

Policies Document

- Approved by National Council of The Theosophical Society in Australia originally in June 2003.
 - These policies have been developed over a period by the members of the National Council which includes State Representatives who are elected from time to time.
 - These policies apply to the work of the Theosophical Society in Australia (National Society), its National Council members, national Executive Committee members, paid staff and volunteers.
 - These policies are regularly reviewed and may be subject to change.
-

Contents

Page

TS Work: Spirit and Ethos	2
Working Policies:	
Adyar	6
Annual Fund	8
Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives	8
Children, Care of	8
Conflict of Interest, Potential	8
Convention	9
Copyright	11
Education	11
Elections- International President, Nat. President and State Reps.	13
Electronic Media	14
Equipment	14
Events, National- General Matters	15
Executive Committee (National) Composition	15
Finance	16
Indo- Pacific Federation	18
Internal Disputes- Australian Section	18
Lecturers	19
Legal Advice	20
Lodges/ Branches/ Groups	21
Membership	23
Public Relations and Promotions	25
Responsible Persons	25
Staff Issues	29
Standard of Behaviour	30
<i>Theosophy in Australia</i>	31
Travel and Accommodation	31
Trust Properties	32
Volunteers	37

Legend:

~~Strike through~~ Old policy amendment/deletions

Highlight Additions to existing policy or new policy approved by National Council.

The Theosophical Society – First adopted 30/6/03

Amended 20/07/04; 14/01/05; 26/06/05; 13/01/06; 25/06/06; 12/01/07; 30/06/07; 11/01/08 27/06/08, 15/01/09, 26/06/09, 14/01/10, 27/05/10, 14/01/11 25/06/11, 20/01/12, 15/07/12, 18/01/13, 30/06/13, 19/01/14, 22/06/14, 27/03/2015, 27/06/2015, 15/01/2016, 25/06/2016, 20/01/2017, 24/06/2017, 18/01/2018, 23/06/2018, 18/01/2019, 22/6/2019, 16/1/2020, 26/7/2020.

TS Work: Spirit and Ethos

Rule 4 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia

Objects

Purpose of the Society/ Objects of the National Society

The Society's purpose, as its name implies, is essentially spiritual in aim and content, consisting, as it does, in the pursuit and dissemination of the Divine or Spiritual Wisdom known as Theosophy and synonymously called by some the Wisdom Religion. To this end the Objects for which the National Society is established are:

(a) To pursue, with particular relevance to Australia, the aims and Objects of The Theosophical Society as set out in paragraphs (1) to (3) below, slightly amended to express the original intent in more modern terms, and with particular regard, within the scope of paragraphs (2) and (3), to the advancement of religion, viz:

- (1) To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour;*
- (2) To encourage the study of Comparative Religion, Philosophy and Science;*
- (3) To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in the human being.*

And in implementation of these Objects primarily to pursue the study and spread the message of the illimitable truths revealed through, synthesized in, and known as Theosophy; and to foster the practice and understanding of, and promote tolerance between, the various religions of the world, to make available to the public and to study their scriptures, doctrines and philosophies, without infringing the complete freedom of belief of any Member.

Mission Statement

To serve humanity by cultivating an ever-deepening understanding and realisation of the Ageless Wisdom, spiritual Self-transformation and the Unity of Life.

The members of the National Council of The Theosophical Society in Australia reiterate their commitment to the ideals embodied in the following statements issued by the General Council of the Theosophical Society. These statements are published in the national publication of The Theosophical Society in Australia and are reproduced in publicity material used by the Australia Section:

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasise the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership.

No teacher, or writer, from H.P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties.

The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (1924)

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organisation entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title, The Theosophical Society.

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organisation.

Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (1949)

Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches

The freedom of Lodges and Branches is defined by the scope of the Society's Objects as well as its essential mandate to make Theosophy known as a practical living Wisdom, which can uplift human consciousness to a realisation of the Oneness of life. Therefore, although the Society has no official creed of its own and upholds freedom of thought, and while it is acceptable to invite some outside speakers who can contribute to the exploration of the Ageless Wisdom, it is not appropriate for our platform to be

used by such speakers to actively promote other organisations or belief systems. Each Lodge and Branch was chartered by the International President to be a representative of the Society in its area. Its work and programme should reflect the character, altruistic ethos and spirit of the Theosophical Society.

Resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society (2019)

Background Explanation – 2019 Resolution of the General Council on The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches

The Theosophical Society was formed to show the world that Theosophy exists and to help people ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal truths. This therefore determines the Society's essential work which is also broadly reflected in its three Objects, Mission Statement, Freedom of the Society resolution and Freedom of Thought resolution. However, the General Council considers it important to articulate further the scope of the Theosophical Society.

Theosophy can be regarded as the spiritual heritage of humanity, its principles lying at the heart of the great religions of the world. While Theosophy is not defined officially in the TS, it constitutes a distinct lineage, the Divine or Ageless Wisdom, which dates back to antiquity. It embraces literature, teachings and individual perspectives on the subject since the inception of the Theosophical Society, but its antecedents also include its expressions in Eastern and Western cultures such as ancient India, China and Egypt, the Platonic and Neoplatonic traditions of ancient Greece and Europe, and the great mystics throughout history. Therefore, Theosophy is not specific to any one era or civilisation.

Theosophy implies a regenerated state of consciousness, its study and application being the way to that. The most fundamental principle underlying authentic expressions of Theosophy is the essential Unity of all life, which is revealed in the interconnectedness of life forms at all levels, the cyclicity of life's processes and humanity's search for wholeness. The non-dogmatic study of Theosophy leads to a spirit of open-mindedness and altruism, and the purposeful unfoldment of those qualities which can lead a human being to Self-realisation.

As Theosophy is predicated on unity, the Theosophical Society also exists to help foster equality and balance in the world by helping to counteract discriminatory attitudes such as those which contribute to racial and gender inequality, as well as religious sectarianism, fundamentalism, and excessive materialism in all its forms including 'spiritual' materialism. It provides a platform through which we can enquire into our deepest nature and unfold ever greater awareness, leading to a life of self-responsibility and depth. Psychic practices of all kinds, which are an extension of the more superficial personal nature, may be studied from time to time as one aspect of the broad field of Theosophical enquiry, but they are neither generally taught, nor encouraged.

The Role of The Theosophical Society in Australia in Relation to Lodges/Branches

The Theosophical Society in Australia is a Section of The Theosophical Society with International Headquarters at Adyar, India. The Theosophical Society is a world-wide body with Sections in many countries around the world which are all united by the pursuit of the Society's Three Objects. The Australian Section is Chartered as a component of this body, which is reflected in the fact that its National President is an ex officio member of the General Council, the international governing body of The Theosophical Society. Any changes to International Rules need to be approved by the General Council. The National President, who is elected by Australian Members in Good Standing, has a vote on the General Council and on matters such as these consults with the national Executive Committee. In addition, the Australian Section's Rules, and any amendments to them, need to be approved by the International President.

In turn, the Australian Section is made up of Chartered component Lodges/Branches which form the Australian body and whose Charters are signed by the International President of the day. Due to the strong interconnection that exists Lodge/Branch Rules, and any amendments to them, need to be approved by the national Executive Committee. Conversely, any changes to the Rules of the Australian Section need to be voted on and approved by a majority of Lodges/Branches at their Annual Convention Meetings. Subsequently, they are presented for approval by the International President. The number of votes allocated to each Lodge/Branch is based on its number of members and if a Lodge/Branch has more than one vote at the Annual Convention Business Meeting, all its votes on any issue must be cast either for or against. Lodge/Branch, Section and International Rules need to be compatible. Also, at the Lodge/Branch Convention Meeting the minutes of the last Section Convention Business Meeting, the National President's Report, the National Treasurer's Report, the Section's Financial Statement, Balance Sheet and Auditor's Report need to be voted on for the Convention Business Meeting.

The Theosophical Society has its mission statement, its three Objects as well as three Resolutions passed by the General Council, 'Freedom of Thought', 'Freedom of the Society', and 'The Freedom and Responsibility of Lodges and Branches' which are all common to the Society at the international, national and local levels. In addition, a Code of Conduct was incorporated into the Section's Rules in 2019. The Objects, Mission Statement, General Council Resolutions and Code of Conduct can be regarded as collectively constituting the spirit of The Theosophical Society in this country.

It is from the interconnectedness of the compatible Rules and identical Objects that Lodges/Branches have the right to use the name and seal of the Society, similar to a franchise. But of course that right brings forth obligations. As a Society based on the promotion of Brotherhood nothing done in the name of the Society should be to the detriment of that ideal, to our Objects or to our name. In fact it would be seen as working against the Society and its Objects.

Therefore there is an expectation that all Lodges/Branches using the name and seal of the Society, and especially their elected Committees, act so as to actively promote brotherhood and not demean the good name and character of The Theosophical Society.

Furthermore, in applying for membership an applicant signs that 'Being in sympathy with the Objects of The Theosophical Society and The Theosophical Society in Australia, I hereby apply for admission to membership thereof and agree to abide by their [the Lodge/Branch's] Rules.'

Lodges/Branches are expected to adhere to all relevant Rules and the spirit of The Theosophical Society in their various activities. Normally, the National Headquarters, the national Executive Committee and the National Council of the Australian Section do not interfere in the running of Lodges/Branches. They perform a support role which includes actions such as considering applications for financial assistance, answering queries as well as the provision of promotional and educational material, a national magazine, a speaker programme, Annual Conventions and events at the two National Centres.

However, the National Council, national Executive Committee or National Headquarters may either act or intervene in the following instances:

- If any officers, members of Lodges/Branches or National Members actively work against a Lodge/Branch, The Theosophical Society nationally or internationally, the Society's three Objects or the three General Council Resolutions mentioned above
- If any officers, members of Lodges/Branches or National Members are in serious or sustained breach of the Code of Conduct, Lodge/Branch Rules, the Section Rules or Australian Law
- If there is action required in relation to an agreement between the Section and a Lodge/Branch occupying a property owned by The Australian Section Theosophical Trust.

or

- Upon the request of one or more officers or committee members of a Lodge/Branch or Certified Group, if further enquiry is considered necessary.

WORKING POLICIES:

ADYAR

Adyar is the International Headquarters of The Theosophical Society, chosen by Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Henry Steel Olcott.

The Theosophical Society in Australia is a Section of The Theosophical Society with International Headquarters at Adyar, India.

Adyar Donation

A donation at a base rate of \$3,000 (commencing from January 2007) may be made to the International headquarters in Adyar each year as a gesture of support for the work of the Society. This payment is to be made in February each year as approved by the National Council in January. It can also take the form of any or all of the following: transfer into a fund nominated by the International President (See Adyar Security Fund), Adyar Building Repairs, Wages Contribution of workers at Adyar approved by the National Council and Contribution to International Travel for International Officers.

Adyar Security Fund

The Adyar Security Fund may be directed either towards workers' wages or else building renovations at Adyar.

Historical Notes

At the request of the International President this trust fund was originated in 2006 commencing with the deposit of the 2006 annual donation to Adyar by the Australian Section of \$10,000, in lieu of transferring donations from the Australian Section to Adyar. The President asked that this fund be augmented by additional funds from overseas from time to time. The National Executive authorised the holding of this fund on behalf of Adyar at its April 2006 meeting.

After approval in principle by the National Council, the International General Council approved a proposal at its December 2013 meeting that the Australian Section transfer once a year to the International TS Treasury the annual interest accruing from the Adyar Security Fund, to help augment the wages of workers at Adyar. Subsequently, on the recommendation of the Finance Committee of the Australian Section, it was agreed by the national Executive Committee in March 2014 that \$7,000 be transferred each year to the International Headquarters for this purpose as from 2014, with a review of this rate in early 2017. This amount represents approximately 6% of the market value of the current fund as at March 2014 and is a conservative estimate based on the projected average annual interest which is likely to be received during this period. As a result of a request from the International Headquarters, this transfer will normally take place in April, prior to the final approval of the annual budget by the international Executive Committee. The intent of this Fund is to help gradually increase workers' wages at Adyar and to enable additional personnel to be employed at the International Headquarters in the future if required, e.g. people with required specific qualifications. Specific decisions regarding workers' wages and employment at the International Headquarters are the responsibility of the international Executive Committee at Adyar.

A request to expand the scope of coverage of this Fund to Adyar building renovations was made by International President Tim Boyd, in May 2019.

ABC Endowment Fund

We have 2 funds that support and safeguard the Adyar Headquarters as well as helping the International TS work at the International President's discretion.

The first is the ABC Endowment Fund, established under a Trust Deed in 1966.

This fund cannot be touched but can be added to. The interest from this Fund is put into the ABC Fund. In both Funds ABC stands for (A) Adyar (B) Besant (C) Commemorative Fund.

Payments from the ABC Fund are to be authorised by any two of the following signatories: the International President, the International Vice-President, International Secretary or International Treasurer.

ANNUAL FUND

Annual Fund

The Annual Fund is an important part of a forward vision for the Australian Section. The Fund provides funding for new educational and promotional activities. It is not to be used for administrative or building purposes.

Rental Subsidies

The Australian Section will consider subsidizing rents for Lodges and Branches without a property of their own but any funds available for the purchase and development of property will be utilized as required for national TS centres to benefit the greatest number of members.

CAMPBELL THEOSOPHICAL RESEARCH LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

The Campbell Theosophical Research Library welcomes TS members, students and researchers. Anyone wishing to make use of the Library must make an appointment by contacting either the Librarian or the Education Coordinator by email or by telephone. As the Library is not permanently staffed, the time for visits is limited. No book or any other item from the Library may be taken away from the premises of the National Headquarters, located on Level2, 162 Goulburn St, Surry Hills. All visitors to the Library are requested to leave their backpacks and large bags in the space provided. These guidelines are necessary in order to protect and maintain the unique collection of rare books, periodicals and archival material housed in the Campbell Library and held in trust by the Australian Section.

CHILDREN, CARE OF

It is expected that parents who bring children to attend events organised by the Theosophical Society in Australia will arrange for their care and supervision at all times. The Theosophical Society in Australia accepts no responsibility for the care of children under the age of 16 years who are brought to national events.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST –POTENTIAL

The National Council endorses that only one member of a family, or a married or de facto couple (either co-habiting or not), shall be either on the national Executive Committee, the National Council or both at any one time.

CONVENTION

Convention Catering

Vegetarian meals shall be provided at National Conventions. Provision shall be made on the relevant convention form for any essential health-related dietary requirements.

Payment of Convention travel & accommodation

Travel and accommodation may be paid for staff and volunteers who perform the following tasks:

- Audio-visual support and/or recording of Convention sessions
- Reception/Office Duties
- Minutes (National Council meeting only)
- Education Coordinator-Report to National Council and contribute to program-
- National Lecturer- If major contribution to program-travel & accommodation paid.
- Executive Committee Other than Nat Council Member or covered above- See national Executive Committee Expenses.
- Guest Speaker travel and accommodation- Expenses will be paid for a guest speaker to attend Convention if making a substantial contribution to the program, by delivering the public lecture and normally at least one other.

Convention Registration

Registration

Registration fees for Convention are to be \$40, with a special 'early bird' rate of \$20 before a date designated by the Executive Committee.

The national Executive Committee has the right to consider registrations for national Conventions and may accept or reject an application at its discretion.

Accommodation and Board

As the cost of running the convention changes every year, fees are to be at a cost recovery price. Whatever the college or other venue charges the Section for room and board shall be passed on to the delegates living in for the convention, with the Section paying all other costs such as meeting room and break-out room hire and any other incidentals. The host Lodge/Branch shall arrange the evening entertainment and a day-outing, financial assistance being available from the Section for smaller Lodges/Branches.

Maximum registration numbers for Convention shall either equal the seating capacity of the main room, or else may be up to 10% more than this, depending upon the requirements of the venue.

Living in for only part of the convention is an option solely at the discretion of the college or other venue, some of which do not cater for part-registrations.

Refunds

Full refunds of registration fees and other monies paid shall be given to members in the rare event that a Convention is cancelled. Otherwise, refunds

to members for the cancellation of any nights of accommodation already booked will only be made if the registration numbers had not yet been confirmed with the venue or if the venue agrees to refund the amount to The Theosophical Society in Australia. Where possible, the National Headquarters will ascertain the refund policy in advance and advise members as early as possible.

Edna Jenks Convention Scholarship

The Edna Jenks Convention Scholarship was commenced in memory of Edna Jenks, a Queensland member who gave notable service to the TS for many years until her passing in 2002. The scholarship is intended to provide financial assistance to attend the National Convention, for members of the Australian Section who have been giving sustained or notable service withing the Section, and who have not previously received an Edna Jenks Scholarship. The scholarship shall be advertised to TS centres by the National President, who will refer applications to the national Executive Committee for a decision. National members who fit the criteria may also be invited to apply. Members, and/or TS centres if applicable, will be requested to contribute to costs. The annual total maximum for the scholarships shall be \$1500.

Health and Safety

An announcement will be made at each Convention and National Events regarding procedures in event of an emergency and which members in attendance are qualified to give first aid. Fire wardens will also be announced.

Programming for Convention and National TS Centres

The development of programmes organised by The Theosophical Society in Australia for the National Convention and National TS Centres is the responsibility of the National President in conjunction with the Education Coordinator. Contributions may be obtained from other members of the Education and Training Committee, the national Executive Committee or the National Council as appropriate.

[Note: The first two National Presidents of this Section developed these programmes in conjunction with the Education Coordinator.]

Members attending Convention are required not to conduct informal meetings on theosophical topics during any of the formal sessions on the programmes which are provided for Convention delegates.

Restrictions on Goods for Sale

The sale of books or other materials by individuals during Annual Conventions of The Theosophical Society in Australia is not permitted. However, books or other items may be sold during Conventions by:

- The National Headquarters
- The bookshop of the host Lodge/Branch
- The Theosophical Order of Service, in support of its work.

Performers or other guests may be informed prior to a Convention that, if they wish, they are welcome to distribute information about themselves or about

anything they have for sale, after the session concerned, e.g. website information, business cards, brochures. Any exceptions to this would be subject to the approval of the National President

National Councillors' expenses

The Members of the National Council shall be entitled to reasonable travelling expenses including accommodation and meals in order to attend Meetings of the National Council and the Convention Business Meeting. Rule 17 (4) (a)
The State Representatives shall be entitled to reimbursement of reasonable expenses of liaising with all Lodges (Branches), Groups and National Members in their Electoral State and with the National Society Officers. Rule 17(1) (c)

National Executive Committee expenses

If resident outside Sydney metropolitan area; reasonable travelling expenses to attend meetings of the Executive Committee.
The Members of the national Executive Committee shall be entitled to reasonable travelling expenses including accommodation and meals in order to attend Meetings of the National Council and the Convention Business Meeting.

[See also **Registrations- Events Organised by the TS in Australia**]

COPYRIGHT

Copyright Provisions, Adherence to

All Lodges, Branches, Certified Groups and National Members who borrow or are given resource material from the National Society are requested to adhere strictly to the relevant copyright provisions. Copying of audio-visual resources is not permitted and photocopying of books needs to adhere to copyright law.

TS Presentations

The National Council requests that images/diagrams used in presentations within the Australian Section be copyright free or else copyright compliant. TS centres and National Lecturers are to be advised of this annually by the National Headquarters, provided with relevant information and reminded that information on the Copyright Council's website can be used as a guideline in case of any uncertainty.

EDUCATION

Education and Training Committee (formerly known as the Education Unit, established in 2004)

Goals:

In the context of The Theosophical Society's purpose and Objects as defined in Rule 4 of the Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia, the following goals have been identified:

1. To encourage the study and practical application of Theosophy by TS members.
2. The Education and Training Committee strongly upholds that freedom of thought and enquiry, courtesy and consideration are essential principles in such study and application.
3. To provide quality educational materials and activities to Lodges, Branches, Groups and National Members.
4. To encourage the highest possible standards in programmes throughout the Australian Section, consistent with the character and Objects of The Theosophical Society.
5. To provide assistance with the development of theosophical programmes throughout the Australian Section consistent with the Objects of The Theosophical Society.
6. To provide resources, study material, direction and mentoring to informal theosophical groups.

Ways of Achieving the Above Goals:

Talks
 Discussions
 Workshops - day and weekend
 Retreats
 Schools of Theosophy
 Schools of Lodge/Branch/Group Programme Management
 Correspondence courses
 Development of Australian Study courses
 Development of introductory programme for new members by Education and Training Committee
 Individual and group tuition
 Printing of Theosophical Study Papers by Education and Training Committee
 Specific pages on Section website
 National Members lending library
 Specific educational initiatives for National Members
 Partnership initiatives and special projects with Lodges/Branches/Groups as requested.

Note on Self-Governance of Lodges/Branches

This policy is presented bearing in mind the self-governance of Lodges, Branches and Groups throughout the Australian Section and their responsibility in providing their own programmes consistent with the Society's purpose and Objects as expressed in the Section Rules. The activities organised by the Education and Training Committee are therefore offered for the consideration of members and Australian TS Centres.

Media Resources Available from National Headquarters

All Lodges, Branches, Groups and National Members who borrow or are given resource material from the National Society are requested to adhere strictly to the policy that non-members not be lent any media resources

without the written authority of the Education Coordinator. As per copyright laws, no borrowed media can be copied.

Registrations- Events organised by the TS in Australia

The Theosophical Society reserves the right to reject registrations for events organised by the Australian Section other than the Annual Convention Business Meeting if it can be reasonably assumed that the applicant's standard of behaviour might be in breach of the Code of Conduct to a significant degree or in other ways inappropriate.

ELECTIONS- INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESIDENT AND STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Elections National President

In Section Rule 20(5), which concerns the election of a National President, the term "not successful," in relation to an only candidate, shall mean that a majority vote of more than half the votes cast has not been attained. In that case, a fresh election shall be called.

All Elections

While the freedom of ~~thought and~~ expression of TS members within the limits of courtesy and consideration is respected, active lobbying by individuals, groups of members, Lodges, Branches or theosophical groups in elections for International President, National President and State Representatives, is expressly discouraged by the National Council. The reasons for this are that lobbying is considered divisive in nature, working against our first and primary Object centred on brotherhood; and that in fairness all candidates should have the most equal opportunity possible during an electoral process.

Promotion or self-promotion of candidates on websites or by email during these election processes within the Australian Section is considered another example of divisiveness by the National Council and is also expressly discouraged in the Australian Section during these election periods.

~~Whilst being mindful of the fairly common practice of succession planning today, the National Council considers that~~ Any substantial evidence of lobbying, promotion or self-promotion as described above may result, ~~in disqualification of some votes or,~~ in extreme circumstances, ~~in~~ the calling of a new election within the Australian Section ~~on the grounds that the election had been compromised~~. Any such decisions would be made as a result of consultation between the National Secretary and members of the national Executive Committee, and approval by the National Council.

With the above in mind, it is recommended that qualifying members who agree to be nominated for election be aware of the importance of providing a comprehensive and honest set of supporting documents, as required under the relevant Rules.

On the authorisation of the National Council, the National Secretary will include the relevant portions of this policy when communicating with members in Good Standing in respect of elections for International President, National President and State Representatives.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

E-Bulletins

E-Bulletins may be prepared by the National President, the National Secretary or the Education Coordinator for circulation to the e-Bulletin distribution list.

Email Etiquette National Headquarters

Emails sent by members of staff and volunteers who are associated with the National Headquarters are expected to be polite and professional in tone and language. If there is any doubt about the content of a draft email which is of a sensitive nature, some consultation with or between national officers is required.

Facebook Page

The moderator of the Facebook Page shall be appointed by the national Executive Committee. The moderator shall select and regularly post new content relevant to the work of the TS for the Page. Issues regarding any posted content shall be discussed by the Electronic Media Committee with a view to a resolution, failing which the matter shall be put before the national Executive for a decision.

Website Policy

The Theosophical Society (TS) in Australia maintains its website as a service to its Members and the Public. It is designed to provide quick access to information about The TS in Australia's activities and act as a resource for those interested in the Perennial Wisdom known as Theosophy.

The overall coordination of the website is the responsibility of the Electronic Media Committee and the webmaster is appointed by the National Executive Committee. New, non-routine material to be placed on the website has to be approved by the Electronic Media Committee which is also appointed by the National Executive Committee.

The Australian Section's website includes some links to Web pages that are not part of its website. The TS in Australia is not responsible for the information or links contained in those Web pages and the presence of these links is not an endorsement of those sites. The TS in Australia may discontinue an external link at any time if it becomes aware a particular site provides or promotes false, slanderous, divisive, illegal or immoral information.

The Campbell Theosophical Research Library pages on the TS in Australia website – including *The Campbell Theosophical Research Library*, *Union Index of Theosophical Periodicals* and *Links to Theosophical Texts Online* – are maintained and updated under the supervision of the Education Coordinator.

EQUIPMENT

The Theosophical Society – First adopted 30/6/03

Amended 20/07/04; 14/01/05; 26/06/05; 13/01/06; 25/06/06; 12/01/07; 30/06/07; 11/01/08 27/06/08, 15/01/09, 26/06/09, 14/01/10, 27/05/10, 14/01/11 25/06/11, 20/01/12, 15/07/12, 18/01/13, 30/06/13, 19/01/14, 22/06/14, 27/03/2015, 27/06/2015, 15/01/2016, 25/06/2016, 20/01/2017, 24/06/2017, 18/01/2018, 23/06/2018, 18/01/2019, 22/6/2019, 16/1/2020, 26/7/2020.

Section Electronic Equipment, Use of

Computers and data projectors (with their fragile and costly bulbs) owned by the Section are intended for the sole use of the staff and volunteers working for the National Headquarters in their TS work, or for lecturers who are speaking on behalf of The Theosophical Society in Australia, i.e. National Lecturers, International Lecturers and lecturers at Conventions, Springbrook or Canyonleigh events.

Computer Protocol

All employees and volunteers are reminded that access to our network is not to be granted to any unauthorized persons. In addition, no network system settings on individual computers are to be changed without the authorization of our computer consultant. All complaints regarding computers are to be forwarded to the National Secretary who will take the necessary action. No unauthorized software is to be installed.

All Section computer files must be saved to the Section office server.

The National Council recommends that sensitive, important and historical emails, received and sent, be saved and stored in folders on the Section office server.

EVENTS, NATIONAL- GENERAL MATTERS

Individuals requiring Special Assistance

Individuals wishing to attend events organised by the Theosophical Society in Australia and requiring special assistance with specific health issues or any disabilities e.g. mobility, are required to propose to the organizer an attendant carer who will be responsible for their care and for assisting them as required during the whole of the period in question. The carer selected would also need to agree to this arrangement in writing and be willing to pay the fees to attend the event. If these conditions are not met then registration for the event concerned will not be approved. Where there is any doubt on the part of the organisers, a medical certificate will be requested.

Regarding events for members, the National Secretary or the National President may make special dispensation for a carer who is a non-member to be in attendance.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NATIONAL) – COMPOSITION

Under Section Rule 18(1) the Executive Committee consists of the National President, the National Treasurer and the National Secretary and five Members appointed annually by the National Council. Excluding the Assistant Treasurer, the longest serving of the remaining four members shall be replaced by a new member if a suitable person can be found. These members may serve for up to four years on the Executive Committee and may serve on it again after a break of at least one year.

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the regular refreshment of membership of the Executive Committee, and to provide opportunities for

suitable members to serve The Theosophical Society in Australia at the national level.

FINANCE

Expenditure

The National President, the National Treasurer, and the National Secretary each has authority for expenditure on behalf of the Theosophical Society in Australia up to \$5,000 per item other than for emergency repairs and the payment of regular expenses (e.g. insurance, electricity etc.) and as approved by budget. All expenditure exceeding that is to be authorized by the National Executive Committee. Expenditure over \$30,000 will be referred to the National Council on recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Finance Committee: Role and Function

1. The Finance Committee of the Section is appointed by the Executive Committee and ratified by the National Council. The members of this Committee are usually also the members of the Investment Committee appointed by The Theosophical Foundation Pty. Limited. (“The Foundation”)
2. The Executive Committee and the National Council shall submit all major financial issues to the Finance Committee for its consideration and recommendation.
3. The Finance Committee may consider other financial issues and make relevant recommendations thereon to the Executive Committee and/or to the National Council as appropriate.
4. (A) The Finance Committee is authorised to make recommendations to The Foundation or its Investment Committee regarding the investments managed by Maple-Brown Abbott Limited provided they are consistent with the Investment Policy or as amended with the approval of the Finance Committee.
(B) The Finance Committee may make recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or the National Council regarding accounting practice, preparation and presentation of monthly and annual financial statements, salaries and budgets.
(C) The Finance Committee may make recommendations to the Executive Committee and/or the National Council regarding property management and transactions but it shall not have power to make binding decisions regarding property transactions unless specifically authorised to do so by the Executive Committee or the National Council, and then only within defined parameters.
5. As The Theosophical Society in Australia is the major shareholder (through the Australian Section Theosophical Trust) in The Foundation, it is appropriate for the Executive Committee and the National Council to request the Finance Committee to make appropriate recommendations to the Board of The Foundation or its Investment Committee on financial matters concerning the Section.

Hospitality

Modest meals can be provided for long Executive Committee and National Council meetings, for international lecturers and for special visitors.

Investment Policy

1. Investments managed by Maple-Brown Abbott Limited

- (a) Primarily ethical investments ~~only~~
- (b) Only investments in securities listed on the Australian Stock Exchange.
- (c) The Investment Committee of The Theosophical Foundation Pty Limited will determine limits for specific categories of investments.

2. Lodges (Branches) investing in the Section Investment Trust

1. Any funds so invested will be held in trust for the Lodge by Australian Section Theosophical Trust and accounted in the same manner as funds already held for International Headquarters.

2. There would not be a specific trust deed for a Lodge fund unless requested by the Lodge, in which case the cost of the deed would be borne by the Lodge, including any stamp duty. Otherwise a Letter of Agreement would be used.

3. The investment of any Lodge Funds would be regarded as a service by Section to the Lodge and there would be no charge for accounting by Section.

4. There will be no limit on investment by Lodges until this is reviewed by the National Council. Initial amounts over \$100,000 deposited should be spread over a 12-month period.

5. In order to be fair to all parties, the accounting of return on investment will be at market value. All investors will receive notification of investment balance including quarterly performance result within six weeks of the end of the quarter.

6. Accounting will be on a quarterly basis and the quarterly percentage return will be that reported by the Investment managers of the Section Investment Trust, Maple-Brown Abbott Ltd. Note that the above reported percentage return is net of management fees to the above Fund Manager. Note also that in some quarters the return may be negative.

7. (a) It is preferable that Lodge Funds invested be such as can be left intact for an extended period.

(b) However to provide some flexibility, Funds may, if necessary, be added or withdrawn from time to time in multiples of \$20,000.

(c) It is preferable that additions should be made at the end of a quarter and withdrawals at the beginning of a quarter. Any funds added during a quarter will be accounted as having been added at the end of the quarter. Any funds withdrawn during a quarter will be accounted as having been withdrawn at the beginning of the quarter. [Note: The quarters referred to above end on 31 March, 30 June, 30 September and 31 December.]

(d) Normally ten days' notice should be given for withdrawal but in emergency, funds may be withdrawn on short notice (at least 48 hours) at any time.

(e) Note that even with the ability to withdraw substantial funds at short notice in case of emergency; it is important that the Lodge management exercises careful cash flow planning and control.

(f) The Section needs to be informed and updated on the names of the officers who are authorised to withdraw money from the Trust after each Lodge's AGM.

INDO PACIFIC FEDERATION

Indo Pacific Support

Dues: 1% of Gross Membership dues from each Section within the Indo-Pacific Federation to the Indo-Pacific Trust account held by Australian Section.

School of Theosophy: Accommodation for one NZ student

Financial Assistance

Additional financial assistance to the Indo-Pacific Federation may take the form of travel and appropriate accommodation for members of the Indo-Pacific region (excluding Australia and New Zealand) to attend conferences or TS schools within the Indo-Pacific region; or for Indo-Pacific Federation officers, as considered appropriate. Approvals and the amount payable shall be determined by the national Executive Committee on a case by case basis. The maximum amount payable shall normally be \$5000.

INTERNAL DISPUTES- AUSTRALIAN SECTION

The national Executive Committee and/or National Council will deal with internal disputes through oral and/or written communication as considered necessary; otherwise it will resolve them by:

- The appointment of an independent arbitrator agreed on by both parties to arbitrate on the dispute;
- The arrangement of a meeting whereby the complainants and the arbitrator examine and discuss the issue and where a judgement can be made by the arbitrator. The arbitrator will ensure that all parties receive a full and fair opportunity to present their respective cases and will appoint a Minute taker to ensure that the proceedings are properly minuted.
- Where the dispute cannot be solved, the arbitrator will refer the matter back to the national Executive Committee and/or the National Council.

A review of policies and procedures which may have contributed to the dispute may be carried out by the National Council with a view to correction.

LECTURERS

National President –Travel Policy

The Theosophical Society in Australia shall pay the National President's travel expenses to attend the General Council Meeting, the International Convention of The Theosophical Society at the International Headquarters, and the triennial Indo-Pacific Conference, subject to the National President's availability to attend. In each case the time taken to attend ~~both~~ these events would be paid leave and not part of annual leave. Any time over 2 weeks needs to be endorsed by the national Executive Committee.

Overseas Lecturers- expenses and accommodation

Expenses: Section gives each lecturer A\$300 towards their expenses

Accommodation: Individual Lodges (Branches) and Groups either host at individual member's homes or at hotels in consultation with the National President. Some financial assistance is available to small centres.

Speakers Policy

To provide as many good quality talks and seminars as reasonably possible each year to the TS centres around the country, as well as at national centres and conventions, using speakers from within the Australian Section and overseas.

Invitations to Speak to non-TS Groups

National Lecturers are requested to consult with the National President on receiving any invitation to speak as a National Lecturer at a non-TS group. Misleading advertising by other groups, which may or may not have comparable ideals, may mean that the reputation of the TS could suffer by association. Such requests will be considered on a case by case basis.

Australian Section Speakers

To organise speakers from within the Australian Section to tour our TS centres each year.

Currently, the regular speakers are:

1. The National President (member of Education and Training Committee)
2. The Education Coordinator (member of Education and Training Committee)
3. Several additional speakers, who may be appointed, or discontinued, at any meeting of the National Council, or in between Council meetings with verbal approval by the National Council.

International Speakers:

To organise up to two tours each year by international lecturers including, where possible, lecturers who have not previously visited the Section.

Content of Presentations - Australian and International Speakers:

to provide the best possible quality of theosophical content in the range of programmes presented by speakers in this Section, without undue emphasis on any one particular spiritual teacher or subject area.

Selection Criteria for Australian Speakers:

When recommending speakers for appointment by the National Council, the following criteria are taken into consideration:

- membership of the TS for a reasonable period of time
- familiarity with and understanding of theosophical teachings

- a non-dogmatic and non-divisive approach
- adherence to the spirit of freedom of thought
- a high standard of presentation
- an ability to mix well and communicate with different types of people

These criteria are very important as each speaker acts as a representative of The TS in Australia.

If the National President and Education Coordinator are not familiar with a speaker whose name has been suggested as a National Lecturer, they will obtain copies or videos of talks given by the individual concerned in order to make a recommendation to the National Council.

General Policy on Future Speakers

To build up a larger base of good quality speakers within the Section as an investment for the future and to help strengthen our work.

Selection Criteria for Casual Speakers e.g. Convention Guest Speakers

- familiarity with and understanding of theosophical teachings
- a non-dogmatic and non-divisive approach
- adherence to the spirit of freedom of thought
- a high standard of presentation
- an ability to mix well and communicate with different types of people
- Non-member speakers to be endorsed by national Executive Committee

Selection Criteria for Guest Speakers, School of Theosophy

- familiarity with and understanding of theosophical teachings
- a non-dogmatic and non-divisive approach
- adherence to the spirit of freedom of thought
- a high standard of presentation
- an ability to mix well and communicate with different types of people

LEGAL ADVICE

Solicitor, Section- Appointment and Authorisation to Use

The Section's Solicitors shall be appointed by the National Council. The National President, National Secretary and National Treasurer are authorised to consult the Section's solicitors as required, individually or together, on matters requiring legal advice, provided authority and general direction are given by at least 75% of either by the National Council or national Executive Committee.

Other members of the National Council or national Executive Committee may be involved in such consultations if required, with the authority of either the National Council or the national Executive Committee.

Legal Documents- Emails

The *Federal Electronic Transactions Act 1999* permits courts to treat email exactly the same as other forms of written communication and states that

emails must be retained for a minimum of 7 years. The Theosophical Society in Australia notes that emails sent under a company domain are treated like any correspondence on letterhead with legal liability for their content, and copies being able to be produced if required.

Larger Lodges/Branches – Reimbursement

Lodges/Branches with over 50 members, which request assistance from the National Society in relation to behavioural issues regarding TS members will be requested to contribute to any associated travel/accommodation costs of National Officers and for any necessary legal advice, unless otherwise determined.

LODGES/BRANCHES/GROUPS

Formation of Lodges/Branches

It is preferred that a Certified Group is formed prior to an application to form a Lodge/Branch, as this enables a core group of members to consolidate and also helps develop basic committee procedures, programming and regular reporting to the National President, all of which are required more extensively of Lodges and Branches.

Certification of Groups

Under Section Rule 6A, the Executive Committee or National Council shall have authority to grant or refuse applications for Certification of a Group, or to decertify a Group. A Certified Group shall have official permission to use the name and seal of The Theosophical Society.

A Group can be certified by either the Executive Committee or the National Council if:

- a. Three or more members in Good Standing for at least one year apply for Certification of a Group in which they will take an active part in directing its initial year of operation. [See Section Rule 6A (2)]
- b. An informal theosophical group has already functioned for at least 18 months prior to Certification
- c. The programme of study of the group for the previous 12 months is considered to be in keeping with the three Objects of The Theosophical Society, with sufficiently broad theosophical content.
- d. The TS members forming the Certified Group agree in writing to undertake the responsibility of reporting six monthly to the National President while they are Certified.
- e. The TS members forming the Certified Group agree in writing to adopt the Pattern Rules for Certified Groups or an approved modification thereof.
- f. The TS members forming the Certified Group understand that, in accordance with the spirit of The Theosophical Society, it is important to foster an environment of brotherhood and open enquiry.
- g. The members concerned are given to understand the privilege and trust involved in having permission to use the name and seal of the TS, and the need to uphold the dignity and good name of The Theosophical Society

Groups, Book Grant

All new Certified Groups will if they wish receive a grant of books up to the value of \$400 wholesale. These books may be selected from a list supplied by the Education Coordinator of core theosophical texts.

Decertification of Groups

The approved Certification of a Group may be withdrawn subject to Section Rule 6A(3). In this Rule, ‘good and sufficient reason why the approved Certification should be withdrawn shall include reference to points (c), (f) and (g) of the policy on Certification of Groups. If the Certified Group does not adhere to any of these points, or if two consecutive reports have not been received by the National President from a Certified Group, the Coordinator will be advised in writing and asked to submit a report if applicable. The Coordinator will also be advised that if a report is not received within one month of the date of the letter of reminder, or if the issue concerned cannot be resolved, then the national Executive Committee and National Council will be advised accordingly, and the status of the Group will be assessed.

Informal Theosophical Groups

An informal theosophical group does not have a set of Rules approved by the national Executive committee. Such a group does not have permission to use the name and seal of the Society. However, flyers or other advertisements of its meetings may be headed “theosophical study group” (though they need not be). Unless they are members of the Society the members of such a group may not attend national conventions of The Theosophical Society without special permission from the *National President*. Insurance cover or funding from the Assistance Fund is available to an informal theosophical group only if that group agrees to abide by the Guidelines for Informal Groups. Their programs shall be formulated and implemented under the coordination of and in consultation with the *Education Coordinator*, based on material supplied by the Education and Training Committee. Alternative material submitted to the *Education Coordinator* will also be considered.

Free Educational Material

The National President and Education Coordinator, as they consider appropriate, are authorised to provide free educational material to small Lodges/Branches, Certified Groups and approved informal theosophical groups from time to time.

Courses Run by Lodges/Branches in Properties Owned by The Australian Section Theosophical Trust

No non-member led courses in a Lodge/Branch programme can be conducted on a property owned by The Australian Section Theosophical Trust. This does not preclude external hiring to non-member groups with valid public liability insurance.

Mediation

Larger Lodges/Branches requiring mediation for internal disputes are requested by the National Council to pay for the travel and accommodation costs of the National President, or his/her representative. The Australian Section could cover such costs in the case of smaller Lodges/Branches.

Change of Lodge/Branch to Certified Group

The National Council considers that every effort should be made for Lodges/Branches to continue as Chartered components of the TS in Australia, with the support of the National Society, as required, to help ensure their longevity. However, a Lodge/Branch whose continued viability is seriously diminished may be re-designated as a Certified Group by the National Council for the time being, if the Lodge/Branch in question is not an incorporated entity owning property.

The purpose of this option is to provide an opportunity for numbers and vitality to be rebuilt by members in the area concerned, as a Certified Group, retaining the authority to use the name and seal of the TS, with a view to the possible revival of the Lodge/Branch Charter in due course. In this case the former Lodge/Branch members will be transferred to National membership, unless they elect to join another Lodge/Branch. Also, the Charter shall not be withdrawn, but held by the National Headquarters for up to five years. The custody of its remaining assets (e.g. library) shall be determined by the National Council in consultation with the Lodge/Branch. If revitalisation does not occur within the specified time then the Charter shall be withdrawn under one of the provisions of Section Rule 7(5).

[Historical Note: In an email to the National President of 31 May 2019 International President Tim Boyd, answering a query about such an instance, wrote: ‘There is no requirement to cancel the charter immediately. It would be best to allow some time for possible new membership. When, or if, it becomes clear that revival is unlikely, then the charter can be withdrawn.’]

Hobart Rent

Extracts from Agreement with Hobart Branch dated July 1994:

The Lodge shall receive the proceeds of the rent of office space and shall remit to the Section an agreed amount per month as rent of the whole property.

Subject to annual review on 30 June.

In the event of the office space not being let or for any other sufficient reason, the Section may, at its discretion, reduce, defer or waive the payment:-

MEMBERSHIP

Certificate of Commendation

The Executive Committee on its own initiative or upon receipt of a recommendation from any Lodge (Branch) or from the National President shall give consideration to the making of a recommendation, with accompanying explanatory reasons, to the National Council for the conferring of a Certificate of Commendation on any Member of the Society.

A Certificate of Commendation may be awarded by members of the National Council to members of The Theosophical Society in Australia who have undertaken excellent work in promoting theosophical ideals and working for The Theosophical Society over an extended period of time. This work need not necessarily be at the national level.

In considering whether a Certificate of Commendation should be conferred on a member:

For both the National Executive Committee and the National Council -

1. Each member shall have a right to remain silent,
2. The vote on the proposal shall be by secret ballot if considered necessary,
3. For the motion to be passed, at least 75% of the votes cast need to be in favour, and
4. The name of the nominee shall remain confidential, and shall not be mentioned in the Agenda or in the Minutes, except where the National Council has passed the motion to confer a Certificate of Commendation.
5. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a recommendation for a Certificate of Commendation must be received along with supporting documents at the National Headquarters one month before a National Council Meeting for distribution on a confidential basis with the Agenda to the members of the National Council.

At the discretion of the National Council, if a Certificate of Commendation is awarded, then the National dues for that member may be waived.

Honorary Life Membership

Extract from Rule 7:

(12)(a) The Executive Committee on its own initiative or upon receipt of a recommendation from any Lodge (Branch) or from the National President shall give consideration to the making of a recommendation, with accompanying explanatory reasons, to the National Council for the conferring of Honorary Life Membership of the National Society on any Member of the Society.

A decision by National Council conferring Honorary Life Membership on any Member includes the remission of the whole of any future National Society annual dues determined under Rule 9(1) and will apply for the remainder of that Member's life or for such lesser period as National Council may in special circumstances determine at any time.

(b) Honorary Life Memberships accorded by Lodges (Branches) have no bearing or standing in relation to membership of the National Society and National dues for such Members must continue to be paid by the relevant Lodges (Branches) to the National Society.

Policy approved by National Council

Honorary Life Membership of the National Society shall be conferred, in exceptional circumstances, on a member only in accordance with the procedure set out in Rule 7(12)(a) and in recognition of outstanding or meritorious service to the National Society.

In considering whether Honorary Life Membership should be conferred on a member in accordance with Rule 7(12) (a):

For both the National Executive Committee and the National Council -

1. Each member shall have a right to remain silent,
2. The vote on the proposal shall be by secret ballot if considered necessary,
3. For the motion to be passed, at least 75% of the votes cast need to be in favour, and
4. The name of the nominee shall remain confidential, and shall not be mentioned in the Agenda or in the Minutes, except where the National Council has passed the motion to confer Honorary Life Membership on a nominee.

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Public Relations and Promotions Policy

Appropriate publicity and promotional material will be produced which reflects the purpose and Objects of the TS and the freedom of thought of its members, using contemporary methods of dissemination. Suggestions for new leaflets, electronic publications and booklets shall be referred to the national Executive Committee for approval.

Note: The following was added at the request of the National Council at its meeting on 14 January 2010. This is not considered a Policy, but a note for future reference:

Mindful of its financial responsibilities the National Council ... recommends that future members of the national Executive and the National Council give very careful consideration to participation at events such as the Parliament of the World's Religions and other festivals in which information booths may be set up for a fee, especially if the event is not freely open to the public. Participation in such events requires considerable time and expense which might better be expended in the organisation of our own events over which we would have greater control and which might more effectively target people who are interested in Theosophy or in The Theosophical Society.

RESPONSIBLE PERSONS GUIDELINES

1. Purpose The Theosophical Society in Australia is committed to taking all reasonable steps to ensure that members of the National Council and national Executive Committee understand and comply with their duty of care as a “Responsible Person” under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth) and are not disqualified from:

- a) managing a corporation under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (the Corporations Act), or
- b) being a responsible person by the ACNC Commissioner, within the previous 12 months.

The Theosophical Society – First adopted 30/6/03

Amended 20/07/04; 14/01/05; 26/06/05; 13/01/06; 25/06/06; 12/01/07; 30/06/07; 11/01/08 27/06/08, 15/01/09, 26/06/09, 14/01/10, 27/05/10, 14/01/11 25/06/11, 20/01/12, 15/07/12, 18/01/13, 30/06/13, 19/01/14, 22/06/14, 27/03/2015, 27/06/2015, 15/01/2016, 25/06/2016, 20/01/2017, 24/06/2017, 18/01/2018, 23/06/2018, 18/01/2019, 22/6/2019, 16/1/2020, 26/7/2020.

This guide has been developed to assist any responsible person involved in the management and governing of The Theosophical Society in Australia to fulfil their duty of care and act with integrity and common sense.

2. Scope This Responsible Persons guideline documents the duty of care requirements and the expectations of how the responsible persons will conduct themselves with integrity, dignity and common sense in alignment with the Objects of the Theosophical Society, the rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia and all applicable legislation.

Responsible Person/s means any Member of the Theosophical Society in Australia's National Council and/or Executive Committee.

3. Duty of Care Any Member appointed or acting in a role as Responsible Person has to make sure that he/she at all times acts with integrity and common sense in the exercise of his/her duties, including:

- a) acting with reasonable care and diligence;
- b) acting honestly and fairly in the best interests of the Theosophical Society and for its charitable purposes;
- c) not misusing his/her position or information he/she gains as a Member of the national Executive Committee, the National Council or as a Responsible Person;
- d) promptly disclosing any actual or perceived conflicts of interest;
- e) ensuring that the financial affairs of the Theosophical Society are managed responsibly, and
- f) not allowing the Theosophical Society to operate while it is insolvent.

3.1 Act with reasonable care and diligence

As a committee member, Responsible Persons are in a position to guide, influence and impact the management of the Theosophical Society in Australia. It is important to understand and keep informed about the Theosophical Society in Australia's activities and finances.

For example, it may be a breach of this duty if a responsible person failed to attend several board meetings in a row. However, this duty is not breached if a person cannot take part in managing The Theosophical Society in Australia at the time (for example, because of illness).

As well, a responsible person can rely on the special knowledge or expertise of another responsible person, adviser or expert, as long as they adequately inform themselves and make an independent assessment of that information or advice.

3.2 Act honestly in the best interests of the TS and for its purposes

Responsible persons make decisions by honestly considering what would be in the best interests of The Theosophical Society in Australia and would further its charitable purposes as set out in the Theosophical Society in Australia's rules.

For example, this duty is breached if a responsible person uses The Theosophical Society in Australia's property to benefit another organisation; where it compromised the independence of the Theosophical Society; or it didn't further the Society's charitable purposes or Objects.

3.3 Not misuse the position of Responsible Person

An example of misusing a position is where a Responsible Person is involved in paying another company owned or controlled by a friend or relative (when it is not reasonable payment for the goods or services provided).

3.4 Not misuse information obtained in performing duties

An example of misusing information is if a Responsible Person gives out confidential information about the Theosophical Society in Australia's operations (that they have gained because of their role) to another person or organisation (even if it is to another charity).

3.5 Disclose any actual or perceived conflict of interest

Responsible Persons should disclose any situation where they may appear to have a conflict between their duty to act and a personal (private) interest and should not discuss or vote on any matter where there is such a conflict.

For example, if The Theosophical Society in Australia is considering which company to buy its stationery from, a responsible person should declare an interest if one of the companies is owned by his relative. This is true even if there is no actual conflict.

A conflict should be disclosed whenever an independent observer could doubt that a responsible person is acting in the best interests of the Theosophical Society in Australia.

Further potential examples include:

- a) In the past 3 years a member is or was employed by an organisation that The Theosophical Society in Australia is considering to engage;
- b) Is or was personally providing services as an external supplier or consultant in the past 3 years to an organisation that The Theosophical Society in Australia is considering to engage;
- c) Has an Investment/commercial interest in a matter to be discussed at a committee meeting;
- d) Is a personal friend or relative of any of the senior management, directors, shareholders or founders of an organisation that The Theosophical Society in Australia is considering to engage.

In general, the responsible person should disclose the conflict of interest to the National Council and/or Executive Committee (as appropriate) and abstain from any involvement, directly or indirectly – on the specific matter. This includes any discussion before voting occurs as a person with a conflict of interest can be perceived to influence the final decision made, even when not voting on the specific matter.

3.6 Ensure that the Theosophical Society in Australia's financial affairs are managed responsibly

As a minimum, Responsible Persons should have good understanding of the processes required to prevent problems and to manage money responsibly. This includes reading financial statements and having a process to ask questions if you don't understand.

3.7 Not allow a charity to operate while insolvent

If a National Council and/or Executive Committee member reasonably suspects that the Theosophical Society in Australia cannot pay all of its debts when they become due, then such member should take all reasonable steps to prevent The Theosophical Society in Australia from taking on more debt. The National Council and Executive Committee should regularly review the financial position and ensure there is enough money to pay for its activities.

4. Disqualification as Responsible Person

The Theosophical Society in Australia has to take reasonable steps to be satisfied that its Responsible Persons are not disqualified from:

- a) managing a corporation under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) (the Corporations Act), or
- b) being a responsible person by the ACNC Commissioner, within the previous 12 months.

If the person is already appointed, The Theosophical Society in Australia must take reasonable steps to remove them as a responsible person.

In order to fulfil this legislative requirement, The Theosophical Society in Australia will require all Responsible Persons to sign a declaration confirming that he/she is not disqualified to be a Responsible Person as set out above and conduct all necessary background checks to ensure that no Responsible Persons are disqualified from holding the position as Responsible Person on the National Council or Executive Committee.

If during a Member's term as Responsible Person he/she becomes disqualified to be a Responsible Person, he/she will immediately notify the National Secretary and resign from his/her position as a Member of the National Council or the national Executive Committee.

5. Annual review

All Responsible Persons of The Theosophical Society in Australia will be required to complete an annual refresher of this guideline and to sign that they have done so, and to sign an annual declaration to confirm that he/she is not disqualified to be or become a Responsible Person.

6. References and Associated Documentation

REFERENCE	RELEVANCE
The Theosophical Society in Australia Rules	Rules of The Theosophical Society in Australia
Responsible Persons Appointment letter	Letter of appointment of a Member to the National Council and/or Executive Committee.
Declaration of Responsible Person	Annual declaration by any Members of The Theosophical Society in Australia appointed in governance and/or management roles in the Theosophical

REFERENCE	RELEVANCE
	Society in Australia, confirming his/her good standing.
Conflict of Interest Policy	Policy setting out the requirements of when and how to disclose any potential, perceived and/or actual conflict of interest.

7. More information

Any questions about roles, duties and the requirements of being a Responsible Person should be directed to the National Secretary or the President of the Theosophical Society in Australia.

STAFF ISSUES

Staff Salary Increases, Basis of

Subject to the determination of the National Council and the economic climate, the National Council accepts the advice of Storey Blackwood and Co. to increase staff salaries in accordance with the Australian Bureau of Statistics yearly trend estimates Index of Average Weekly Earnings, Private Sector, Full Time adult total earnings, and other relevant considerations.

Personal Leave

All National Headquarters staff shall be asked to provide a medical certificate for personal leave of more than two consecutive workdays. If it is not appropriate to obtain a medical certificate for any reason, the matter shall be referred to the National Secretary in writing. Personal leave entitlements of staff employed by the National Headquarters will be in line with determinations by the Fair Work Australia Ombudsman.

Annual Leave

A maximum of four weeks' leave may be taken by an individual staff member working at the National Headquarters at any one time. This shall pertain to annual leave, time in lieu or a combination of both.

STANDARD OF BEHAVIOUR

Bullying

Our Code of Conduct [See page 4] sets out principles for behaviour based on our values that:

- *All people should be treated with respect; and*
- *All people should be treated fairly and with sensitivity.*

These qualities have been implied in the resolution passed by the General Council of the Theosophical Society in 1924 on Freedom of Thought. This policy is set up as a tool for harmony. It is intended to encourage appropriate behaviour patterns in the Theosophical Society. While acknowledging that

bullying is not widespread in the Theosophical Society, the fact is that covert and overt bullying does sometimes occur to disastrous effect.

Bullying in the Theosophical Society is inappropriate and unacceptable. Committee members, staff and volunteers found to have either committed or condoned such behaviour in the Theosophical Society in Australia may be subject to appropriate action.

Ongoing Definition: Bullying is physical or psychological behaviour or conduct where strength (including strength of personality) and/or a position of power is misused by a person or persons. It includes behaviour that could be expected to intimidate, offend, degrade, humiliate, undermine and threaten. Bullying is normally associated with an ongoing systematic pattern of behaviour. An isolated incident of behaviour is not considered bullying, but may still lead to action being taken against the perpetrator. Bullying may be overt or covert.

Overt Bullying:

Examples may include:

- Abusive behaviour towards another person such as threatening gestures or actual violence.
- Aggressive or abusive or offensive language, including threats or shouting.
- Demeaning remarks
- Constant unreasonable criticism.

Covert Bullying:

Examples may include:

- Deliberate exclusion, isolation or alienation of the person from normal interaction, such as intentionally excluding that person from meetings.
- Placing unreasonably high demands on one person but not on others.
- Allocation of demeaning jobs or meaningless tasks only.
- Deliberately withholding information that a person needs to exercise his or her role or entitlements in the Society.
- Undermining another person, including encouraging others to ‘gang up’ on them.
- Repeated refusal of requests for leave or training without adequate explanation and suggestion of alternatives.

Bullying can result in absenteeism, reduced productivity and motivation and loss of experienced and skilled people. Bullying can also have other significant costs for individuals, including loss of confidence and increased anxiety or depression. Bullying can also adversely affect other witnesses in a similar way.

All National Council members, national Executive Committee members, staff and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure that their actions do not negatively affect another’s career, health or well-being and are consistent with

our Guidelines for Conduct. This includes not condoning bullying by failing to do anything about it, such as raising the matter with the bully or someone else.

It is important that any experience or perception of bullying is reported preferably in writing or otherwise verbally to the National President or the National Secretary.

THEOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIA

“Theosophy in Australia” Magazine

General Aims

1. To provide a written vehicle for furthering the Objects of the Society in the Australian Section and exploring the Ancient Wisdom teachings through theosophically oriented articles, reviews, readers’ contributions and other items.
2. To assist the National President to sound his/her keynote to the Section.
3. To keep members in touch with the keynote of the International President
4. To keep members informed of TS events of note at the Section level, in Australian Lodges/Branches and overseas.
5. To provide a range of material consistent with the spirit of Freedom of Thought promoted within the TS, without undue emphasis on any one particular style of presentation, spiritual teacher or subject area.
6. To provide a forum for the expression of views by members, within the spirit of Brotherhood and the scope of the Society’s work.
7. To encourage study and reflection on theosophical material through items presented in the magazine.

TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Travel and accommodation may be paid for staff and volunteers in respect of events organised by the National Society anywhere in the Section, as follows:

- National Officers who organise/participate in events
- National Lecturers who participate in events
- Audio-visual support and/or recording of sessions
- Guest speakers

TRUST PROPERTIES

Administrator

At such times that an Administrator is not appointed to oversee the running and maintenance of any or all Trust properties those duties shall fall to the National Secretary. The National Council may appoint a property Administrator at any time.

Environmental Responsibility

The National Council acknowledges that all Trust properties should be sensitive to the environment with regard to running activities, and power sources where practical and affordable should be as carbon neutral as possible.

Caterers

Voluntary caterers, at events organised by the National Society, will not be charged for attendance at the events concerned.

Lodges/Branches and Groups organising their own events at Springbrook will be charged their caterers' accommodation and need to include this overhead in determining their price for the event.

Canyonleigh

Purpose

The Canyonleigh Theosophical Centre is an annexe of the National Headquarters of The Theosophical Society in Australia. The Centre's purpose is for educational and administrative activities organised by the National Headquarters. The Centre is dedicated to encouraging a balance between meditation, study and service along the lines of the theosophical tradition.

Additional Note: Bolitho House at the Canyonleigh Centre was dedicated by the International President, Mrs Radha Burnier, in 2001.

Guidelines for Usage:

1. Vegetarian food only to be prepared and eaten on the property (no fish, chicken or meat allowed)
2. No smoking anywhere on the property
3. No alcohol permitted on the property
4. No taking of prohibited drugs on the property
5. No pets on the property without prior approval from the National President or the National Secretary
6. No shooting on the property.

Accommodation Hire

The minimum number for any group or individual hire of Bolitho House shall be three, so that a minimum of three persons would be on site during any event.

Exceptions may be considered by the National Council or the National Executive on a case by case basis.

Ownership of Canyonleigh Property

The Canyonleigh property is owned by the Australian Section Theosophical Trust on behalf of The Theosophical Society in Australia. No member, Lodge, Branch or Group of the Society has any equity in the property.

Canyonleigh Gardens

Only selected plants will be planted at the Centre and no gifts of any other plants will be accepted.

Restriction on Personal Goods for Sale

During events organized by the National Headquarters run at the Canyonleigh Centre, the sale by members or other individuals of books or other items

which do not relate to the specific event concerned, or else-advertising which promotes activities by a member or non-member outside of the TS activity concerned, are not permitted.

Restriction on Advertising

Groups hiring the Canyonleigh Centre may not leave brochures, publications or calling cards for display at the Centre after the end of the hiring period. Individual members or non-members may not display brochures, publications or calling cards at the Centre, which is intended to promote the work and Objects of the Theosophical Society.

Restrictions on Psychic-Related Practices

In keeping with the ethos and principles of The Theosophical Society in Australia, no psychic-related practices/techniques (i.e. kundalini practices, séances, mediumship, astral travel, channelling etc.) are permitted at the Canyonleigh Centre.

Springbrook

Springbrook Wastewater Management:

The Australian Section Theosophical Trust has a licence to operate sewage treatment works at 2184 Springbrook Road in the Numinbah Valley QLD (environmental authority EPPR00530113), as part of the development consent. This is an environmentally relevant activity under the Environmental Protection Act 1994. It is an offence to contravene any condition of the environmental authority, carrying a maximum penalty of \$530,100. It is the responsibility of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust to ensure that the sewage treatment plant at the Springbrook Centre is operated within the guidelines of that authority at all times. Therefore, the National Secretary or the property Administrator (if one has been appointed) must make herself or himself familiar with the conditions of authority, taking special note of the release limits for effluent irrigation onto the land, and of the site based management plan. These may be found in the Notice of Concurrence Agency Response Queensland Government Environmental Protection Agency, a document that is kept on file in hard copy and on the Section's server. New conditions may be imposed at any time, and it is the responsibility of the National Secretary or Administrator to remain aware of these and abide by them.

Guidelines for Usage:

1. Vegetarian food only to be prepared and eaten on the property (no fish, chicken or meat allowed)
2. No smoking anywhere on the property
3. No alcohol permitted on the property
4. No taking of prohibited drugs on the property
5. No pets on the property without prior approval from the National President or the National Secretary
6. No shooting on the property.

Schools of Theosophy:

Students: The annual Schools are a time of study and training for members committed to the work of The Theosophical Society. The aim is to foster a deeper study of Theosophy and encourage future speakers and leaders.

Priority is given to members who have not previously attended a School. Some travel and accommodation grants are available for interested, serious students who have not previously received financial assistance to attend an Australian or New Zealand School of Theosophy and who may need some assistance in order to attend.

Staff: Travel & accommodation paid for volunteers who work at least one day per week at Section office and who contribute to the running of the School.

Scholarships- Australia/New Zealand Schools of Theosophy

Any Lodges/Branches for which a member has been given a scholarship to the School of Theosophy will be asked to arrange a follow-up contribution/s by the recipient to the work of that TS Centre.

Restriction on Personal Goods for Sale

During events organized by the National Headquarters run at the Springbrook Centre, the sale by members or other individuals of books or other items which do not relate to the specific event concerned, or else advertising which promotes activities by a member or non-member outside of the TS activity concerned, are not permitted.

Restriction on Advertising

Groups hiring the Springbrook Centre may not leave brochures, publications or calling cards for display at the Centre after the end of the hiring period. Individual members or non-members may not display brochures, publications or calling cards at the Centre, which is intended to promote the work and Objects of the Theosophical Society.

Restrictions on Psychic-Related Practices

In keeping with the ethos and principles of The Theosophical Society in Australia, no psychic-related practices/techniques (i.e. kundalini practices, séances, mediumship, astral travel, channelling etc.) are permitted at the Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre at Springbrook. The Caretaker is authorised to exercise supervision of all events that take place at the Centre in order to ensure that this policy is upheld by all groups or individuals hiring the Centre.

Ownership of Springbrook Property

The Springbrook property is owned by the Australian Section Theosophical Trust on behalf of The Theosophical Society in Australia. No member, Lodge, Branch or Group of the Society has any equity in the property.

Springbrook Management - Travel Expenses:

Administrator may receive travel costs as required.

Springbrook Hiring for TS Groups

There is no minimum number for Lodges, Branches and Groups wishing to hire the Centre. However, all requests for hiring must be made formally to the Caretaker and are also subject to the discretion of the National President or National Secretary. It is preferred that small TS Groups hire the Centre in the cooler months when there are fewer external bookings. Up to two volunteers appointed by a Lodge/Branch or Certified Group running an event at the Springbrook Centre may have free accommodation for the duration of the event concerned. This shall include the event organisers.

Attendees at TS events organised by the National Headquarters at the Springbrook Centre may use the reference library for research purposes under the general supervision of the Education Coordinator, any other national Officer or another person nominated by the Education Coordinator. Books from the reference library may not be taken out of the hall building.

Springbrook Access

The Education and Retreat Centre is for the private use of members of the Society and also hirers of the property who agree to respect the special conditions which apply at the Centre. As it is intended for retreat purposes, the general quiet enjoyment, security and well-being of all who use the Centre is of great importance to The Theosophical Society in Australia.

We wish to maintain harmonious relations with our various neighbours who have properties adjacent to the Centre.

Applications for access to or through our property need to be made to:

- a. The Caretaker of the Theosophical Education and Retreat Centre (By email, fax or telephone);
or
- b. The Springbrook Administrator (by email, fax or telephone);
or else
- c. An appointed person standing in for the Caretaker at the Centre during his absence.
Or
- d. The National President.

At least 24 hours' notice needs to be given for all requests for access and should be made in the first instance to the Caretaker, otherwise to the Springbrook Administrator, the National President or an appointed person standing in for the Caretaker.

In the case of genuine emergencies the 24 hours' notice does not, of course, apply.

Caretaker—Family and Friends

Any family members or friends of the Caretaker, other than a partner or any dependents, staying at the Springbrook Centre for more than six months continuously or in a given year may be charged rent at market value. The Caretaker shall advise the Springbrook Administrator or the National

Secretary of any family member or friend staying with the Caretaker for more than one week.

Caretaker—Leave of Absence

All arrangements for the Caretaker's leaves of absence, including the choice of casual Caretaker, whether that be a volunteer or a casual employee, must be arranged in consultation with the National Secretary before any request for leave, bearing in mind that the authority to engage casual employees rests with the property owner.

Vehicle Insurance

The vehicle that is owned by The Theosophical Society in Australia and housed at the Springbrook Centre is for the use of the Caretaker. Insurance cover on that vehicle shall extend only to the person or persons named as the driver. Others should not drive that vehicle except in a medical emergency or similar event.

Lodges/Branches Occupying Trust Properties

Lodges/Branches which occupy properties owned or leased by the Australian Section Theosophical Trust for their use must provide regular copies of their programmes to the National Headquarters.

In keeping with the ethos and principles of The Theosophical Society in Australia, no psychic-related practices/techniques (i.e. kundalini practices, séances, mediumship, astral travel, channelling etc.) are permitted at these properties. Also, no courses of more than 12 weeks are to be run by one presenter at these Lodges/Branches without the approval of the national Executive Committee.

[See also **Programming for Convention and National TS Centres and Registrations- Events Organised by the TS in Australia**]

Hobart Branch

The property at 13 Goulburn Street Hobart was purchased by The Australian Section Theosophical Trust in 1994 and has ever since then been made available for the use of Hobart Branch, by mutual agreement, under certain conditions. The National Secretary should make herself or himself aware of those conditions, as set out in the agreement signed by the two parties in July 1994, and kept on file in hard copy and on the Section's server, along with several other related documents. A new agreement may be entered into at any time, by mutual consent. Until such a time, the conditions outlined in the 1994 agreement may be waived only with written consent of The Australian Section Theosophical Trust, after application to the national Executive committee.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers

The value of volunteers to organizations such as The Theosophical Society has long been recognized. The foundation and growth of the Society has largely depended on the contributions of volunteers, both members and non-members. Volunteers provide one way of interaction between the Society and the

community. On the other hand, the Theosophical Society can benefit the volunteers in a variety of ways, for example, by providing opportunities for personal development and meaningful pursuits.
Volunteers provide a service to the TS and the community; do their voluntary work by choice and without seeking monetary reward.

The aim of this volunteer policy is to:

- Recognise the invaluable contribution of volunteers to The Theosophical Society in Australia
- Review regularly policies ensuring continuous improvement
- Maintain familiarity with professional literature on volunteering
- Recruit volunteers who have a strong interest and commitment to The Theosophical Society, who will honour their commitment in time and quality of service to perform agreed tasks
- Place volunteers where most appropriate to the Society's needs and to volunteers' interest and skills and provide them with satisfying and meaningful volunteer experiences
- Provide suitable training for specific tasks and support for volunteers
- Monitor the ongoing volunteer commitment to the Society in order to ensure volunteers and supervisors continue to have productive, meaningful and enjoyable relationships
- Include provision for more formal recognition of volunteers from time to time
- Acknowledge the necessity of meetings with volunteers to review practices and procedures
- Acknowledge that a nationally and internationally agreed maximum number of hours for volunteers is a limit of 15 hours per week for each volunteer. Any volunteer wishing to exceed this average weekly limit is required to gain authorisation from the National President, who will then refer the matter to the National Council at their six-monthly meetings.

Volunteers Working for the National Society:

Are each requested to adhere to a maximum of 15 hours voluntary work per week, unless authorised in advance as per the previous point, or unless requested by the National President or National Secretary to provide volunteer work for longer hours during a brief period, e.g. in the case of volunteer caterers working for a short period at a national TS centre from time to time.

Volunteers working at the National Headquarters office:

- Are required to be supervised by paid staff
- Are normally required not to work before or after the business hours of the office, unless prior authorisation is obtained from the National President or National Secretary
- Will have a log kept of their working hours.

Best Practice which the TS will endeavour to fulfil:

- Providing volunteer staff with orientation and training where appropriate
- Providing volunteer staff with a healthy and safe workplace
- Providing appropriate and adequate insurance cover
- Defining volunteer roles
- Providing appropriate levels of support and management for volunteer staff
- Provide volunteers with a copy of policies pertaining to volunteer staff
- Acknowledging the rights of volunteer staff
- Ensuring that the work of volunteer staff complements but does not undermine the work of paid staff
- Treating volunteer staff as valuable team members
- Acknowledging the contribution of volunteer staff

Termination:

The TS acknowledges that a volunteer may leave his/her position at any time. It would help the organization if they would submit written notice and, if appropriate, furnish a reason for the decision.

Volunteers who do not adhere to the Rules and Guidelines for Conduct or who fail to satisfactorily perform the volunteer work are subject to termination.

Possible grounds for termination may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Misconduct with staff, workers or other volunteers
- Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Theft of property
- Misuse of equipment or resources
- Abuse or mistreatment of workers or other volunteers
- Failure to abide by policies, procedures and the Guidelines for Conduct

The Theosophical Society will provide written notice to any volunteer faced with termination, furnishing reasons for the decision.