

GHANA ASSOCIATION OF NSW



THE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION OF GHANA ASSOCIATION OF NSW

FOREWORD:

This Constitution provides structural and procedural safeguards as well as checks and balances required for the smooth running of Ghana Association of New South Wales. Its succinctness is to ensure members' quick understanding of the key message of each section.

The Constitution would work as long as members become dedicated to the ideals namely, fairness, justice and mutual obligations on which it is built.

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SECTION I – Name

The Association shall be known as “The Ghana Association of New South Wales”

SECTION II – Definition of a Member

"Member" shall mean and include Ghanaians and their families who may be resident in New South Wales either temporarily or permanently. It shall also include friends of Ghana who would be prepared to comply by the rules and regulations of the Association. Where a Ghanaian is on a 'short course', he or she may register as a Transient Member of the Association.

SECTION III – Aims and Objectives

1. To promote friendship, mutual understanding and co-operation between members of the Association and between the Association and Australia through the establishment of cultural and social relationships
2. To assist new Ghanaian migrants and their families to fully integrate and participate meaningfully in the Australian society
3. To promote youth programs including sports, entertainment and cultural activities
4. To provide counseling services to adults and the youth within the Ghanaian community
5. To assist in the event of a death of a member as specified at Section XVIII - Member Welfare -- not from the Association's coffers
6. To assist members suffering from chronic debilitating or terminal illness through voluntary individual member financial and in kind contributions - not from the Association's coffers
7. The Association shall be non-political or non-religious in its operations
8. Shall from time to time organise fundraising activities to support projects of the Association and the wider Australian community
9. The assets and income of the Association shall be used to support its projects only and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to members except the reimbursement of approved expenses incurred on behalf of the Association
10. Shall assist members that are unemployed by linking them to those that might know of job opportunities

SECTION IV– Membership

1. Shall be open to all people of Ghanaian descent. It shall also be open to anyone who subscribes to the aims and aspirations of the Association
2. 'Short course' in this context [see Section II above] refers to courses or visits of

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3-months duration or less

3. Patrons shall be Consul General of Ghana in Sydney and any members identified as deserving the honour

SECTION V– Officers

1. The day-to-day administration of the Association shall be in the hands of an executive committee, which shall be elected by members for a 3-year term of office
2. Members of the executive committee shall collectively take responsibility for all decisions taken by the Association and will be legally held responsible for any misdeed
3. All Officers shall be volunteers - services provided by them shall be purely voluntary - without any monetary reward
4. The executive committee shall comprise the following officers:
 - I. President
 - II. Vice President
 - III. Secretary
 - IV. Organising Secretary I
 - V. Treasurer
5. The Management Committee shall comprise the above-listed officers as well as the following:
 - VI. Assistant Secretary
 - VII. Organising Secretary II
 - VIII. Financial Secretary
 - IX. Public Relations Officer
 - X. 1 volunteer representing the church and community groups
6. Responsibilities of Key Officers:
 - i. President
 - a. Shall preside over all executive and general meetings both emergency and regular
 - b. Shall announce the final decision and all matters discussed at meetings after voting
 - c. Shall have a casting vote in the event of a tied vote
 - d. Shall personally represent the Association or appoint a delegate in all dealings with external bodies
 - e. Shall be the custodian of all financial instruments of the Association including cheques
 - f. Shall appoint the members of the management committee subject to approval by the executive committee
 - g. Shall appoint the Auditor subject to approval by the management committee
 - ii. Vice President
 - a. Shall assist the President in the execution of his or her duties and shall act for him or her in his or her absence

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- iii. Secretary
 - a. Shall deal with all correspondence of the Association
 - b. Shall take the minutes at all meetings
 - c. Shall act for the Vice President in his or her absence
- iv. Organising Secretary
 - a. Shall organise all social activities of the Association
 - b. Shall act for the Assistant Secretary in his or her absence
- v. Treasurer
 - a. Shall handle all monetary transactions of the Association including banking
 - b. Shall present half-yearly financial report to the Association
 - c. Shall keep records of all financial transactions
 - d. Shall act for the Organising Secretary in his or her absence
- vi. Financial Secretary
 - a. Shall collect dues and issue receipts
 - b. Shall keep separate record of all financial transactions
 - c. Shall hand over money collected to the Treasurer and keep record of such
 - d. Shall act for the Treasurer in his or her absence
- vii. Public Relations Officer
 - a. Shall be in charge of the Association's publicity, media duties and announcements
 - b. Shall act for the Financial Secretary in his or her absence
7. An Auditor shall be appointed by the President subject to approval by the management committee. The Auditor shall be independent – not belonging to any of the Association's committees and shall:
 - i. audit the books of the Association to ensure that the financial statements are correct
 - ii. render annual financial reports
8. Board of Trustees

The Association shall have a 5-member Board of Trustees appointed by the executive committee to serve a 5-year term. The appointment shall be subject to members' approval at an Annual General Meeting. Responsible for strategic planning, the Board of Trustees shall consist of:

 - i. A Patron
 - ii. President
 - iii. Secretary
 - iv. 2 other people to be appointed by the executive committee

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least once in a year.
9. Signatories to Accounts

The signatories for the Association's accounts shall be the President **and** the Secretary **or** the Treasurer. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall sign on his or her behalf.
10. Collective Responsibility of Executive Committee Members

Members of the executive committee shall have a collective responsibility for the

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implementation of the Association's decisions and its smooth running

SECTION VI - Special (Ad-hoc) Committees

1. The executive committee shall have the power to form ad-hoc committees as and when necessary and appoint the members thereof
2. Members of the Association may be asked on ad-hoc basis to attend executive committee meetings to assist the executive in their deliberations
3. The executive committee may also ask church and community group leaders or their representatives on ad-hoc basis to attend executive committee meetings to assist the executive in their deliberations

SECTION VII – Dues

1. Annual dues of \$50.00 shall be paid by each member for the running of the association
2. Dues shall be payable by 31st of May of each calendar year
3. A member who has paid his or her dues shall be deemed a paid-up member
4. There shall be penalty imposed for late payment of dues – payment after 31st of May
5. A member shall become inactive if he or she fails to pay dues within one calendar year. Such a member shall be required to pay up retrospectively to regain paid-up status
6. The Secretary shall serve a member who defaults for a whole year, with a reminder notice. A 2nd letter shall be served 3 months later if the amount is still not settled. If after further 3 months the member still owes, then the executive committee shall follow up. Thus the executive committee shall approach a member after 18 months of non-payment of annual dues.

SECTION VIII – General Meetings

1. The Association shall hold a general meeting once every quarter
2. The venue and time of each general meeting shall be communicated by the executive committee prior to the meeting
3. A quorum of 15 members of the Association shall be required for a general meeting to proceed. This number [i.e.15] shall include the President, the Secretary and any other member of the executive committee
4. Voting at general meetings shall be restricted to only paid-up members of the Association

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SECTION IX - Emergency Meeting

1. The executive committee shall hold an emergency meeting when the need arises. Where possible their decision shall be communicated immediately to members
2. The executive committee may convene an emergency general meeting to discuss matters needing immediate action
3. The emergency general meeting may also be requested by at least 15 members of the Association. Such a request must be:
 - i. in writing to the Secretary
 - ii. signed by all those requesting the emergency meeting
 - iii. accompanied with clearly stated agenda
 - iv. forwarded to the Secretary at least 7 days before the meeting
4. The quorum for such a meeting shall be the same as for a general meeting [see Section VIII above].

SECTION X - Amendments

1. An amendment to this constitution shall first be tabled at a meeting for deliberation if a minimum of 16 members at the meeting are in favour
2. Voting for the adoption of the amendment shall take place at a later meeting
3. At that later meeting, a minimum of 30 members of the Association shall be required to be in favour of the amendment for its adoption

SECTION XI – Dissolution of the Association

In the event that the Association shall cease to exist, the fate of all its assets shall be decided at a general or emergency meeting.

SECTION XII – Membership Rights and Privileges

A **right** shall be a favour that **cannot** be denied or taken away from a member.

A **privilege** shall be a favour that **can** be denied or taken away from a member.

An **obligation** shall be a moral duty, promise or something that can be imposed legally or socially on a member **and** the Association. Thus it shall be mutual.

Example 1:

While it shall be the **privilege** of all members to attend the Association's meetings, only paid-up members shall have the **right** to vote.

Example 2:

It shall be the **privilege** of all Ghanaians to attend functions organised by the Association. But only members shall have the **right** to buy tickets at discounted rates if they are on offer.

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Example 3:

It shall be the **obligation** of members to pay their annual dues and attend meetings. It shall be the **obligation** of the Association to reach out to a member who has paid his or her annual dues, attend meetings and is in need of assistance.

In view of the above-listed definitions and examples, a member's right or privilege shall:

1. not be transferrable to another person
2. terminate upon cessation of membership

Obligation shall be mutual between a member and the Association. *It can be transferred e.g. a member can offer to pay a defaulting member's dues on their behalf.*

SECTION XIII – Punctuality at Meetings

Members shall be punctual at all meetings

SECTION XIV – Member Absenteeism

Members unable to attend a meeting shall send an apology to the Secretary

SECTION XV – Withdrawal of Membership

1. Withdrawal of membership from the Association shall be done formally in writing
2. The written note shall be sent to the Secretary giving 1 month's notice
3. A member withdrawing from the Association shall where applicable, return any of the Association's assets in his or her custody

SECTION XVI – Disciplinary Action

A member of the Association shall face a disciplinary action under any or a combination of the following:

1. Failure to pay dues after 18 consecutive months

Upon exhausting the due process as prescribed under Section VII – Dues, the executive committee shall deal with a defaulting member according to the member's circumstance.

2. Failure to comport oneself at a general meeting or any function under the auspices of the Association

An offending member in this instance shall be dealt with as the executive

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committee deems fit.

3. Misappropriation of funds

Any member who is proven to have misappropriated funds:

- i. shall be given time to pay up
- ii. refusal to pay the amount owed may result in a legal action

4. Depending on the gravity of any of the above-listed offences, a member may be expelled from the Association

5. Any member expelled from the Association shall forfeit all rights and privileges

6. An expelled member may rejoin the Association after 2 years

SECTION XVII - Right of Appeal of Disciplined Member

1. A member may appeal against an expulsion or suspension within 7 days of being served the notice

2. The member shall lodge the appeal with the Secretary who in turn shall inform the executive committee for an emergency meeting to be convened within 21 days

3. At the emergency meeting so convened:

- i. only the appeal shall be on the agenda
- ii. the executive committee and the member shall both state their respective cases orally or in writing or both
- iii. the outcome of the appeal [confirming or revoking the disciplinary action] shall be determined by the members present through a secret ballot
- iv. absentee votes shall not be accepted in such a situation

SECTION XVIII – Member Welfare

1. Demise of a Member

- i. On the demise of a member, the Association's Welfare Central Committee shall liaise with the family of the deceased to get names of persons to constitute a funeral committee
- ii. The Association shall devote an amount of at least \$5,000 [five thousand dollars only] upfront for the funeral, specifying how the money shall be disbursed
- iii. Working in close collaboration with the bereaved family and with their understanding, the Association shall recoup this money from the funeral activities

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- iv. The Association shall however make a donation of \$1,000 [one thousand dollars only] to the bereaved family

2. Demise of a Member's Close Relation

- i. On the demise of a member's close relation i.e. parent, spouse or dependent child residing in Sydney, upon a simple notification [e.g. phone call], the Association shall pay a condolence visit with 2 crates [48 cans / bottles] of soft drinks
- ii. The Association shall make a donation of \$1,000 [one thousand dollars only] to the bereaved family where the deceased is a dependent child residing in Sydney

3. Birth of a Member's Child

- i. On the birth of a member's child or in the event of a member's hospitalisation, the Association shall send a delegation with a bouquet of flowers and a card

4. Formation of Zonal Welfare Teams

- i. The Association's Welfare Central Committee shall be assisted by decentralised i.e. zonal welfare teams domiciled in various geographical zones within Greater Sydney, in the execution of its tasks. The decentralised teams shall be composed as follows:
 - a. North West – Rouse Hill and its environs
 - b. Inner West – North Sydney, Eastern Suburbs, Ashfield and adjoining environs
 - c. South West – Liverpool and Campbelltown area
 - d. Greater West – Blacktown and its environs

SECTION XIX – Involvement in a Criminal or Civil Case

When a member of the Association is involved in a criminal or civil case, the President shall appoint a member of the executive committee to investigate the matter and submit a report to the executive committee for appropriate action

SECTION XX – Election of Officers

- 1. There shall be general elections every 3 years
- 2. The executive committee shall appoint an electoral committee at least 6 months before a general election, charged with the sole responsibility of conducting the election
- 3. The electoral committee shall as soon as possible announce via various media i.e. email, radio, short messaging system or general meeting, the electioneering formalities
- 4. Only paid-up members shall nominate to be office-bearers
- 5. Nominations for office-bearers of the Association shall be done by completing

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a nomination form witnessed by 2 other paid-up members of the Association

6. 3 months prior to the election, the electoral committee shall publish an interim list of nominees and request confirmation from all nominees
7. The final list of nominees shall be published and the nominees shall be introduced at the **last** general meeting preceding the election
8. If only 1 nomination is received for a given office, the nominee shall be deemed as elected
9. If no nomination is received for a vacant office, the incoming executive committee shall appoint a member to the office
10. Should an elected office become vacant during a term of office, the executive committee shall arrange to fill the office thereof
11. Being ad-hoc in nature, the electoral committee shall cease to exist after a general election

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PROMULGATION:

*This Constitution was promulgated on of
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[Bernard Tabí]

President of Ghana Association of New South Wales

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