



Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania Incorporated

A.B.N. - 49 452 275 349

www.tasmanianambulancevolunteers.asn.au

Our aim: To enhance pre-hospital patient care, by providing representation and support for the well being of Volunteer Ambulance Officers in Tasmania.

Explanation of Proposed Changes to Constitution

When the VAOAT was incorporated in 1996, email and websites were virtually unknown, and our starting bank balance was less than \$2,000. Much has changed, and the Committee has determined that it is time we reviewed, updated and amended the Constitution to ensure it reflects current practice, circumstances and expectations. We have produced the following Draft Amended Constitution for member's consideration at the Annual General Meeting at Coles Bay on the 21st November.

The bulk of the document is unchanged from the 1996 version, and follows the Model Rules of Incorporation. We have, however, changed the order of some of the sections and revised the grammar and language to make it more logical and readable. There are still many sections dense with legalistic language as required under the Associations Incorporation Act of 1964, because it is the Committee's view that these sections provide important legal underpinning for our activities.

Substantive additions or modifications from the 1996 original are highlighted in red, while suggested deletions are listed at the end of the document in blue. You are encouraged to read the entire document, but major changes and their explanations are listed below:

- 1) It is our view that *Board* better represents the significance of the activities and deliberations of the people elected to manage the Association than the current wording of *Committee*, so we propose to change all references from Committee to Board.
- 2) As the Association grows so does our expectation of the member involvement, so we propose changing the quorum for Board/Committee meetings from four to six, and for General Meetings from 10 to 20. We also took the opportunity to extend the required notification time for AGM's from 14 days to 28 days, to reflect current practice and provide maximum time for members to plan their attendance.
- 3) The current Constitution limits voting and committee membership to registered volunteer ambulance officers, who are described as 'operational' members. We believe this is unnecessarily restricting the contribution of 'retired' volunteers, or other people who have skills to offer and wish to help. Therefore, we have amended language to include 'associate' members in all VAOAT activities, but

specifying that at least 75% of Board/Committee members should come from the ranks of operational volunteers.

- 4) There are a suite of small changes to reflect current practice of websites and email communications. In particular, the Committee/Board has enjoyed great benefit from the creation of confidential online forums to discuss, debate and vote upon issues, and we seek to formalise this arrangement. (Members may have noticed that we have also created forums for First Response Units, Coordinators and a general membership discussion.)
- 5) We are hoping that this year will be the last time we have to pay hundreds of dollars to take a newspaper advertisement to notify our forthcoming AGM. We are confident that our current practice of placing notification on the VAOAT website, as well as sending emails to Coordinators and all members provides more appropriate and timely communication. The proposed changes still include a provision for postal notification for those few of our members who have told us that they prefer to receive their mail in the old fashioned way.

The current constitution – as well as the new draft - is available on this website for members who wish to compare and contrast. Please contact me via email secretary@tasmanianambulancevolunteers.asn.au or by phone on 64717017 if you would like to receive a hard copy of these documents.

We look forward to seeing you at the Coles Bay Gathering.

Dianne Coon
Public Officer
Volunteer Ambulance Officers Association of Tasmania Inc.

Volunteer ambulance officers....giving Tasmania more than a bandaid