

AUSTRALASIAN SOCIETY FOR CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY
CONSTITUTION

[Last Revised 29 November 2023, in line with motions passed at the AGM held at the University of Sydney and online via Zoom]

§ 1. Aims and status of this document

1.1 Aims

This constitution is designed with the following interrelated functions in view:

1.1.1 A *symbolic* function, namely, to constitute the existence of the Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy [henceforth designated as ‘the Society’] above and beyond any individual Society members, including position-holders and members active on its Executive Committee and any sub-committees. Tributary to this symbolic function is the stating of desired aims and principles which the Society endeavours to carry out and uphold.

1.1.2 A *pragmatic* or *informative* function, namely, to produce guidelines for the effective running of the meetings and activities of the Society.

1.1.3 An *arbitrating* or *authoritative* function, namely, to provide a reference point for debates and disagreements arising in the course of the life of the Society, and to provide a valid basis for the creation of proposals, fostering of debates, and resolution of disputes, respectively.

1.2 Status

All amendments to the constitution must be by resolution of an Annual General Meeting [AGM] of the Society, which is typically held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Society. Notification of proposed amendments to the constitution should be given at least one month in advance of any vote. Decisions pertaining to the constitution are to be ratified by two-thirds majority vote of members attending the AGM and any other proxy votes.

§ 2. Name of the Society

The name of the Society shall be the ‘Australasian Society for Continental Philosophy’ [ASCP].

§ 3. Aims of the Society

3.1 The Society aims to foster interest and support research in the field of Continental/European philosophy, understood in a broad and interdisciplinary sense, in Australia, New Zealand, and in the Australasian region, and to provide a network for those interested in and/or working in this field both nationally and internationally. The Society endeavours to promote the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas inspired by the diverse traditions of European thought (such as phenomenology, existentialism, critical theory, hermeneutics, feminism, deconstruction, poststructuralism, and so on), and to develop productive links with other international societies and associations that share similar goals and views. It remains committed to the development of a pluralistic Australasian philosophical community, linking those working in diverse institutions, disciplines, and areas of inquiry, and encouraging productive and collegial relations between postgraduate students and professional academics and researchers. The Society also actively supports principles of equity, diversity and inclusion. Finally, the Society is committed to fostering dialogue between varied philosophical and cultural traditions both within Australia and internationally.

3.2 The Society shall endeavour to adhere in the carrying out of its activities to broadly democratic processes. The Society shall practice a policy of ‘openness’ whereby all Society records—minutes, accounts, time and place of meetings—are available to any member of the Society, generally via the Society website or through the Executive Committee. There shall be an obligation for the Executive Committee to address or consider interests and suggestions of members and engage in democratic decision-making processes regarding any members’ formal proposals or motions.

§ 4. Membership of the Society

4.1 Membership shall be open to all those interested in supporting the aims of the Society and shall involve the payment of an annual membership fee as determined by the Executive Committee.

4.1.1 The Secretary must, on payment annual membership fee, enter the member's name in the register of members as a record of membership of the Society.

4.1.2 The Public Officer will undertake to maintain a register of the Society's membership specifying the name, email and address of each member including the date on which they became a member.

4.1.3 This register of membership shall be available for inspection by any member of the Society free of charge. The request for inspection of the Society's membership must be made via email to the Public Officer, who needs to respond within 5 working days.

4.2 All members shall be entitled to vote at the Annual General Meeting of the Society, as well as to be nominated for election on its Executive Committee and any other designated sub-committees or task-groups.

4.3 All members shall have access to the Chair's annual report via the Society's website.

4.4 All members shall have to right to post appropriate material and notices on the Society's electronic mailing list and any related sites or social media accounts, such as the Society's Facebook page and Twitter account.

4.5 Participation in the annual conference is conditional upon joining the Society and paying the annual membership fee. The membership fee will be collected from members along with their conference registration fee. The membership period for those who become members by paying the membership fee as part of the conference registration fee begins with the annual conference (generally in November/December) and expires immediately prior to the following conference.

4.5.1 Anyone can also join the Society or maintain their membership by paying their membership fee at other times of the year. Their membership will last until a month before the AGM of the following year, whereby they will be entitled to participate in only one AGM for the duration of their annual membership.

4.6 All members shall receive benefits from the Society's association with any journal, such as being allowed to submit their paper for consideration to any proceedings resulting from the Society's annual conference, and have access to the journal associated with the Society.

4.7 Members are entitled to resign from the Society at their own discretion, and such resignations are to be made in writing to a member of the executive committee. Resignations will be recorded in writing in the register of members held by the Public Officer.

4.8 A situation may arise requiring the disciplining or even removal of a member of the Society due to breaches of the Society's constitution, refusal to comply with the rules and aims of the Society, or bringing the Society into disrepute. In such a case, disciplining or removal will be undertaken in accordance with the procedures outlined in the "Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009" (publicly available from the NSW Office of Fair Trading). This includes processes ensuring the disciplined member's right of appeal as outlined in the "Model Constitution" document.

§ 5. The Executive Committee

5.1. An Executive Committee shall be formed from members of the Society committed to play an active role in the activities and events of the Society.

5.2. The Executive Committee will meet as often as is necessary to co-ordinate and review the activities of the Society, ensure their compatibility with the Constitution of the Society, and create subcommittees where the size of the activity demands.

5.2.1 The Executive Committee would customarily meet once every 4 to 8 weeks.

5.2.2 The meetings of the Executive Committee will be chaired by the Chair or Chair's representative

5.2.3 The Secretary, or the Secretary's representative, is responsible for circulating the agenda for the meeting, for taking minutes, and for keeping a record of all the minutes of the Executive Committee meetings.

5.2.4 Deliberations and voting on urgent issues that cannot wait until the next meeting of the Executive Committee can be conducted via email

5.3 Appointments to positions in subcommittees shall be made and motions carried within the Executive Committee by a simple majority.

5.4 The elected positions on the Executive are Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary

5.4.1 The standard term for the elected position will be three years.

5.4.2 Nominations for vacant and/or expired positions being publicly called for in the period a month before the scheduled AGM.

5.4.3 Members can nominate themselves for any elected position on the executive committee provided at least one other member of the Society agrees to second the nomination.

5.4.4 Members wishing to nominate themselves for an elected position on the executive committee must do so in writing to the sitting Executive Committee at least seven days before the scheduled date of the AGM.

5.4.5 If there is an interim elected position, such as in the case of a resignation, the interim position is valid until the next AGM.

5.4.6 All elected positions on the executive must be paid members of the Society.

5.5 Voting procedures for the election of these members of the executive committee at the annual general meeting will be by simple majority; they will be carried out in accordance with the relevant sections of the "Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009".

5.6 The committee will ordinarily also include the following Officer positions: Communications Officer, Conference Officer, Early Career Researcher Representative, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, Governmental/Institutional Liaison Officer, International Liaison Officer, New Zealand Representative, Student and ER Officers, and Members at Large .

5.6.1 The Officers shall be directly appointed by the Executive Committee. The standard term for these positions will be three years.

5.6.2 The Offices will be responsible for developing policies relevant to their respective areas, in consultation with the entire Executive Committee.

5.6.3 The Offices will be responsible to develop and/or implement action plans to realise the policies relevant to their respective areas, in collaboration with the entire Executive Committee.

5.6.4 All Officers must be paid members of the Society.

5.6.5 When a member of the Society seeks election to an Officer position, they will need to submit their CV and a short supporting statement to the Executive Committee.

5.7 The Executive Committee retains the power to co-opt other members for particular purposes, as seen fit by the committee.

5.8 Any member of the Executive Committee, either in an Elected or in an Officer position, can resign at any time. The resignation must be communicated in writing to the Chair, Secretary, or Public Officer of the Society.

5.8.1 The committee may appoint a member of the association to fill the casual vacancy created by this resignation. The member so appointed is to hold office, subject to these rules, until the conclusion of the AGM next following the date of the appointment.

5.9 A member of the executive who has resigned is responsible to hand over their portfolio to the person or persons who replace them in the Executive. This may involve, for example, ensuring that a new Treasurer gains access to the Society's bank account, or that any new officer is briefed on the action plan of the position.

§ 6 Subcommittees

6.1. Subcommittees can be formed by the Executive Committee as groups specifically focusing on more substantial activities of the Society. Participation in a subcommittee is open to any member of the Society interested in being more involved with the relevant activity on which the subcommittee is focused.

6.2. Subcommittees are considered responsible for their internal structure, if such a structure is necessary (e.g., editorial structures in the case of the Journal), provided it conforms with the principles of the constitution.

6.3. Subcommittees are considered as having primary responsibility for funding (i.e. the carrying out of fundraising work) pertaining to their activity. Extra funding from common Society funds is available at the discretion of the Executive Committee, but does not override this primary responsibility. General fundraising activities of benefit to all activities may be proposed and coordinated by the Executive Committee.

6.4 Subcommittees must give a report on their activities at a meeting of the Executive Committee, or make minutes of any meetings available to the Executive Committee.

6.5. The role of the Executive Committee being to supervise the functioning and public presentation of the Society as a whole, Subcommittees and/or the representatives should be open to responses to their reports by the Executive Committee with these factors in mind:

6.5.1 Any member of the Society or Executive Committee who has strong opinions on the running of any given activity is encouraged to become an active member of the relevant Subcommittee and contribute their opinions in that forum.

6.5.2 Objections and/or criticisms of Subcommittee activities should ultimately refer to the Constitution of the Society as their basis.

6.5.3 Any claim to monies in the central account of the Society is subject to approval by the Executive Committee (see below).

§ 7 Positions

7.1 The Executive Committee shall at least include among its members the positions of:

1. Chair: who is responsible for the ensuring the functioning of the Executive Committee and for overseeing the general running of the Society and its various activities. The Chair takes responsibility for ensuring that the Society and its members uphold the Constitution and fulfil the aims of the Society in its activities and events, such as by assisting the Officers in developing policy in their areas and by implementing the policy through an action plan. The Chair represents the Society in contact with other professional associations or instituted bodies.
2. Deputy Chair: who is co-responsible with the Chair for overseeing the running of the Executive Committee and general activities of the Society, and who can stand in for the Chair if they are temporarily unable to perform these functions. The Deputy Chair is generally co-responsible with the Chair for ensuring that the Society and its members uphold the constitution and fulfil the aims of the Society in its activities and events, such as by assisting the Officers in developing policy in their areas and by implementing the policy through an action plan.
3. Treasurer: who is responsible for the financial accounting of the Society, for maintaining financial records of the Society's annual income and expenditure for its various activities, and for reporting on all financial matters to the Executive Committee in accordance with the relevant sections of the "Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009".
4. Secretary: who is responsible for managing all data and information records related to the Society, including correspondence to and from the Society, the Society's database, mailing lists, copies of minutes of the Executive, copies of minutes of the AGM, membership registers, list of sponsored activities, and for reporting on these subjects to the Executive Committee in accordance with relevant sections of the "Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009".
5. International Liaison Officer: who is responsible for initiating and sustaining relationships with other philosophical societies and associations beyond Australia, coordinating others' efforts in linking with international organisations, implementing the protocol for the running of the Advisory Board, (7.4), and promoting the participation of international delegates at the Society's annual conference.

6. Public Officer: who is responsible for maintaining the incorporated status of the Society, being a signatory in the bank account, and in conjunction with the Secretary for maintaining a register of members of the association specifying the name and address of each person who is a member of the association together with the date on which the person became a member.
7. Communications Officer: who is responsible for maintaining and managing the Society's website (www.ascp.org.au), for the promotion of any Society events and activities, including the annual conference (in conjunction with the conference subcommittee), for ensuring that any material publicised via the Society's website accords with the rules and aims of the Society, and for maintaining the social media presence of the Society.
8. Conference Officer: who will be responsible for the smooth running of the Society's annual conference, and who will liaise between the host institution and the executive committee, ensuring that planning and organising of the annual conference is undertaken in timely manner and proceeds in agreement with the rules and aims as outlined in the Society's constitution.
9. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Officer, who is responsible to ensure that policies and practices within the Society uphold principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, liaises with other professional organisations and bodies on equity, diversity and inclusion issues, and organizes one or more special sessions on equity, diversity and inclusion at the Society's Annual Conference.
10. Governmental/Institutional Liaison Officer, who is responsible for representing the Society's interests in liaising with the government and government agencies.
11. Student Representative Officer, who is responsible to represent the interest of Students, to present their perspective at the Executive of the Society, and to help propose and organise special events for Postgraduate students and ECRs as part of the Annual Conference.
12. Early Career Researcher Representative Officer, who is responsible to represent the interest of ECRs, to present their perspective at the Executive of the Society, and to help propose and organise special events for Postgraduate students and ECRs as part of the Annual Conference.
13. New Zealand Representative, who is responsible to promote the Society's connection with continental philosophers and philosophy departments in New Zealand.

7.4 Advisory Board: The Society shall establish an advisory board consisting of invited academics who have been associated with the Society and its activities in the past, and who will serve in an advisory and consultative role for any matters arising of concern or interest to the Society. The members of the advisory board can also choose to become active members of the Society, and will be entitled to put forward new proposals for the Society and the executive committee to consider. But they will not be able to simultaneously hold positions on the executive committee or take part in its executive decisions. Members of the advisory board, however, can nominate themselves for any position on the executive committee provided they first step down from the advisory board and nominate themselves in the appropriate manner as outlined in the Society's constitution.

§ 8 Meetings

8.1 For all AGMs there shall be the following:

8.1.1 An Agenda: a meeting plan itemising all issues hoped to be addressed by the Executive Committee in the meeting, in rough order of urgency. The agenda may include Treasurer reports, Secretary reports and any subcommittee reports.

8.1.2 A Secretary, or Minutes-taker: who is responsible for notifying members for elected positions that need to be filled at the AGM, noting the agenda of the meeting, those present and apologies, submissions and reports made to the Executive Committee, and decisions taken by the Executive Committee, and distributing these minutes to the rest of the Executive Committee.

8.1.3 A Meeting Chairperson: who is responsible for formulating the agenda of the meeting (from submissions by Committee members), ensuring the agenda is addressed over the course of the meeting. The Chair shall enable the productivity of meeting discussions through ensuring the expression of opinions, being able to sum up opinions and their divergence, and keeping this expression to the agenda and to its point, assigning where necessary extra agenda items for the meeting or for a future meeting.

8.2 An ordinary AGM shall be organized to coincide with each annual conference.

8.3 Extraordinary General Meetings may be called at any time by the Executive or by a written request to the Executive of not less than 10 financial members.

8.4 General meetings (annual or extraordinary) shall undertake to elect members to the Executive Committee, to make any requisite amendments to the Constitution, and to decide plans for activities or events to be pursued in the following year. Motions put before the general assembly shall be passed if supported by a two-thirds majority of financial members present or voting by proxy.

8.5 Other issues pertaining to voting procedures, the nomination and counting of proxies, and any other business concerning the holding of general meetings shall take place in accordance with the “Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009”.

§ 9 Activities of the Society

The number and nature of the activities of the Society is broadly dependent upon the initiatives of its members in coordination with the Executive Committee. Any activity claiming to be an activity of the Society must conform with the aims and principles of the Society as expressed in this constitution as well as the established policies and action plans, and to be conducted according to the guidelines of this constitution. The main actual or envisaged activities of the Society are as follows:

9.1 The Annual Report: The Chair of the Society shall undertake to (and is obliged to, where stated as a membership promise) produce available an annual report presented at the AGM and subsequently made publicly on the Society’s website.

9.2 The Website: The Society shall undertake to produce and maintain a website for the Society.

9.3 The Conference: The Society shall undertake to organise an annual conference of the Society.

9.4 The Journal: The Society shall undertake to produce a philosophical journal issue on an annual basis, which should be linked to publishing some of the proceedings of the annual conference (though publication of some conference papers via different publishing venues is also permissible).

9.5 Social Media: The Society shall undertake to maintain an active presence in social media such as Facebook and Twitter for the purpose of promoting activities in continental philosophy and interaction between members of the Society throughout the year.

§10 Financial

10. 1. The Society is understood to be an essentially non-profit organisation, hence work for the Society is understood to be of a volunteer nature, i.e. no member of the Society shall be entitled to a wage of any sort nor a share in monies raised or collected by the Society.

10. 2. Adequate account records must be kept of all funds received by the Society, and all funds spent by the Society. Accounts should specify the source, amount and purpose of funds received, the purpose of funds spent, by whom, and on which dates. This information, apart from ensuring ‘accountability’, will be referred to in the case of the need to draw up budgets and project expenses.

10. 3. The Society shall maintain a bank account in its name into which membership funds, and donations of a non-specific nature shall be deposited. The Executive Committee shall have discretion to designate a percentage of all funds raised for specific activities of the Society. Signatories to the bank account shall be the Chair, the Treasurer, and Public Officer, and any other elected member of the Executive who agrees to upon request from the Executive.

10.4 Funds in the Society account will automatically be considered to be a resource for:

10.4.1 The production of the Journal, and anything else promised as a membership entitlement in the membership year.

10.4.2 Petty cash costs associated with any activities of the Society (stationery, postage, photocopying, etc.), distributed either in advance or as reimbursement for costs upon presentation of receipts.

10.4.2 The maintenance of the Society website and continued possession of the Society's domain name.

10.4.3 The contribution of "seeding" funding for the annual conference in consultation with the host institution's organising committee. The annual conference remains a Society event, though the financial and institutional support of the host institution and/or other contributing bodies will be duly acknowledged.

10.5 Once costs listed in 10.4 have been taken into account any remaining funds, subject to approval by the Executive Committee, will be considered as resources for:

10.5.1 Non-petty cash "grants" to Society sponsored activities (e.g. workshops, symposia, publications, etc.).

10.5.2 'Capital' (software, fax machines, CD-ROMs, etc) for general use and availability to Society members.

10.5.3 Any other unforeseen or contingent costs concerning the Society.

10.6 All financial matters including record keeping and reporting shall be undertaken in accordance with the "Model Constitution under the Associations Incorporation Act, 2009".