

GHANA ASSOCIATION OF NSW



THE CONSTITUTION

CONSTITUTION OF GHANA ASSOCIATION OF NSW

FOREWORD:

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

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

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CHANGE HISTORY

Version	Section	Change Details	Author	Date
2.0	XX	Amended to include criteria for the office of the president	Isaac K. Acquah, Dela Dokli	09/07/2016

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SECTION I – NAME

The Association shall be known as “Ghana Association of New South Wales” [GHANSW].

SECTION II – DEFINITION OF A MEMBER

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

SECTION III – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

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

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SECTION IV – MEMBERSHIP

1. Shall be open to all people of Ghanaian descent. It shall also be open to anyone who subscribes to the aims and aspirations of the Association
2. 'Short course' in this context [see Section II above] refers to courses or visits of 3-months duration or less
3. Patrons shall be Consul General of Ghana in Sydney and any members identified as deserving the honour

SECTION V – OFFICERS

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

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

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

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

The Board of Trustees shall meet at least once in a year.

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9. Signatories to Accounts
The signatories for the Association's accounts shall be the President **and** the Secretary **or** the Treasurer. In the absence of the President, the Vice President shall sign on his or her behalf.
10. Collective Responsibility of Executive Committee Members
Members of the executive committee shall have a collective responsibility for the implementation of the Association's decisions and its smooth running

SECTION VI - SPECIAL (AD-HOC) COMMITTEES

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

SECTION VII – DUES

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

SECTION VIII – GENERAL MEETINGS

1. The Association shall hold a general meeting once every quarter **and an annual general meeting on the first Sunday of December each year**
2. The venue and time of each general meeting shall be communicated by the

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executive committee prior to the meeting

3. A quorum of 15 members of the Association shall be required for a general meeting to proceed. This number [i.e.15] shall include the President, the Secretary and any other member of the executive committee
4. Voting at general meetings shall be restricted to only paid-up members of the Association

SECTION IX - EMERGENCY MEETING

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

SECTION X - AMENDMENTS

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

SECTION XI – DISSOLUTION OF THE ASSOCIATION

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

SECTION XII – MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES

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

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

An **obligation** shall be a moral duty, promise or something that can be imposed

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legally or socially on a member **and** the Association. Thus it shall be mutual.

Example 1:

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

Example 2:

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

Example 3:

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

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

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

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

SECTION XIII – PUNCTUALITY AT MEETINGS

Members shall be punctual at all meetings

SECTION XIV – MEMBER ABSENTEEISM

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

SECTION XV – WITHDRAWAL OF MEMBERSHIP

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

SECTION XVI – DISCIPLINARY ACTION

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

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1. Failure to pay dues after 18 consecutive months

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

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

An offending member in this instance shall be dealt with as the executive committee deems fit.

3. Misappropriation of funds

Any member who is proven to have misappropriated funds:

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

4. Depending on the gravity of any of the above-listed offences, a member may be expelled from the Association
5. Any member expelled from the Association shall forfeit all rights and privileges
6. An expelled member may rejoin the Association after 2 years

SECTION XVII - RIGHT OF APPEAL OF DISCIPLINED MEMBER

1. A member may appeal against an expulsion or suspension within 7 days of being served the notice
2. The member shall lodge the appeal with the Secretary who in turn shall inform the executive committee for an emergency meeting to be convened within 21 days
3. At the emergency meeting so convened:
 - i. only the appeal shall be on the agenda
 - ii. the executive committee and the member shall both state their respective cases orally or in writing or both
 - iii. the outcome of the appeal [confirming or revoking the disciplinary action] shall be determined by the members present through a secret ballot
 - iv. absentee votes shall not be accepted in such a situation

SECTION XVIII – MEMBER WELFARE

1. **Demise of a Member**

- i. On the demise of a member, the Association's Welfare Central Committee

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shall liaise with the family of the deceased to get names of persons and together, constitute a funeral committee

- ii. The funeral committee so constituted shall then direct and provide guidance on all the funeral activities

2. Demise of a Member's Close Relation

- i. On the demise of a member's close relation i.e. parent, spouse or dependent child residing in Sydney, upon a simple notification [e.g. phone call], the Association shall arrange a traditional condolence visit to the bereaved family.

3. Birth of a Member's Child

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

4. Formation of Zonal Welfare Teams

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

SECTION XIX – INVOLVEMENT IN A CRIMINAL OR CIVIL CASE

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

SECTION XX – ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. General Guidelines

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

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- v. Nominations for office-bearers of the Association shall be done by completing a nomination form witnessed by 2 other paid-up members of the Association
- vi. 3 months prior to the election, the electoral committee shall publish an interim list of nominees and request confirmation from all nominees
- vii. The final list of nominees shall be published and the nominees shall be introduced at the **last** general meeting preceding the election
- viii. If only 1 nomination is received for a given office, the nominee shall be deemed as elected
- ix. If no nomination is received for a vacant office, the incoming executive committee shall appoint a member to the office
- x. Should an elected office become vacant during a term of office, the executive committee shall arrange to fill the office thereof
- xi. Being ad-hoc in nature, the electoral committee shall cease to exist after a general election

2. Criteria for the office of the President

A person seeking to contest the office of the President must meet the following criteria:

- i. Criminal record – none whatsoever
- ii. Age – one must be at least 35 years old
- iii. Dues – fully paid up for the past 2 years
- iv. Meeting attendance – must have attended at least 6 meetings in the past 2 years
- v. Overall conduct – all-round well-behaved person
- vi. Sociability – ability to mix freely with Ghanaians and attend some Ghanaian functions and engagements
- vii. Past experience – having held leadership position in a social organisation
- viii. Scrutiny – ready to submit to a screening process or face questions from the community or both
- ix. Team player – ability to work with and within a team
- x. Communication – ability to express oneself and the concerns of the community

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Please refer to Appendix A for the supporting premise of each criterion stated above.

APPENDIX A

Criteria for Office of President of GHANSW

Srl	Criterion	Premise
1.	Criminal record – none whatsoever	While someone with a known criminal record can be subjected to scrutiny for membership to GHANSW, such a person cannot hold an executive office. Also any person known to be on security watch list at any level of government cannot hold an executive office i.e. office of president.
2.	Age – one must be at least 35 years old	Ghanaians in Australia at this stage comprise of 1st and probably 2 nd generations. There is a sizeable number of GHANSW members who are above 50 years of age. The president must therefore be of that age as to be able to display maturity and relate to people over 45 years. Age of 35 seems ideal as people tend to start to settle in life from this age.
3.	Dues – fully paid up for the past 2 years	GHANSW has expenditure to incur including payment of rent of meeting place and public liability insurance. Dues constitute the only source of income to GHANSW and as such the person to preside over its affairs must be a paid-up member and from past 2 years to date. As the Constitution stipulates, there is a penalty for late payment.
4.	Attendance – must have attended at least 6 meetings in the past 2 years	GHANSW meets once every quarter on first Sunday of the months of Feb, May, Sept and Dec. Someone seeking the office of president must attend meetings regularly to appreciate what is going on within the assoc. However if 2 apologies are received and recorded for a prospective candidate, then total meeting attendance could be reduced to 4. Else it could be deemed such a candidate does not have the time required to run GHANSW affairs.
5.	Overall conduct – all-round well-behaved person	GHANSW meetings do generate a lot of heated debates albeit healthy. But someone who refuses to behave well and is as temperamental as to show disrespect to others cannot hold the office of president. Such a person must be noted as all-round well-behaved.
6.	Sociability – ability to mix freely with Ghanaians and attend some Ghanaian functions and engagements	GHANSW is by and large a social organisation. The president cannot be an anti-sociable person.

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7.	Past experience – having held leadership position in a social organisation	While this is not a must-have, someone with past experience in leadership would be deemed an asset.
8.	Scrutiny – ready to submit to a screening process or face questions from the community or both	It is the norm that a prospective leader be subjected to scrutiny to determine one's fitness and suitability to the role. This could be vetting by a selection committee or question and answer session at meetings or both.
9.	Team player – ability to work with and within a team	The president need not be the source of all tangible ideas. Some ideas could come from other executives or indeed from the floor of a meeting. The president must lend support to such ideas that generate progress even if they did not originate from the president.
10.	Communication – ability to express oneself and the concerns of the community	The president must be able to articulate views and express them clearly in private and in public as a true spokesperson of the community

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PROMULGATION:

This amended Constitution was promulgated on 4th



[Franklyn MacBruce]

President of Ghana Association of New South Wales



[Isaac K. Acquah]

Treasurer of Ghana Association of New South Wales