



23rd June 2022

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS OF WASA FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

THE WASA CONSTITUTION

This letter is sent to you on behalf of the members of the WASA Committee and the WASA Constitution Review Team.

On 21st July, at the AGM, you will be asked to vote for a revised and improved WASA Constitution (also known as The Rules). This is the 3rd and Final Version of this document.

Please consider this opportunity to vote very carefully for this final revised WASA Constitution.

The WASA Vision, Our First 'Regular Duty'

The WASA Vision is to add value and make a positive difference to all the members. This is the same vision as our predecessors have had for the past 126 years. We aspire to do the same.

Our first 'regular duty' is to work to improve and sustain the future of the Society. Growth is an integral part of all successful improvement and change. Namely; to make WASA stronger and more representative of the art community. To Encourage, Exhibit and Educate artists to become better in their practices. To promote art and to make the society more resilient.

These are our precious and shared responsibilities. There are considerable, yet exciting, challenges.

Why Change the Current Constitution?

When the current Rules were created in 2019, COVID had not come to WA. The extent of personal and professional restrictions, government controls, vaccination mandates, restricted opportunity, lockdowns, working from home protocols arrived after this work was ratified in February 2020.

COVID changed WASA and how members respond. Now, some members find large gatherings and travel very difficult. Moreover, Regional Members cannot attend meetings in town so easily. These sentiments emerged strongly from the Strategic Review in 2020/21,

There is a new reality. The strict health provisions, whilst temporarily relaxed, are not going away. The current wave of a new Flu Virus is now growing in the WA community and the next wave of COVID is already the subject of medical concern. Preparing for tough times is sound risk management practice.

Applying for grants now is much harder as more people experience tough economic conditions.

What are the Changes?

We must enable every available resource we can to continue doing what we all enjoy doing so well.

We need to make our meetings more available to those unable to attend in person. To offer the capability for members who are absent to vote on key strategic issues.

Summary of the Improvements

The Rules are now 10 pages shorter than before and more contemporary with a clearer Index and Terminology including extra details of Bye Laws. Other inclusions are:

1. Financial Delegations and Annual Reporting now included.
2. CPI added for Delegation levels.
3. Annual Approvals of Delegations and Provisions for Fees now clearer.
4. Annual Membership Fees based on the Anniversary dates of joining and reviewed annually.
5. Use of Technology (such as Zoom) will be used when required by members. Zoom is currently the preferred method used for Committee meetings.
6. Introduction of Bye Laws for special requirements such as the options for Absentee and Pre-Polling voting.
7. A more applicable and standard format facilitates ease of reference and review.
8. Applying for grants will be aided by the introduction of the new recognised format.

Use of Technology

Current Technology offers us all new ways of communication. Already all WASA Committee meetings are held on Zoom. Zoom is in common use today with Government, Industry and the Media. It is a simple and effective system that allows a large group to communicate from their own home or office locations. Another art society in WA is already offering Zoom for their regular monthly meetings.

Using Zoom will mean anyone from a remote location may log in and watch a demo or talk once the software is loaded onto your own device free of charge. It is easy, flexible and very convenient to use.

The Draft WASA Constitution now includes provisions for the use of communication technology.

Absentee and Pre-Poll Voting

The Incorporation Associations Act 2015, permits the use of Absentee (Postal and/or Proxy) Voting as follows:

“A person is taken to cast a vote at a general meeting as mentioned in subsection (1) if the person has a right under the rules of the association to vote on the resolution and — (a) votes in person at the meeting; or (b) where proxies or postal votes are allowed by the rules of the association, votes on the resolution by proxy or postal vote.”

Absentee and Pre-Poll voting will be available to WASA members under the following terms:

1. to be properly administered including the use of Registered Post for submissions;
2. nominations for a Single WASA Member only; and,
3. introduced only after a Bye Law has been approved.

The Committee will exercise due diligence and correct administrative oversight. Under the Act, the committee has the power to cancel or withhold any absentee votes.

The WASA Committee recommend Absentee and Pre-Poll voting be an option for the future.

The Constitution – The Independent Review

In Dec 2021, a previous version was proposed but a deeper review was requested. This Review commenced in Feb 2022 and was run by 4 highly qualified persons.

The earlier draft and the original constitution were considered thoroughly by this separate independent review group. There were Adrienne Kinnear, Susan Swain, Alan Pickering and Jim Halloran (external). All 4 members had experience writing constitutions. A full open consultation process was conducted again by them and all submissions received close attention over 5 months.

The review group operated independently of the WASA Committee who prepared and presented the Dec 2021 draft. This Final version is the product of the Review Group and the WASA Committee work.

This Final Draft is attached to this letter. A copy will be placed on the Website. www.waart.org.au.

The WASA Special Resolution

The wording of the Special Resolution is as follows:

"The West Australian Society of Arts agrees to adopt the Revised and Updated Constitution (known as The Rules of the Association) dated 21st July 2022."

Lodging the Changes

The Current Constitution is valid until this revised new version is accepted by a majority of members and endorsed by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Appreciation and Thanks

Twelve (12) members of the WASA Committee and the Review Team, worked on the proposed Constitution for the past 6 months. Additionally, in Nov and Dec 2021, the WASA Committee worked on the previous version for 6 months. These members are all to be applauded for their application, commitment and dedication. This has been a marvellous example of WASA members working for the benefit of the whole Society.

Past knowledge and experience of other societies has been applied. These references included The Watercolour Society of WA, The Pastel Society of WA and The Armadale Society of Arts. Now, the proposed WASA Constitution revision more closely aligns with all these other societies.

Thanks also goes to all those who made submissions and offered their ideas and improvements. All these have been considered. Every submission was considered and discussed.

The review has been of immense value. It has resulted in a far more contemporary set of Rules for WASA. No issue has been passed without extensive consideration by all the members in both teams.

The review has considered all the different views. It was exhaustive and professionally executed. Thank you to everyone who participated.

Conclusion

Please examine all the aspects of the proposed newly revised WASA Constitution.

Please **attend the AGM on 21st July 2022 in person**. There is no provision for Absentee or Pre-polling under the current Rules.

The vote will be by Secret Ballot not a show of hands. Only fully paid-up members may register a vote.

Under the Rules, 75% of fully paid members present must approve change to the newly proposed Constitution for it to be ratified.

The WASA Committee and the WASA Review Group recommend your approval of the revised Rules.

Regards

Roger Reading