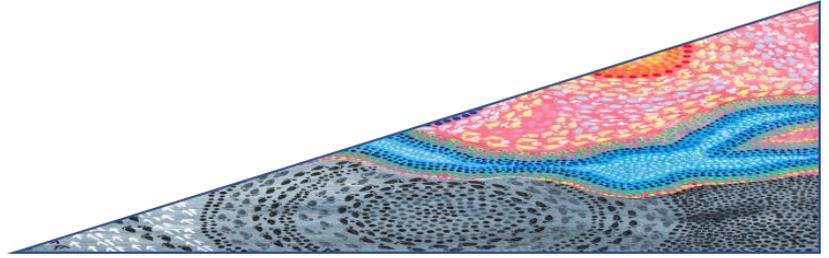


**CONSTITUTION  
OF  
MALLEE DISTRICT ABORIGINAL  
SERVICES LTD**

Australian Company Number (ACN) 604 331 144  
Australian Business Number (ABN) 54 334 685 198

A company limited by guarantee



## FOREWORD

As an Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation, we operate under two systems of law.

We abide by and comply with our statutory legal obligations under the *Corporations Act (Cth) 2001*. We report to and are regulated by both the Australian Securities and Investment Commission and the Australian Charities and Not for Profit and Commission.

In addition to the western legal system that governs our operations we also follow and honour our own cultural obligations under Aboriginal LORE. Our LORE sets the foundation and values by which we operate our business and deliver services to our communities.

Our LORE is the customs and stories of Aboriginal peoples learned from the Dreamtime, passed from generation to generation through our ceremony, songs, stories and dance and requires us to respect Country. Our LORE from time immemorial has governed all aspects of our lives. Our culture is a vibrant evolving expression of who we are.

We acknowledge the four cornerstones to our LORE:

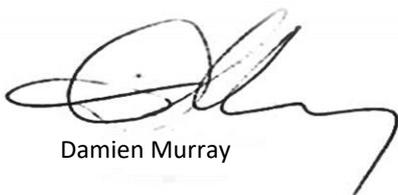
**Land** – our ancestors birthing Country is our link to our sacred lands where ceremony and healing takes place.

**Oral** – our history is an oral tradition, we pass on generation to generation our language, customs, song lines and ceremonies through story telling.

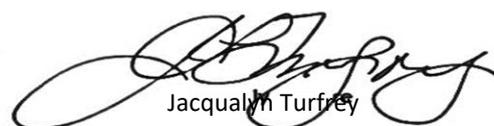
**Respect** – we show respect for our Origin, our Country, our Elders, our cultural practices and the cultural practices of others, our animals and our Dreamtime.

**Elders** – are our wisdom holders, our story tellers, our links to our culture and history. They are our knowledge keepers and spiritual guides for our families and people.

Our constitution has been written to guide the governance of our company under western law, and through the Objects expressed in clause 6, to ensure we honour and acknowledge our obligations under our LORE



Damien Murray  
Chairperson



Jacquelyn Turfrey  
Chief Executive Officer

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## Preliminary

### 1. Name of the company

The name of the **company** is Mallee District Aboriginal Services Limited (the **company**).

### 2. Type of company

The **company** is a not-for-profit public **company** limited by guarantee which is established to be, and to continue as, a charity.

### 3. Limited liability of members

The liability of members is limited to the amount of the guarantee in clause 4.

### 4. The guarantee

Each member must contribute an amount not more than \$1 (the guarantee) to the property of the **company** if the **company** is wound up while the member is a member, or within 12 months after they stop being a member, and this contribution is required to pay for the:

- (a) debts and liabilities of the **company** incurred before the member stopped being a member, or
- (b) costs of winding up.

### 5. Definitions

In this constitution, words and phrases have the meaning set out in clauses 70 and 72.

## Charitable purposes and powers

### 6. Objects

The **company's** object is to pursue the following charitable purpose(s):

The **company** will pursue charitable purposes only and to apply its income promoting such charitable purposes in accordance with the following:

- (a) establish, maintain and expand medical, health, family and community services
- (b) develop and implement policies and programs which improve health, physical, economic, spiritual and emotional wellbeing for Aboriginal peoples across the Mallee Region;
- (c) establish, maintain and expand centres from which to deliver services to deliver health, family and community programs and contribute to social and recreational activities for Aboriginal peoples of the Mallee Region
- (d) receive funds, donations and titles to properties
- (e) develop, establish and strengthen collaborative relationships or partnerships for the benefit of the members with:
  - i. Other Aboriginal organisations;
  - ii. Local, State and Commonwealth Governments;
  - iii. Specialist health providers;
  - iv. Education providers;
  - v. Or other providers that enhance Aboriginal people;
- (f) encourage the employment of Aboriginal peoples within the **company** and other organisations

- (g) provide affordable and appropriate rental housing to Aboriginal peoples on low incomes and manage and maintain existing housing to meet the social, cultural and economic aspirations of communities serviced by the **company**;
- (h) promote Aboriginal culture
- (i) promote any other purpose beneficial to the community through the provision of any service or program as may be determined by the board of directors from time to time.

## **7. Powers**

Subject to clause 8, the **company** has the following powers, which may only be used to carry out its purpose(s) set out in clause 6:

- (a) the powers of an individual, and
- (b) all the powers of a company limited by guarantee under the **Corporations Act**.

## **8. Not-for-profit**

- 8.1 The **company** must not distribute any income or assets directly or indirectly to its members, except as provided in clauses 8.2 and 69.
- 8.2 Clause 8.1 does not stop the **company** from doing the following things, provided they are done in good faith:
  - (a) paying a member for goods or services they have provided or expenses they have properly incurred at fair and reasonable rates or rates more favourable to the **company**, or
  - (b) making a payment to a member in carrying out the **company's** charitable purpose(s).

## **9. Amending the constitution**

- 9.1 Subject to clause 9.2, the members may amend this constitution by passing a **special resolution**.
- 9.2 The members must not pass a **special resolution** that amends this constitution if passing it causes the **company** to no longer be a charity.

## **Members**

### **10. Membership and register of members**

- 10.1 The **company** must have a minimum of 30 members.
- 10.2 The categories of membership of the **company** are:
  - (a) initial members,
  - (b) full members,
  - (c) associate members; and
  - (d) any other person that the directors allow to be a member, in accordance with this constitution.
- 10.3 **Full member**
  - (a) An Aboriginal person may become a full member if:
    - i. they are 18 years or over;
    - ii. they ordinarily reside within the Mallee Region including Mildura, Swan Hill, Robinvale and Kerang;

- iii. they have applied for membership following the process set out in clause 12; and
  - iv. their application has been confirmed in writing following the process set out in clause 13.
- (b) Full members are entitled to:
- i. receive notices and attend meetings of members;
  - ii. vote on resolutions; and
  - iii. be appointed as a director.
- 10.4 **Associate member**
- (a) An Aboriginal person may become an associate member if:
- i. they are 18 years or over;
  - ii. they are community members using the service who live outside the Mallee Region; or
  - iii. they do not ordinarily reside in the Mallee Region but originally come from the Mallee Region and have family that continue to reside within the Mallee Region;
  - iv. they have applied for membership following the process set out in clause 12; and
  - v. their application has been confirmed in writing following the process set out in clause 13.
- (b) Associate members are entitled to:
- i. receive notice of meetings; and
  - ii. attend meetings of members.
- (c) Associate members are not entitled to:
- i. vote; or
  - ii. be appointed as a director.
- 10.5 The **company** must establish and maintain a register of members. The register of members must be kept by the secretary and must contain:
- (a) for each current member:
- i. name
  - ii. address
  - iii. class of membership
  - iv. any alternative address nominated by the member for the service of notices, and
  - v. date the member was entered on to the register.
- (b) for each person who stopped being a member in the last 7 years:
- i. name
  - ii. address
  - iii. any alternative address nominated by the member for the service of notices, and
  - iv. dates the membership started and ended.
- 10.6 If:
- (a) a full member who moves outside the Mallee Region, is required to notify the Company and their membership category will automatically transfers to associate membership; or

- (b) an associate member becomes resident in the Mallee Region, upon notifying the Company their membership category automatically transfers to a full membership.

10.7 The **company** must give current members access to the register of members.

10.8 Information that is accessed from the register of members must only be used in a manner relevant to the interests or rights of members.

### **11. Who can be a member**

11.1 Subject to clause 10, a person who supports the purposes of the **company** is eligible to apply to be a member of the **company** under clause 12.

11.2 In this clause, 'person' means an individual.

### **12. How to apply to become a member**

12.1 A person (as defined in clause 11.2) must submit a written application to the **company**, signed by the applicant accompanied by a Certificate of Aboriginality in a form acceptable to the board of directors, stating that the person:

- (a) wishes to become a member of the **company** and identify which category of membership they are applying for (full or associate),
- (b) supports the purpose(s) of the **company**, and
- (c) agrees to comply with the **company's** constitution.

### **13. Directors decide whether to approve membership**

13.1 The directors must consider an application for membership within a reasonable time after the secretary receives the application, and decide by resolution whether to accept or reject the application.

13.2 If the directors approve an application:

- (a) the resolution to accept the application must be recorded in the minutes of the board of directors meeting at which the resolution was passed;
- (b) the secretary must as soon as reasonably possible notify the applicant in writing that their application was approved, pending payment of any relevant reasonable membership fees, if required, as determined by the directors from time to time.
- (c) Subject to any membership fees being paid in full, if any, the secretary must, as soon as possible:
  - i. enter the new member on the register of members; and
  - ii. notify the applicant in writing that their application has been finalised, and the date their membership begins (see clause 14).

13.3 If the directors reject an application, the secretary must write to the applicant as soon as possible to tell them that their application has been rejected, but does not have to give reasons.

13.4 For the avoidance of doubt, the directors may approve an application even if the application does not state the matters listed in clauses 12.1(a), 12.1(b) and 12.1(c). In that case, by applying to be a member, the applicant agrees to those three matters.

### **14. When a person becomes a member**

Other than **initial members**, an applicant will become a member when they are entered on the register of members.

## 15. When a person stops being a member

- 15.1 A person immediately stops being a member if they:
- (a) die
  - (b) are bankrupt
  - (c) resign, by writing to the secretary
  - (d) cease to fulfil the eligibility criteria of membership
  - (e) are expelled under clause 17, or
  - (f) have not responded within three months to a written request from the secretary that they confirm in writing that they want to remain a member.

## Dispute resolution and disciplinary procedures

### 16. Dispute resolution

- 16.1 The dispute resolution procedure in this clause applies to disputes (disagreements) under this constitution between a member or director and:
- (a) one or more members
  - (b) one or more directors, or
  - (c) the **company**.
- 16.2 A member or director must not start a dispute resolution procedure in relation to a matter which is the subject of a disciplinary procedure under clause 17 until the disciplinary procedure is completed.
- 16.3 Those involved in the dispute must try to resolve it between themselves within 14 days of knowing about it.
- 16.4 If those involved in the dispute do not resolve it under clause 16.3, they must within 10 days:
- (a) tell the directors about the dispute in writing
  - (b) agree or request that a mediator be appointed, and
  - (c) attempt in good faith to settle the dispute by mediation.
- 16.5 The mediator must:
- (a) be chosen by agreement of those involved, or
  - (b) where those involved do not agree:
    - i. for disputes between members, a person chosen by the directors, or
    - ii. for other disputes, a person chosen by either the Commissioner of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission or the president of the law institute or society in the state or territory in which the **company** has its registered office.
- 16.6 A mediator chosen by the directors under clause 16.5(b)(i):
- (a) may be a member or former member of the **company**
  - (b) must not have a personal interest in the dispute, and
  - (c) must not be biased towards or against anyone involved in the dispute.
- 16.7 When conducting the mediation, the mediator must:
- (a) allow those involved a reasonable chance to be heard
  - (b) allow those involved a reasonable chance to review any written statements
  - (c) ensure that those involved are given natural justice, and
  - (d) not make a decision on the dispute.

**17. Disciplining members**

- 17.1 In accordance with this clause, the directors may resolve by resolution passed at a board of directors meeting to warn, suspend or expel a member from the **company** if the directors consider that:
- (a) the member has breached this constitution, or
  - (b) the member's behaviour is causing, has caused, or is likely to cause harm to or is prejudicial to the interests of the **company**, or
  - (c) the member's behaviour has brought or is likely to bring the reputation of the **company** into disrepute, as determined by the **company**, in its absolute discretion, or
  - (d) the member is or has been convicted of, or has or had a charge found proven relating to, a criminal offence which in the opinion of a majority of the directors is or was an offence involving:
    - i. serious domestic violence
    - ii. serious violence
    - iii. sexual offending, or
    - iv. theft, fraud or deception.
- 17.2 At least 14 days before the directors' meeting at which a resolution under clause 17.1 will be considered, the secretary must notify the member in writing:
- (a) that the directors are considering a resolution to warn, suspend or expel the member
  - (b) that this resolution will be considered at a directors' meeting and the date of that meeting
  - (c) what the member is said to have done or not done
  - (d) the nature of the resolution that has been proposed, and
  - (e) that the member may provide an explanation to the directors, and details of how to do so.
- 17.3 Before the directors pass any resolution under clause 17.1, the member must be given a chance to explain or defend themselves by:
- (a) sending the directors a written explanation before that directors' meeting, and/or
  - (b) speaking at the meeting.
- 17.4 After considering any explanation under clause 17.3, the directors may:
- (a) take no further action
  - (b) warn the member
  - (c) suspend the member's rights as a member for a period of no more than 12 months
  - (d) expel the member
  - (e) refer the decision to an unbiased, independent person on conditions that the directors consider appropriate (however, the person can only make a decision that the directors could have made under this clause), or
  - (f) require the matter to be determined at a **general meeting**.
- 17.5 The directors cannot fine a member.
- 17.6 The secretary must give written notice to the member of the decision under clause 17.4 as soon as possible.
- 17.7 Disciplinary procedures must be completed as soon as reasonably practical.

- 17.8 The member ceases to be a member with effect from the end of the board of directors meeting at which a resolution to expel the member is passed.
- 17.9 There will be no liability for any loss or injury suffered by the member as a result of any decision made in good faith under this clause.

## General meetings of members

### 18. General meetings called by directors

- 18.1 The directors may call a **general meeting**.
- 18.2 A meeting of members must be convened by the board of directors when required by order made under section 249G of the **Corporations Act**.
- 18.3 If members with at least 5% of the votes that may be cast at a **general meeting** make a written request to the **company** for a **general meeting** to be held, the directors must:
- (a) within 21 days of the members' request, give all members notice of a **general meeting**, and
  - (b) hold the **general meeting** within 2 months of the members' request.
- 18.4 The percentage of votes that members have (in clause 18.3) is to be worked out as at midnight before the members request the meeting.
- 18.5 The members who make the request for a **general meeting** must:
- (a) include in the request a copy of all resolutions to be proposed at the meeting
  - (b) sign the request, and
  - (c) give the request to the **company**.
- 18.6 Separate copies of a document setting out the request may be signed by members if the wording of the request is the same in each copy.

### 19. General meetings called by members

- 19.1 If the directors do not call the meeting within 21 days of being requested under clause 18.3, 50% or more of the members who made the request may call and arrange to hold a **general meeting**.
- 19.2 To call and hold a meeting under clause 19.1 the members must:
- (a) as far as possible, follow the procedures for **general meetings** set out in this constitution
  - (b) call the meeting using the list of members on the **company's** member register, which the **company** must provide to the members making the request at no cost, and
  - (c) hold the **general meeting** within three months after the request was given to the **company**.
- 19.3 The **company** must pay the members who request the **general meeting** any reasonable expenses they incur because the directors did not call and hold the meeting.

### 20. Members forum

- 20.1 The board of directors will, at least three times per calendar year and where practicable in conjunction with the annual general meeting, convene a **members forum**.

- 20.2 Procedures for convening, giving notice of, and conducting the **members forum** will be determined by the board of directors.
- 20.3 The strategies which the board of directors aim to follow in seeking to attain the objects of the **company**, as set out in clause 6, will be discussed and recommendations may be made to the board of directors at the **members forum**.
- 20.4 The board of directors will consider recommendations of the **members forum** and incorporate such recommendations into the strategic direction of the **company** as practicable, feasible and desirable to do so in the board of directors' discretion.

## **21. Annual general meeting**

- 21.1 A **general meeting**, called the annual **general meeting**, must be held:
  - (a) within 18 months after registration of the **company**, and
  - (b) after the first annual **general meeting**, at least once in every calendar year.
- 21.2 Even if these items are not set out in the notice of meeting, the business of an annual **general meeting** may include:
  - (a) a review of the **company's** activities
  - (b) a review of the **company's** finances
  - (c) any auditor's report
  - (d) the election of directors, and
  - (e) the appointment and payment of auditors, if any.
- 21.3 Before or at the annual **general meeting**, the directors must give information to the members on the **company's** activities and finances during the period since the last annual **general meeting**.
- 21.4 The chairperson of the annual **general meeting** must give members as a whole a reasonable opportunity at the meeting to ask questions or make comments about the management of the **company**.

## **22. Notice of general meetings**

- 22.1 Notice of a **general meeting** must be given in a form recognised by section 249J of the **Corporations Act**, to:
  - (a) each member entitled to vote at the meeting
  - (b) each director, and
  - (c) the auditor (if any).
- 22.2 Notice of a **general meeting** must be provided in writing at least 21 days before the meeting.
- 22.3 Subject to clause 22.4, notice of a meeting may be provided less than 21 days before the meeting if:
  - (a) for an annual **general meeting**, all the members entitled to attend and vote at the annual **general meeting** agree beforehand, or
  - (b) for any other **general meeting**, members with at least 95% of the votes that may be cast at the meeting agree beforehand.
- 22.4 Notice of a meeting cannot be provided less than 21 days before the meeting if a resolution will be moved to:
  - (a) remove a director
  - (b) appoint a director in order to replace a director who was removed, or
  - (c) remove an auditor.
- 22.5 Notice of a **general meeting** must include:

- (a) the place, date and time for the meeting (and if the meeting is to be held in two or more places, the technology that will be used to facilitate this)
- (b) the general nature of the meeting's business
- (c) if applicable, that a **special resolution** is to be proposed and the precise words of the proposed resolution
- (d) a statement that members have the right to appoint proxies and that, if a member appoints a proxy:
  - i. the proxy must be a full member of the **company** unless the proxy is the member's legal representative,
  - ii. the proxy form must be delivered to the **company** at its registered address or the address (including an electronic address) specified in the notice of the meeting, and
  - iii. the proxy form must be delivered to the **company** at least 48 hours before the meeting.

22.6 If a **general meeting** is adjourned (put off) for one month or more, the members must be given new notice of the resumed meeting.

### **23. Quorum at general meetings**

- 23.1 For a **general meeting** to be held, at least 10% of members eligible to vote (a quorum) must be present (in person, by proxy or by representative) for the whole meeting. When determining whether a quorum is present, a person may only be counted once (even if that person is a representative or proxy of more than one member).
- 23.2 No business may be conducted at a **general meeting** if a quorum is not present.
- 23.3 If there is no quorum present within 30 minutes after the starting time stated in the notice of **general meeting**, the **general meeting** is adjourned to the date, time and place that the chairperson specifies. If the chairperson does not specify one or more of those things, the meeting is adjourned to:
- (a) if the date is not specified – the same day in the next week
  - (b) if the time is not specified – the same time, and
  - (c) if the place is not specified – the same place.
- 23.4 If no quorum is present at the resumed meeting within 30 minutes after the starting time set for that meeting, the meeting is cancelled.

### **24. Auditor's right to attend meetings**

- 24.1 The auditor (if any) is entitled to attend any **general meeting** and to be heard by the members on any part of the business of the meeting that concerns the auditor in the capacity of auditor.
- 24.2 The **company** must give the auditor (if any) any communications relating to the **general meeting** that a member of the **company** is entitled to receive.

### **25. Using technology to hold meetings**

- 25.1 The **company** may hold a **general meeting** at two or more venues using any technology that gives the members as a whole a reasonable opportunity to participate, including to hear and be heard.
- 25.2 Anyone using this technology is taken to be present in person at the meeting.

## **26. Chairperson for general meetings**

- 26.1 The elected board chairperson is entitled to chair general meetings.
- 26.2 The members present and entitled to vote at a **general meeting** may choose a director or member to be the chairperson for that meeting if:
- (a) there is no elected board chairperson, or
  - (b) the **elected chairperson** is not present within 30 minutes after the starting time set for the meeting, or
  - (c) the **elected chairperson** is present but says they do not wish to act as chairperson of the meeting.

## **27. Role of the chairperson**

- 27.1 The chairperson is responsible for the conduct of the **general meeting**, and for this purpose must give members a reasonable opportunity to make comments and ask questions (including to the auditor (if any)).
- 27.2 The chairperson does not have a casting vote.

## **28. Adjournment of meetings**

- 28.1 If a quorum is present, a **general meeting** must be adjourned if a majority of **members present** direct the chairperson to adjourn it.
- 28.2 Only unfinished business may be dealt with at a meeting resumed after an adjournment.

## **Members' resolutions and statements**

### **29. Members' resolutions and statements**

- 29.1 Members with at least 5% of the votes that may be cast on a resolution may give:
- (a) written notice to the **company** of a resolution they propose to move at a **general meeting** (members' resolution), and/or
  - (b) a written request to the **company** that the **company** give all of its members a statement about a proposed resolution or any other matter that may properly be considered at a **general meeting** (members' statement).
- 29.2 A notice of a members' resolution must set out the wording of the proposed resolution and be signed by the members proposing the resolution.
- 29.3 A request to distribute a members' statement must set out the statement to be distributed and be signed by the members making the request.
- 29.4 Separate copies of a document setting out the notice or request may be signed by members if the wording is the same in each copy.
- 29.5 The percentage of votes that members have (as described in clause 29.1) is to be worked out as at midnight before the request or notice is given to the **company**.
- 29.6 If the **company** has been given notice of a members' resolution under clause 29.1(a), the resolution must be considered at the next **general meeting** held more than two months after the notice is given.
- 29.7 This clause does not limit any other right that a member has to propose a resolution at a **general meeting**.

### **30. Company must give notice of proposed resolution or distribute statement**

- 30.1 If the **company** has been given a notice or request under clause 29:

- (a) in time to send the notice of proposed members' resolution or a copy of the members' statement to members with a notice of meeting, it must do so at the **company's** cost, or
  - (b) too late to send the notice of proposed members' resolution or a copy of the members' statement to members with a notice of meeting, then the members who proposed the resolution or made the request must pay the expenses reasonably incurred by the **company** in giving members notice of the proposed members' resolution or a copy of the members' statement. However, at a **general meeting**, the members may pass a resolution that the **company** will pay these expenses.
- 30.2 The **company** does not need to send the notice of proposed members' resolution or a copy of the members' statement to members if:
- (a) it is more than 1000 words long
  - (b) the directors consider it may be defamatory
  - (c) clause 30.1(b) applies, and the members who proposed the resolution or made the request have not paid the **company** enough money to cover the cost of sending the notice of the proposed members' resolution or a copy of the members' statement to members, or
  - (d) in the case of a proposed members' resolution, the resolution does not relate to a matter that may be properly considered at a **general meeting** or is otherwise not a valid resolution able to be put to the members.

### **31. Circular resolutions of members**

- 31.1 Subject to clause 31.3, the directors may put a resolution to the members to pass a resolution without a **general meeting** being held (a circular resolution).
- 31.2 The directors must notify the auditor (if any) as soon as possible that a circular resolution has or will be put to members, and set out the wording of the resolution.
- 31.3 Circular resolutions cannot be used:
- (a) for a resolution to remove an auditor, appoint a director or remove a director
  - (b) for passing a **special resolution**, or
  - (c) where the **Corporations Act** or this constitution requires a meeting to be held.
- 31.4 A circular resolution is passed if all the members entitled to vote on the resolution sign or agree to the circular resolution, in the manner set out in clause 31.5 or clause 36.1.
- 31.5 Members may sign:
- (a) a single document setting out the circular resolution and containing a statement that they agree to the resolution, or
  - (b) separate copies of that document, as long as the wording is the same in each copy.
- 31.6 The **company** may send a circular resolution by email to members and members may agree by sending a reply email to that effect, including the text of the resolution in their reply.

## **Voting at general meetings**

### **32. How many votes a member has**

Each full member has one vote.

**33. Challenge to member's right to vote**

- 33.1 A member or the chairperson may only challenge a person's right to vote at a **general meeting** at that meeting.
- 33.2 If a challenge is made under clause 33.1, the chairperson must decide whether or not the person may vote. The chairperson's decision is final.

**34. How voting is carried out**

- 34.1 Voting must be conducted and decided by:
- (a) a show of hands
  - (b) a vote in writing, or
  - (c) another method chosen by the chairperson that is fair and reasonable in the circumstances.
- 34.2 Before a vote is taken, the chairperson must state whether any proxy votes have been received and, if so, how the proxy votes will be cast.
- 34.3 On a show of hands, the chairperson's decision is conclusive evidence of the result of the vote.
- 34.4 The chairperson and the meeting minutes do not need to state the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour or against on a show of hands.

**35. When and how a vote in writing must be held**

- 35.1 A vote in writing may be demanded on any resolution instead of or after a vote by a show of hands by:
- (a) at least five **members present**
  - (b) **members present** with at least 5% of the votes that may be passed on the resolution on the vote in writing (worked out as at the midnight before the vote in writing is demanded), or
  - (c) the chairperson.
- 35.2 A vote in writing must be taken when and how the chairperson directs, unless clause 35.3 applies.
- 35.3 A vote in writing must be held immediately if it is demanded under clause 35:
- (a) for the election of a chairperson under clause 26.2, or
  - (b) to decide whether to adjourn the meeting.
- 35.4 A demand for a vote in writing may be withdrawn.

**36. Appointment of proxy**

- 36.1 A full member may appoint a proxy to attend and vote at a **general meeting** on their behalf. If the CEO or Managing Director of the **company** is also a member, they are not entitled to appoint a proxy.
- 36.2 A proxy must be a full member unless the proxy is the member's legal representative.
- 36.3 A proxy appointed to attend and vote for a member has the same rights as the member to:
- (a) speak at the meeting
  - (b) vote in a vote in writing (but only to the extent allowed by the appointment), and
  - (c) join in to demand a vote in writing under clause 35.
  - (d) in addition to their own vote if they are a member, each proxy can hold a maximum of one vote at the meeting

- 36.4 An appointment of proxy (proxy form) must be signed by the member appointing the proxy and must contain:
- (a) the member's name and address
  - (b) the **company's** name
  - (c) the proxy's name or the name of the office held by the proxy, and
  - (d) the meeting(s) at which the appointment may be used.
- 36.5 A proxy appointment may be standing (ongoing).
- 36.6 Proxy forms must be received by the **company** at the address stated in the notice under clause 22.5(d) or at the **company's** registered address at least 48 hours before a meeting.
- 36.7 A proxy does not have the authority to speak and vote for a member at a meeting while the member is at the meeting.
- 36.8 Unless the **company** receives written notice before the start or resumption of a **general meeting** at which a proxy votes, a vote cast by the proxy is valid even if, before the proxy votes, the appointing member:
- (a) dies
  - (b) is mentally incapacitated
  - (c) revokes the proxy's appointment, or
  - (d) revokes the authority of a representative or agent who appointed the proxy.
- 36.9 A proxy appointment may specify the way the proxy must vote on a particular resolution.

### **37. Voting by proxy**

- 37.1 A proxy is not entitled to vote on a show of hands (but this does not prevent a member appointed as a proxy from voting as a member on a show of hands).
- 37.2 When a vote in writing is held, a proxy:
- (a) does not need to vote, unless the proxy appointment specifies the way they must vote
  - (b) if the way they must vote is specified on the proxy form, must vote that way, and
  - (c) if the proxy is also a member (who is only able to hold a maximum of one proxy), may cast their own vote and that of their proxy in different ways.

## **Directors**

### **38. Number of directors**

The company must have at least five and no more than nine directors.

### **39. Election and appointment of directors**

- 39.1 The initial directors are the people who have agreed to act as directors and who are named as proposed directors in the application for registration of the **company**.
- 39.2 Apart from the initial directors and directors appointed under clauses 39.3 and 39.7, the members may elect a director by a resolution passed in a **general meeting**.
- 39.3 The board of directors must at all times include:
- (a) the chairperson currently serving on the board of directors of any fully owned subsidiary entity located in Swan Hill at the time of the **company's** meeting,
  - (b) the chairperson currently serving on the board of directors of any fully owned subsidiary entity located in Kerang at the time of the **company's** meeting.

The remaining vacant director's positions can be filled by members from anywhere in the Mallee Region and elected in accordance with clause 39.2.

- 39.4 Each of the directors that are to be appointed by the members must be appointed by a separate resolution, unless:
- (a) the members present have first passed a resolution that the appointments may be voted on together, and
  - (b) no votes were cast against that resolution.
- 39.5 Subject to the requirements of clause 39.3 and 39.7, a person is eligible for election as a director of the **company** if they:
- (a) are ordinarily resident in the Mallee Region
  - (b) are a full member of the **company**
  - (c) are not an employee of the **company**
  - (d) do not have an immediate family member already serving as director, and
  - (e) are not ineligible to be a director under the **Corporations Act** or the **ACNC Act**.
- 39.6 Without limiting clause 39.5, all nominations for appointment as a director of the **company** must be:
- (a) made in writing, signed by a member of the **company** and accompanied by a signed consent to act as a director of the **company** (which must be endorsed on the form of nomination)
  - (b) delivered to the secretary of the **company** not less than 14 days prior to the date set for the **general meeting** at which directors are to be appointed, and
  - (c) accompanied by a resume of the candidate outlining the candidate's skills and abilities that they can offer to the **company** in ensuring effective governance to provide quality service to the community.
- 39.7 The directors may appoint a person as a director to fill a casual vacancy or as an additional director if that person:
- (a) is ordinarily resident in the Mallee Region
  - (b) is a full member of the **company**
  - (c) is not an employee of the **company**
  - (d) does not have an immediate family member already serving as director
  - (e) provides a resume outlining the skills and abilities that they can offer to the **company** in ensuring effective governance to provide quality service to the community
  - (f) gives the **company** their signed consent to act as a director of the **company**, and
  - (g) is not ineligible to be a director under the **Corporations Act** or the **ACNC Act**.
- 39.8 If the number of directors is reduced to fewer than five or is less than the number required for a quorum, the continuing directors may act for the purpose of increasing the number of directors to five or calling a **general meeting**, but for no other purpose.

#### **40. Election of chairperson**

The directors must elect a director as the **company's elected chairperson**.

#### **41. Term of office**

- 41.1 At each annual **general meeting**:
- (a) any director appointed by the directors to fill a casual vacancy or as an additional director must retire, and
  - (b) at least one-third of the remaining directors must retire.

- 41.2 The directors who must retire at each annual **general meeting** under clause 41.1(b) will be the directors who have been longest in office since last being elected. Where directors were elected on the same day, the director(s) to retire will be decided by lot unless they agree otherwise.
- 41.3 Other than a director appointed under clause 39.7, a director's term of office starts at the end of the annual **general meeting** at which they are elected and ends at the end of the annual **general meeting** at which they retire.
- 41.4 Each director must retire at least once every three years.
- 41.5 A director who retires under clause 41.1 may nominate for election or re-election, subject to clause 41.6.
- 41.6 A director who has held office for a continuous period of six years or more may only be re-appointed or re-elected after a period of at least 3 years.

#### **42. When a director stops being a director**

A director stops being a director if they:

- (a) give written notice of resignation as a director to the **company**
- (b) die
- (c) are removed as a director by a resolution of the members, including if, in the reasonable opinion of the members, the director's behaviour has brought or is likely to bring the reputation of the **company** into disrepute
- (d) stop being a member of the **company**
- (e) are absent for 3 consecutive directors' meetings without approval from the directors
- (f) during their term as director, are engaged as an employee of the **company**, or
- (g) become ineligible to be a director of the **company** under the **Corporations Act** or the **ACNC Act**.

## **Powers of directors**

#### **43. Powers of directors**

- 43.1 The directors are responsible for managing and directing the activities of the **company** to achieve the purposes set out in clause 6.
- 43.2 The directors may use all the powers of the **company** except for powers that, under the **Corporations Act** or this constitution, may only be used by members.
- 43.3 The directors must decide on the responsible financial management of the **company** including:
- (a) any suitable written delegations of power under clause 44, and
  - (b) how money will be managed, such as how electronic transfers, negotiable instruments or cheques must be authorised and signed or otherwise approved.
- 43.4 The directors cannot remove a director or auditor. Directors and auditors may only be removed by a members' resolution at a **general meeting**.

#### **44. Delegation of directors' powers**

- 44.1 The directors may delegate any of their powers and functions to a committee, a director, an employee of the **company** (such as a chief executive officer) or any other person, as they consider appropriate.
- 44.2 The delegation must be recorded in the **company's** minute book.

#### **45. Payments to directors**

- 45.1 The **company** may pay directors a reasonable sitting fee in connection with their role as a director.
- 45.2 The **company** may pay a stipend instead of a sitting fee to the chairperson to reflect the higher time commitment and responsibilities carried by this position.
- 45.3 Whether to remunerate and the amount of remuneration under clauses 45.1 and 45.2 is to be determined by a committee of the board and must not exceed any amount determined by way of benchmarking or market matching against similar type and sized entities.
- 45.4 Any remuneration under clause 45.1 is to be paid out of the funds of the **company**. The board of directors may determine to suspend, reduce or postpone payment of directors' remuneration if it thinks fit, excluding any amount paid by the **company** under clauses 45.5 or 45.7.
- 45.5 The **company** may:
- (a) pay a director for work they do for the **company**, other than as a director, if the amount is no more than a reasonable fee for the work done, or
  - (b) reimburse a director for expenses properly incurred by the director in connection with the affairs of the **company**.
- 45.6 Any payment made under clause 45.5 must be approved by the directors.
- 45.7 The **company** may pay premiums for insurance indemnifying directors, as allowed for by law (including the **Corporations Act**) and this constitution.

#### **46. Execution of documents**

- 46.1 The **company** may execute a document without using a common seal if the document is signed by:
- (a) two directors of the **company**,
  - (b) a director and the secretary, or
  - (c) an authorised delegate of the **company**.

### **Duties of directors**

#### **47. Duties of directors**

- 47.1 The directors must comply with their duties as directors under legislation and common law (judge-made law), and with the duties described in governance standard 5 of the regulations made under the **ACNC Act** which are:
- (a) to exercise their powers and discharge their duties with the degree of care and diligence that a reasonable individual would exercise if they were a director of the **company**
  - (b) to act in good faith in the best interests of the **company** and to further the charitable purpose(s) of the **company** set out in clause 6
  - (c) not to misuse their position as a director
  - (d) not to misuse information they gain in their role as a director
  - (e) to disclose any perceived or actual material conflicts of interest in the manner set out in clause 48
  - (f) to ensure that the financial affairs of the **company** are managed responsibly, and
  - (g) not to allow the **company** to operate while it is insolvent.

#### **48. Conflicts of interest**

- 48.1 A director must disclose the nature and extent of any actual or perceived material conflict of interest in a matter that is being considered at a meeting of directors (or that is proposed in a circular resolution):
- (a) to the other directors, or
  - (b) if all of the directors have the same conflict of interest, save for the sitting fee determination, to the members at the next **general meeting**, or at an earlier time if reasonable to do so.
- 48.2 The disclosure of a conflict of interest by a director must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- 48.3 Each director who has a material personal interest in a matter that is being considered at a meeting of directors (or that is proposed in a circular resolution) must not, except as provided under clauses 48.4:
- (a) be present at the meeting while the matter is being discussed, or
  - (b) vote on the matter.
- 48.4 A director may still be present and vote if:
- (a) their interest arises because they are a member of the **company**, and the other members have the same interest
  - (b) their interest relates to an insurance contract that insures, or would insure, the director against liabilities that the director incurs as a director of the **company** (see clause 66)
  - (c) their interest relates to a payment by the **company** under clause 65 (indemnity), or any contract relating to an indemnity that is allowed under the **Corporations Act**
  - (d) the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) makes an order allowing the director to vote on the matter, or
  - (e) the directors who do not have a material personal interest in the matter pass a resolution that:
    - (i) identifies the director, the nature and extent of the director's interest in the matter and how it relates to the affairs of the **company**, and
    - (ii) says that those directors are satisfied that the interest should not stop the director from voting or being present.

### **Directors' meetings**

#### **49. When the directors meet**

The directors may decide how often, where and when they meet.

#### **50. Calling directors' meetings**

- 50.1 A director may call a directors' meeting by giving reasonable notice to all of the other directors.
- 50.2 A director may give notice in writing or by any other means of communication that has previously been agreed to by all of the directors.

#### **51. Chairperson for directors' meetings**

- 51.1 The **elected chairperson** is entitled to chair directors' meetings.

- 51.2 The **elected deputy chairperson** is entitled to chair director's meetings in the absence of the **elected chairperson**.
- 51.3 The directors at a directors' meeting may choose a director to be the chairperson for that meeting if the **elected chairperson or deputy chairperson** are:
- apologies for the meeting
  - conflicted out of the meeting or part thereof for the purpose of voting
  - not present within 30 minutes after the starting time set for the meeting, or
  - present but does not want to act as chairperson of the meeting.

## **52. Quorum at directors' meetings**

- 52.1 Unless the directors determine otherwise, the quorum for a directors' meeting is a majority (more than 50%) of directors.
- 52.2 A quorum must be present for the whole directors' meeting.

## **53. Using technology to hold directors' meetings**

- 53.1 The directors may hold their meetings by using any technology (such as video or teleconferencing) that is agreed to by all of the directors.
- 53.2 The directors' agreement may be a standing (ongoing) one.
- 53.3 A director may only withdraw their consent within a reasonable period before the meeting.

## **54. Passing directors' resolutions**

A directors' resolution must be passed by a majority of the votes cast by directors' present and entitled to vote on the resolution.

## **55. Circular resolutions of directors**

- 55.1 The directors may pass a circular resolution without a directors' meeting being held.
- 55.2 A circular resolution is passed if all the directors entitled to vote on the resolution sign or otherwise agree to the resolution in the manner set out in clause 55.3 or clause 55.4.
- 55.3 Each director may sign:
- a single document setting out the resolution and containing a statement that they agree to the resolution, or
  - separate copies of that document, as long as the wording of the resolution is the same in each copy.
- 55.4 The **company** may send a circular resolution by email to the directors and the directors may agree to the resolution by sending a reply email to that effect, including the text of the resolution in their reply.
- 55.5 A circular resolution is passed when the last director signs or otherwise agrees to the resolution in the manner set out in clause 55.3 or clause 55.4.

## **Secretary**

### **56. Appointment and role of secretary**

- 56.1 The **company** must have at least one secretary, who may also be a director.
- 56.2 A secretary must be appointed by the directors (after giving the **company** their signed consent to act as secretary of the **company**) and may be removed by the directors.

- 56.3 The directors must decide the terms and conditions under which the secretary is appointed, including any remuneration.
- 56.4 The role of the secretary includes:
- (a) maintaining a register of the **company's** members, and
  - (b) maintaining the minutes and other records of **general meetings** (including notices of meetings), directors' meetings and circular resolutions.

## Minutes and records

### 57. Minutes and records

- 57.1 The **company** must, within one month, make and keep the following records:
- (a) minutes of proceedings and resolutions of **general meetings**
  - (b) minutes of circular resolutions of members
  - (c) a copy of a notice of each **general meeting**, and
  - (d) a copy of a members' statement distributed to members under clause 29.
- 57.2 The **company** must, within one month, make and keep the following records:
- (a) minutes of proceedings and resolutions of directors' meetings (including meetings of any committees), and
  - (b) minutes of circular resolutions of directors.
- 57.3 To allow members to inspect the **company's** records:
- (a) the **company** must give a member access to the records set out in clause 57.1, and
  - (b) the directors may authorise a member to inspect other records of the **company**, including records referred to in clause 57.2 and clause 58.1.
- 57.4 The directors must ensure that minutes of a **general meeting** or a directors' meeting are signed within a reasonable time after the meeting by:
- (a) the chairperson of the meeting, or
  - (b) the chairperson of the next meeting.
- 57.5 The directors must ensure that minutes of the passing of a circular resolution (of members or directors) are signed by a director within a reasonable time after the resolution is passed.

### 58. Financial and related records

- 58.1 The **company** must make and keep written financial records that:
- (a) correctly record and explain its transactions and financial position and performance, and
  - (b) enable true and fair financial statements to be prepared and to be audited.
- 58.2 The **company** must also keep written records that correctly record its operations.
- 58.3 The **company** must retain its records for at least 7 years.
- 58.4 The directors must take reasonable steps to ensure that the **company's** records are kept safe.

## By-laws

### 59. By-laws

- 59.1 The directors may pass a resolution to make by-laws to give effect to this constitution.
- 59.2 Members and directors must comply with by-laws as if they were part of this constitution.

## Notice

### 60. What is notice

- 60.1 Anything written to or from the **company** under any clause in this constitution is written notice and is subject to clauses 61 to 63, unless specified otherwise.
- 60.2 Clauses 61 to 63 do not apply to a notice of proxy under clause 36.6.

### 61. Notice to the company

Written notice or any communication under this constitution may be given to the **company**, the directors or the secretary by:

- (a) delivering it to the **company's** registered office
- (b) posting it to the **company's** registered office or to another address chosen by the **company** for notice to be provided
- (c) sending it to an email address or other electronic address notified by the **company** to the members as the **company's** email address or other electronic address, or
- (d) sending it to the fax number notified by the **company** to the members as the **company's** fax number.

### 62. Notice to members

- 62.1 Written notice or any communication under this constitution may be given to a member:
- (a) in person
  - (b) by posting it to, or leaving it at the address of the member in the register of members or an alternative address (if any) nominated by the member for service of notices
  - (c) sending it to the email or other electronic address nominated by the member as an alternative address for service of notices (if any)
  - (d) sending it to the fax number nominated by the member as an alternative address for service of notices (if any), or
  - (e) if agreed to by the member, by notifying the member at an email or other electronic address nominated by the member, that the notice is available at a specified place or address (including an electronic address).
- 62.2 If the **company** does not have an address for the member, the **company** is not required to give notice in person.

### 63. When notice is taken to be given

- 63.1 A notice:
- (a) delivered in person, or left at the recipient's address, is taken to be given on the day it is delivered
  - (b) sent by post, is taken to be given on the third day after it is posted with the correct payment of postage costs
  - (c) sent by email, fax or other electronic method, is taken to be given on the business day after it is sent, and
  - (d) given under clause 62.1(e) is taken to be given on the business day after the notification that the notice is available is sent.

## Financial year

### 64. Company's financial year

The **company's** financial year is from 1 July to 30 June, unless the directors pass a resolution to change the financial year.

## Indemnity, insurance and access

### 65. Indemnity

- 65.1 The **company** indemnifies each officer of the **company** out of the assets of the **company**, to the relevant extent, against all losses and liabilities (including costs, expenses and charges) incurred by that person as an officer of the **company**.
- 65.2 In this clause, 'officer' means a director or secretary and includes a director or secretary after they have ceased to hold that office.
- 65.3 In this clause, 'to the relevant extent' means:
- (a) to the extent that the **company** is not precluded by law (including the **Corporations Act**) from doing so, and
  - (b) for the amount that the officer is not otherwise entitled to be indemnified and is not actually indemnified by another person (including an insurer under an insurance policy).
- 65.4 The indemnity is a continuing obligation and is enforceable by an officer even though that person is no longer an officer of the **company** for a period up to 7 years.

### 66. Insurance

- 66.1 To the extent permitted by law (including the **Corporations Act**), and if the directors consider it appropriate, the **company** may pay or agree to pay a premium for a contract insuring a person who is or has been an officer of the **company** against any liability incurred by the person as an officer of the **company**.

### 67. Directors' access to documents

- 67.1 A director has a right of access to the financial records of the **company** at all reasonable times.
- 67.2 If the directors agree, the **company** may give a director or former director, for a period up to 7 years for the purpose of defending any litigation against them, access to:
- (a) certain documents, including documents provided for or available to the directors, and
  - (b) any other documents referred to in those documents.

## Winding up

### 68. Surplus assets not to be distributed to members

- 68.1 If the **company** is wound up, any **surplus assets** must not be distributed to a member or a former member of the **company**, unless that member or former member is a charity described in clause 69.1.

## 69. Distribution of surplus assets

- 69.1 Subject to the **Corporations Act** and any other applicable Act, and any court order, any **surplus assets** (including 'gift funds' defined in clause 69.4) that remain after the company is wound up must be distributed to one or more charities:
- (a) with charitable purpose(s) similar to, or inclusive of, the purpose(s) in clause 6
  - (b) which also prohibit the distribution of any **surplus assets** to its members to at least the same extent as the **company**, and
  - (c) in the event the **company** is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient with the Australian Taxation Office, that is or are deductible gift recipients within the meaning of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth).
- 69.2 The decision as to the charity or charities to be given the **surplus assets** must be made by a special resolution of members at or before the time of winding up. If the members do not make this decision, the **company** may apply to the Supreme Court to make this decision.
- 69.3 If the **company** is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient by the Australian Taxation Office, and that endorsement is revoked (whether or not the **company** is to be wound up), any surplus gift funds must be transferred to one or more charities that meet the requirements of 69.1(a), 69.1(b), 69.1(c), as decided by the directors.
- 69.4 For the purpose of this clause:
- (a) 'gift funds' means:
    - (i) gifts of money or property for the principal purpose of the company
    - (ii) contributions made in relation to a fund-raising event held for the principal purpose of the **company**, and
    - (iii) money received by the **company** because of such gifts and contributions.
  - (b) 'contributions' and 'fund-raising event' have the same meaning as in Division 30 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth).

## Definitions and interpretation

### 70. Definitions

In this constitution:

**ACNC Act** means the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)

**associate member** has the meaning given in clause 10.4

**company** means the **company** referred to in clause 1

**Corporations Act** means the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)

**elected chairperson** means a person elected by the directors to be the **company's** chairperson under clause 40

**full member** has the meaning given by clause 10.3

**general meeting** means a meeting of members and includes the annual **general meeting**, under clause 21.1

**members forum** means a meeting of all members and convened in accordance with clause 20

**initial member** means a person who is named in the application for registration of the **company**, with their consent, as a proposed member of the **company**

**Mallee Region** means collectively the Shire of Mildura Rural City Council, Swan Hill Rural City Council, Gannawarra Shire Council and Buloke Shire Council

**member present** means, in connection with a **general meeting**, a **member present** in person, by representative or by proxy at the venue or venues for the meeting

**registered charity** means a charity that is registered under the **ACNC Act**

**special resolution** means a resolution:

- i. of which notice has been given under clause 22.5(c), and
- ii. that has been passed by at least 75% of the votes cast by **members present** and entitled to vote on the resolution, and

**surplus assets** means any assets of the **company** that remain after paying all debts and other liabilities of the **company**, including the costs of winding up.

## **71. Reading this constitution with the Corporations Act**

- 71.1 The replaceable rules set out in the **Corporations Act** do not apply to the **company**.
- 71.2 While the **company** is a **registered charity**, the **ACNC Act** and the **Corporations Act** override any clauses in this constitution which are inconsistent with those Acts.
- 71.3 If the **company** is not a **registered charity** (even if it remains a charity), the **Corporations Act** overrides any clause in this constitution which is inconsistent with that Act.
- 71.4 A word or expression that is defined in the **Corporations Act** or used in that Act and covering the same subject, has the same meaning as in this constitution.

## **72. Interpretation**

In this constitution:

- (a) the words 'including', 'for example', or similar expressions mean that there may be more inclusions or examples than those mentioned after that expression, and
- (b) reference to an Act includes every amendment, re-enactment, or replacement of that Act and any subordinate legislation made under that Act (such as regulations).

