Society.
- (ii) Any registered company, institution, association or other organisation may upon application be admitted by the Committee as an Institutional Member of the Society.
- (iii) Any registered student or recent graduate may upon application be admitted by the Committee as a Student Member of the Society.

- (iv) Any member of a society with which the Society maintains a reciprocity agreement may upon application be admitted by the Committee as a Reciprocal Member of the Society.

6.

- (i) An application for membership should be in writing and delivered to the Secretary.
- (ii) The Committee must consider the application at or before its first regular meeting after receiving it, but the Committee has the right to refuse membership to any person without giving any reason.
- (iii) The Committee may delegate the admission of members to the Secretary or other Committee member.
- (iv) A successful applicant becomes a member on payment of the current subscription.

Register of Members

7.

- (i) The Secretary must keep a register of members which contains the name, address, telephone number and electronic mail address of each member and the date of joining.
- (ii) The register of members must be made available upon request for inspection by members.

Annual Subscription

8.

- (i) Every member must pay an annual subscription.
- (ii) The amount and conditions of the annual subscription shall be fixed by the Committee, and must be ratified by a General Meeting or a Remote Ballot.
- (iii) The annual subscription should be fixed appropriately for different classes of members, and may in any case be reduced for Ordinary Members who are retired or unemployed, or as the Committee sees fit.
- (iv) Each subscription is payable within one month of advice in writing to the member that the subscription is due.

Notices

9.

- (i) A member may choose to receive official notices of the Society, including notice of Remote Ballots, either by electronic mail or by post.
- (ii) Any notice to a member required by this Constitution is sufficient if posted or e-mailed, in accordance with the member's choice, to the last address of that member notified in writing to the Secretary. Notice to a member is deemed to have been received on the seventh day after it was posted.

Termination of Membership

10. A member may resign by giving written notice to the Society. Any member whose subscription is more than one year in arrears may, at the Committee's discretion, be deemed to have resigned.

11. Every person who has ceased to be a member of the Society remains liable for all financial obligations to the Society at the time when membership ceases.

Branches and Specialist Groups

12. With the approval of the Committee, Members of the Society may form regional branches, or specialist groups. Each such regional branch or specialist group must adopt a set of rules of procedure to be approved by the Committee of the Society.

Officers and Committee

13.

- (i) Subject to any resolutions passed at a General Meeting or by a Remote Ballot of the members, all powers of the Society may be exercised by the Committee.
- (ii) The office bearers are the President, Secretary and Treasurer
- (iii) The Committee consists of the office bearers, two ordinary members, and up to two co-opted members.
- (iv) The office bearers must be Ordinary Members of the Society.
- (v) The office bearers and ordinary members of the Committee are elected by the General Meeting for a term of one Session of the Society (as defined in Section 16).
- (vi) The newly-elected Committee takes office at the end of the General Meeting at which it is elected.
- (vii) The office of President may not be filled by the same person for more than two consecutive terms.
- (viii) All Committee positions are honorary.
- (ix) A person ceases to be a member of the Committee if that person:
 - (a) delivers a written resignation to the Secretary, or, in the case of the Secretary resigning, the President;
 - (b) ceases to be a member of the Society;
 - (c) is absent without apology from two consecutive meetings of the committee; or
 - (d) becomes an insolvent under administration.
- (x) The Committee may co-opt up to two further Committee members, and may fill casual vacancies.
- (xi) If an office bearer ceases to be a member of the Committee, the vacancy must be filled by election by the other members of the Committee.
- (xii) A person co-opted to fill a casual vacancy holds office until the end of the next General Meeting.

- (xiii) The Committee may appoint subcommittees and delegate any of its powers to them.

14.

- (i) The quorum at a meeting of the Committee is one half of the total number of Committee members, rounded up.
- (ii) The Committee hold at least one meeting in person during each Session of the Society. Other meetings of the Committee may be held in person or by post, teleconference, electronic mail or other appropriate means.
- (iii) The Secretary must call a Committee meeting on the request of any three members of the Committee.
- (iv) The Secretary must give three weeks' notice of any Committee meeting.
- (v) The President has the right to preside at all meetings, but may delegate this responsibility. If the President is absent, the Committee must elect a person to preside.
- (vi) The Committee may determine its own procedure.
- (vii) A resolution of the Committee is carried if a simple majority of those voting vote in favour of it. The person presiding has a casting vote.

Biennial Conference and General Meeting

15.

- (i) There shall be a biennial Conference of the Society. A Conference may be cancelled if a resolution to that effect is passed at a General Meeting or by a Remote Ballot of the members.
- (ii) The organisation of a Conference is the responsibility of an organising committee acting under the general instructions of the Committee. The Committee will appoint a Director for the Conference, who will chair the organising committee.

16.

- (i) A General Meeting of the Society shall be held during and only during each Conference.
- (ii) The period from the termination of one General Meeting to the termination of the next General Meeting is called a Session of the Society.

17. The business of a General Meeting is:

- (i) the President's report on the Society's activities during the session;
- (ii) the Treasurer's and Auditor's reports;
- (iii) the appointment of Auditors for the following session;
- (iv) the election of office bearers and ordinary members of the Committee;
- (v) the determination of the time and place of the next Conference;

- (vi) such other business as has been notified to the members, or as the meeting may determine.

Procedure for general meetings

18.

- (i) The quorum at a General Meeting is one quarter of the members present at the Conference.
- (ii) The President has the right to preside at all general meetings, but if the president does not wish to do so or is absent, the meeting must elect a person to preside.
- (iii) A member cannot appoint a proxy to represent that member at a General Meeting.
- (iv) A special resolution, that is, a resolution to amend the name, the objects or the constitution of the Society, or in relation to the winding up of the Society, can only be put to the meeting if twenty-one days' notice has been given to the members, specifying the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution.
- (v) A special resolution is carried if at least two thirds of the members present and voting vote in favour of it.
- (vi) Any other resolution is carried if greater than half of the members present and voting vote in favour of it.
- (vii) The person presiding at a General Meeting shall not vote on resolutions.

Election of Committee

19.

- (i) The officer bearers and ordinary members of the Committee shall be elected at each General Meeting.
- (ii) The Committee must appoint a Returning Officer, not less than one month before an election. The Returning Officer is responsible for the fair conduct of the election.
- (iii) The Secretary must notify all members of a forthcoming election at least one month before the general meeting. This notice must specify details concerning the process of nomination, voting and the Returning Officer.
- (iv) A nomination for any Committee position may be made by any two members who are entitled to vote at the ensuing election, provided that
 - (a) the nominee gives written consent to the nomination;
 - (b) the nomination is received by the returning officer by 12 noon on the day before the General Meeting;
 - (c) the nominee is a member who is entitled to vote at the ensuing election; and
 - (d) if the nomination is for President, Secretary or Treasurer, the nominee is an Ordinary Member of the Society.

- (v) Elections shall be by secret ballot. The Returning Officer has the responsibility to prepare a ballot paper listing the names of all candidates for each contested position in random order.
- (vi) The Proportional Representation system shall be used. A vote will be valid even if less than the maximum number of priorities is indicated.

Validation of Acts of Committee

20. If it is afterwards discovered that there was some defect in the appointment or election of a person as a member of the Committee, or that a person so appointed or elected was ineligible, all acts done at any meeting of the Committee are as valid as if that person had been duly appointed or elected and was eligible to be a member of the Committee.

Remote Ballots

21.

- (i) The Committee may hold a Remote Ballot of the members.
- (ii) The Committee must hold a Remote Ballot if it receives a written request to do so from at least 10% of the membership of the Society, or 5 members, whichever is greater.
- (iii) A special resolution (as defined in Section 18(iv)) submitted to a Remote Ballot is carried if at least two thirds of the votes cast are in favour of it.
- (iv) Any other resolution submitted to a Remote Ballot is carried if a simple majority of the votes cast are in favour of it.
- (v) Notice of any Remote Ballot must be sent to every member resident in Australasia at least thirty days before the closing date of the ballot. Such notice may be sent by post or by electronic mail.
- (vi) The unintentional omission to give notice to any member, or the non-receipt by any member of any notice, shall not invalidate the result of the voting on any resolution.
- (vii) The Committee may make rules for the conduct of Remote Ballots, and, in each case giving consideration to the nature of the resolutions being put, may make appropriate arrangements for ballot papers to be submitted by post, or for a Remote Ballot to be conducted as a secret ballot.
- (viii) In the case of a Remote Ballot being held due to a written request under Subsection (ii), the Committee must conduct a secret ballot if the written request so specifies.

Books and Records

22.

- (i) The Secretary is responsible for the books records and securities of the Society, other than the financial books and records.
- (ii) A member may inspect the books and records of the Society on giving reasonable notice to the person relevant for the relevant documents in accordance with this constitution.

Finances

23.

- (i) The Treasurer is responsible for the keeping of the financial books and records of the Society, and must present to each meeting of the Committee a report of the financial transactions of the Society since the last committee meeting.
- (ii) In any financial year where the Society's turnover (excluding bank fees) exceeds one thousand dollars, the Treasurer must prepare and have audited a balance sheet, and present these to the General Meeting or, in years where there is no General Meeting, to the Committee.
- (iii) All funds received by or on behalf of the Society must be deposited in an Australian bank account in the name of the Society, unless they are collected through an account held in the name of the Society with PayPal Australia Pty Ltd hereinafter 'PayPal') under the terms of subclause (v) below. Notwithstanding that, the Treasurer may, with the express approval of the Committee, use cash payments under five-hundred dollars to the Society to pay prizes or small bills under two-hundred dollars at conferences or workshops. Such transactions shall always be noted in the Society's accounts and receipted.
- (iv) The Treasurer shall be listed as the Primary Account holder for the Society's PayPal account, be responsible for compliance with PayPal's terms and conditions and provide separate accounts for it to the committee and at General Meetings. The PayPal account must have the Society's main bank account as Nominated Bank Account, with all the required conditions imposed by PayPal.
- (v) The Society's PayPal account may only be used for the collection of funds for specific purposes, such as conferences, and membership fees. Funds in the Society's PayPal account must, within one hundred and twenty days of receipt, be transferred to the Society's main bank account, or paid out to cover the specific purpose for which they were collected as authorised by the committee, excepting an amount not exceeding five-hundred dollars to cover any disputed payments. If any reserve placed on the Society's account by PayPal exceeds this amount, the committee must either authorise this reserve or direct the Treasurer to close the PayPal account in line with PayPal's procedures. If the reserve is authorised, this decision must then be ratified at the Society's next General Meeting.
- (vi) All payments made by the Society in excess of five-hundred dollars must be made by cheque or by a direct electronic transfer expressly authorised by the Committee. All cheques must be signed by the Treasurer and one of any other members of the Committee appointed by the Committee for that purpose. Notwithstanding this, PayPal's standard Direct Debit Agreement is permitted over the Society's account.

Winding Up

24. If the Society is wound up, the assets remaining after satisfying all liabilities must not be paid or distributed amongst the members, but must be transferred to an institution:

- (i) having similar objects to those of the Society; and

- (ii) which prohibits the distribution of its income amongst members to an extent at least as great as is imposed on the Society by this Constitution; and
- (iii) which is determined in accordance with a special resolution at a General Meeting or by a Remote Ballot of the society before its dissolution.

Liability of members

25. A member of the Society shall not, by reason only of being a member, be liable to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the Society or the costs charges and expenses of the winding up of the Society.

Prohibition of Distribution to Members

26.

- (i) The income and property of the Society must be used and applied solely to the promotion of its objects and the exercise of its powers as set out in this Constitution.
- (ii) No portion of the income or property of the Society may be distributed directly or indirectly to or amongst the members of the Society.
- (iii) Nothing in this rule prevents the payment in good faith:
 - (a) of interest to any member in respect of money advanced by that member to the Society, or money otherwise owing to that member;
 - (b) to any member of the Society or other person in respect of services actually rendered to the Society;
 - (c) of remuneration to any employee of the Society;
 - (d) to any member of out of pocket expenses, money lent, reasonable and proper charges for the hire of goods, reasonable and proper rent for premises let to the Society or the provision of services to the member, to which that member would be entitled in accordance with the objects even if not a member.
 - (e) to any member of a travel grant, scholarship or prize awarded in accordance with the objects of the Society.

Indemnity

27. Every member of the Committee, member of the Society, auditor, employee or agent of the Society must be indemnified out of the property of the Society against any liability incurred by that person in that capacity in defending any proceedings

- (i) in which judgment is given in favour of that person; or
- (ii) in which the person is acquitted; or
- (iii) in connection with any application in relation to any such proceedings, in which relief is granted to that person.

Discipline of Members

28.

- (i) A member of the Society may be expelled, suspended or warned if, in the opinion of the Committee, the member has engaged in conduct which is prejudicial to the name or activities of the Society.
- (ii) If a motion is proposed at a meeting of the committee that a named member be disciplined, the motion must not be dealt with at that meeting, but must be placed on the agenda of a meeting of the Committee to be held not less than 45 days later
- (iii) The Secretary must notify the member at least 30 days before the second meeting, that a motion has been proposed to discipline the member.
- (iv) The notice must give the details of the later meeting and the motion, state that the member has the right to attend and speak at that meeting, to submit a written statement in defence, or to both submit a statement and attend and speak.
- (v) The Committee at the later meeting must consider any statement submitted, and hear the member, if present.
- (vi) A motion to discipline the member, and a motion in relation to the penalty to be imposed, is carried if a simple majority of the Committee vote in favour of the resolution.
- (vii) There is no appeal from the decision of the Committee to a General Meeting

Changes to this Constitution

29. This Constitution can only be changed by a special resolution of the members at a General Meeting or by Remote Ballot.