



The Theosophical Order of Service in Australia

Constitution

As adopted by the 2018 AGM

1. NAME

The name of the Organisation shall be 'The Theosophical Order of Service in Australia', and hereinafter shall be referred to as 'the TOS in Australia'.

2. OFFICE

The office of the TOS in Australia shall be situated at such address as may be determined from time to time.

3. PURPOSE

The distinctive, two-fold purpose of the Theosophical Order of Service is selfless service to the needy and suffering and the inner transformation of the server that this requires.

4. MISSION

The Theosophical Order of Service draws together like-minded people committed to respecting and serving the One Life in all beings.

Annie Besant summarised the mission of the Order in the motto:

'Towards a union of those who love in the service of all that suffers.'

Committing itself to this union, the TOS offers a framework in which:

- individuals may work along self-selected lines of service for the uplifting of humanity and the protection of the planet;
- individual action can be strengthened by collaborative group action and advocacy;

- the practical application of theosophical principles to issues of contemporary concern related to the lines of service can be explored;
- social action as spiritual practice is honoured and nurtured.

5. AIMS

The aims that are generated by the TOS's purpose and mission are:

- to support individuals striving to apply theosophical principles in their lives through altruistic service in their local communities;
- to establish self-selected projects in the lines of service: education, social welfare and justice, healing, peace, animal concerns and the environment;
- to network with other TOS groups and with other humanitarian and environmental service organisations and informal community action groups whose mode of action is consistent with the theosophical principles underpinning the work of the TOS;
- to provide an environment in which friendship and mutual support amongst those committed to the path of service may develop and flower.

6. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

The TOS in Australia is an organisation closely allied with the Theosophical Society.

While the Theosophical Society maintains neutrality on controversial social and political issues, the TOS provides a framework in which stands may be taken on matters of public concern.

The TOS does not see its role as peripheral to the work of spreading Theosophical teachings nor does it see itself as simply duplicating the work of other humanitarian groups. The TOS exists to show the world that Theosophy has much light to shed on contemporary issues of concern. It aims to demonstrate that service grounded in spirituality can engender far-reaching good in the world. It labours to recognise and support Theosophists in their 'giving dharma'.

Affirming that inner growth and service go hand in hand, the TOS seeks to help the Theosophical Society in uniting those for whom Theosophy represents a dynamic force for both social and individual transformation.

7. MEMBERSHIP

a) Any person whether a member or not of the Theosophical Society in Australia, whose endeavour is to carry out the Order's ideal of service to the One Life in all beings, may become a member of the TOS in Australia.

b) Members shall pay a nominal fee to their local TOS Group, as shall be determined by their local TOS Group Committee from time to time. A record of membership shall be kept by each TOS Group working in Australia, and supplied to the National Council.

c) All members of local TOS Groups shall be considered members of the National TOS and shall be eligible to vote at the AGM of the National TOS in Australia.

d) National members of The Theosophical Society in Australia and members of a TS Lodge, Branch or Group that does not have an associated TOS Group may join the National TOS by application. Individuals who do not belong to the Theosophical Society may join the National TOS if they do not have access to a local TOS Group. The nominal membership fee shall be determined by the National Council from time to time.

8. ADMINISTRATION

The management of the organisation shall be as follows:

a) *TOS in Australia National Council*

- i) The TOS in Australia National Council, hereinafter called the National Council shall consist of:
 - i. i) the National Coordinator of the TOS in Australia who is duly elected by the membership for a period up to five years, with the possibility of an extension to no more than seven years.
 - i. ii) a representative of each TOS Group working in Australia, nominated by the Group.
 - i. iii) the office-bearers of the TOS in Australia, as defined under Clause 8 b of the Constitution.
- ii) The National Coordinator together with the National Council is responsible for the functioning of the TOS in Australia, consistent with the aims and principles embodied in the International TOS Guidelines.
- iii) The role of the National Council shall be:
 - to encourage the formation of, and guide, TOS groups for self–selected works in the lines of service: education, social welfare and justice, healing, peace, animal concerns and the environment;
 - to encourage networking within TOS groups and with other humanitarian and environmental service organisations and informal community action groups whose mode of action is consistent with the theosophical principles underpinning the work of the TOS;
 - to encourage communication amongst TOS groups so that they support, inspire and cooperate with each other;
 - to channel support for TOS projects, especially in developing countries;
 - to facilitate a rapid response amongst members to international crises requiring emergency relief;
 - to provide resource material for members;
 - to provide training for members in skills and attitudes helpful in service work.

b) *TOS in Australia Management Committee*

The TOS in Australia Management Committee, hereinafter called the Management Committee, shall consist of the following members, all of whom shall be active members of the Theosophical Society in Australia for at least 24 months:

- i) the National Coordinator, duly elected by the financial members of the TOS in Australia and confirmed at the AGM
- ii) an Honorary Secretary, duly elected by the financial members of the TOS in Australia and confirmed at the AGM
- iii) an Honorary Treasurer, duly elected by the financial members of the TOS in Australia and confirmed at the AGM
- iv) one other member if required, elected by the three office bearers.

c) *Management*

- i) The management of the TOS in Australia shall be vested in the Management Committee, as defined in Clause 8 (b) of the Constitution.
- ii) The Management Committee shall be entitled to manage and control the affairs of the TOS in Australia, including the power to open and operate upon and close banking accounts, and to determine by whom cheques and negotiable instruments shall be signed and endorsed.
- iii) The Management Committee shall also be responsible for ensuring that proper books of account and other records are kept by the TOS in Australia, and that the same are properly and punctually filled in and completed, and to make same available to its auditors whenever required to do so.
- iv) No member of the Management Committee shall be appointed to any salaried office of the TOS in Australia or any office of the TOS in Australia paid by fees and no remuneration or other benefit in money or money's worth shall be given by the TOS in Australia to any member of the Management Committee except repayment of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses.

d) *TOS Groups*

- i) TOS Groups may be established by the TOS National Council, or by the TS Lodges, Branches and Groups in any State. These TOS Groups may function as informal groups or as formally constituted groups with their own Constitutions. The Constitution of any TOS Group must be approved by the TOS in Australia Management Committee of the National Council.
- ii) TOS Groups shall consist of members of the Theosophical Society, and non-members of the Society, as under Clause 7 (a) as approved by the Council.
- iii) Each TOS Group will have the power to appoint one member to the National Council. This member must be an active member of the Theosophical Society in Australia for at least 24 months.
- iv) Each TOS Group will appoint its own member to present an annual report to the TOS in Australia National Council.
- v) Each formally constituted TOS Group shall elect its own Committee or Management Group. A majority of members of a Committee or Management Group must be active members of the Theosophical Society in Australia.

9. FINANCE

- a) The financial year of the TOS in Australia will correspond with the financial year of the Theosophical Society in Australia and shall end on August 31.
- b) The income of the TOS in Australia shall be devoted exclusively to promoting the Purpose and Aims of the Order as above, and the funds shall be banked in the name of the TOS in Australia.
- c) Proper bank accounts shall be kept for all receipts and disbursements. The signatories for the bank accounts shall be any two of the following office bearers National Coordinator, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Treasurer.
- d) Proper accounting records shall be maintained for all receipts and expenditure and financial statements shall be presented to each meeting of the Management Committee.
- e) TOS Groups shall keep accounts into which all monies shall be paid and an annual statement presented to the National Council.

10. AUDIT

The Management Committee shall appoint an auditor who shall furnish a report relating to the Accounts and Records of the TOS in Australia to each Annual Meeting of the National Council.

11. MINUTES

Proper Minutes relating to the proceedings of all meetings of the National Council and the Management Committee shall be kept.

12. MEETINGS

- a) The National Council shall meet at least once in each calendar year in person or using electronic technology.
- b) The TOS in Australia shall hold its Annual Meeting in conjunction with the Annual Convention of the Theosophical Society in Australia, to receive the Annual Report and Financial Statements, and to hear the Annual Reports of the TOS Groups in Australia, as in Clause 8 (d iv) of the Constitution.
- c) The National Coordinator or appointed representative, shall preside at every general meeting of the TOS in Australia.

13. DISSOLUTION

- a) The TOS in Australia shall be dissolved in the event of membership being fewer than three or upon the vote of a three-fourths majority of members present at a Special General Meeting convened to consider such question.

b) Upon a resolution being passed in accordance with paragraph (a) of this rule, the net assets or property available after satisfying all debts and liabilities shall, upon determination by the members of the TOS in Australia, be handed over to some other organisation or organisations having objects similar to the objects of the TOS in Australia, which prohibits the distribution of its income and property among its members to an extent at least as great as is imposed by the TOS in Australia under rule 15. However, in making the distribution, the TOS in Australia must ensure it satisfies all legal obligations applying to any funds or property over which a charitable trust exists.

14. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

a) This Constitution shall not be altered except by resolutions, of which prior notice has been given for presentation at the Annual Meeting.

15. NON-DISTRIBUTION OF PROFITS

a) The income and property of the TOS in Australia, however derived, shall, subject to any obligations under charitable trust law or any other statutory requirements, be used and applied solely in the promotion of its purpose and aims and in the exercise of powers conferred upon it by the rules.

b) No portion of this income and property shall be distributed, paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise by way of profit to or among the members of the TOS in Australia.

c) The requirement contained in (b) shall not, however, prevent the payment in good faith of:

i) interest (provided it is based on the prevailing rate of interest charged by banks, building societies or credit unions for unsecured loans) to any such member in respect of monies advanced by that member to the TOS in Australia, or otherwise owing by the TOS in Australia to the member; or

ii) any remuneration to any officer or servants of the TOS in Australia or other person in return for any services genuinely rendered to the TOS in Australia.

16. INTERNAL DISPUTES

The Management Committee shall ensure that a mechanism is established for resolving internal disputes within its membership. This may include:

a) the appointment of an independent person to arbitrate in the dispute;

b) a process to bring the parties together to resolve the dispute at an early stage;

c) a process to ensure that all parties receive a full and fair opportunity of presenting their case;

d) where the dispute cannot be resolved internally by arbitration or mediation, to refer the matter to a Community Justice Centre which functions as a 'centre for dispute settlement'.