



# **MANAWATU LESBIAN AND GAY RIGHTS ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED**

## **OFFICIAL CONSTITUTION**

### **1. NAME**

Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.

### **2. MISSION STATEMENT, VALUES, AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **2.1 MISSION STATEMENT**

To provide a social service which affirms and empowers gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui and fa'afafine persons, those questioning their sexuality, and those persons living with Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and/or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) who are Members of Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated and/or our community, and their family, whanau/significant others; and which actively promotes the development of a safer social environment for our multicultural communities.

#### **2.2 VALUES**

##### **Community**

We are committed to the holistic wellbeing of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, and fa'afafine communities.

##### **Biculturalism**

We recognise our responsibilities under the Treaty of Waitangi and the need as Tangata Whenua and Tauwi to actively work in partnership to educate and challenge ourselves.

##### **Cultural Appropriateness**

We are committed to ensuring that our services are delivered in a manner that is respectful, safe and sensitive to our own culture(s) and to the culture(s) of our Members, communities and client group; and to the need to continuously educate and challenge ourselves.

##### **Integrity**

We accept the responsibility for our conduct and behaviour, and to adhere to the Code of Conduct of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.

**Legislative Compliance**

We recognise and accept our responsibilities, as an Incorporated Society and service provider, to comply with the relevant organisational, health, health and safety, privacy, human rights, and trade related legislation and regulations.

**Partnership**

We are committed to a process of ongoing negotiation and shared responsibility with our Members and communities in developing, and implementing plans of action.

**Innovation**

We are committed to demonstrating consistent innovation in developing, and implementing plans of action, drawing on the skills, talents, creativity and imagination of our Members and communities in meeting our Aims and Objectives.

**Commitment**

We are steadfastly purposeful in endeavouring to meet our Aims and Objectives in a financially and ethically responsible manner.

**Excellence**

We are committed to quality as a key feature of our service delivery, with an openness to challenges and opportunities to improve our services to our Members and communities.

**Freedom and Equality**

We are actively committed to the elimination of abuse, oppression, discrimination, and disenfranchisement.

**2.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES****Social Wellbeing**

**To provide safe and appropriate opportunities for the social needs of our Members and our communities to be met.**

- a. To regularly investigate and identify current and developing social needs and review our efforts to respond appropriately to these.
- b. To liaise with and support similar service providers who may decide to provide social functions and other activities for our Members and/or our communities.
- c. Where possible, to provide resources to enhance safe opportunities for the social interaction for our Members and/or our communities.
- d. To ensure the services we provide are managed and delivered in a manner which is compliant with relevant legislation and regulations.

**Support and Welfare**

**To provide culturally and ethically appropriate support and welfare services to meet the psychosocial needs of our Members, members of our communities, and their family/whanau/significant others; and to liaise with and support the related activities of other organisations within the Manawatu and the surrounding area so as to promote safe and appropriate service delivery.**

- a. To provide appropriate and ethical support and welfare services to our Members and communities, reflecting our Values and in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.
- b. To regularly investigate and identify welfare needs within our Membership and communities; and to review how well current needs are being met and how services can be improved.
- c. To promote and provide ready access to appropriate contact, support, counselling, advisory, health and education services within our own organisation and other services for, with, and on behalf of our Members and communities.
- d. To actively liaise with and support other service providers providing services to our Members and communities.
- e. To provide education opportunities to other service providers engaged in delivering services to our Members and communities.
- f. To access appropriate education, training, supervision and support opportunities for our volunteers.
- g. To affirm, support and advocate for people with or at risk of HIV/AIDS/STI.
- h. To provide appropriate HIV/AIDS/STI prevention and related education opportunities and resources to our Members and communities, and to other service providers.
- i. To identify, develop and maintain effective and efficient working partnerships with similar service providers.
- j. To proactively utilise our Incorporated Society status to assist similar organisations and service providers as necessary to assist in meeting the psychosocial needs of our Members and communities.

### **Arts and Recreation Support**

**To actively support the artistic endeavours and talents of Members and persons within our communities; and to offer community sport and recreation opportunities to our Members and persons within our communities.**

- a. To provide supportive encouragement and the appropriate use of our premises to our Members and persons within our communities presenting their artistic endeavours and talents – particularly those art forms, specific to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, takatapui, fa’afafine and transgender communities, which are not supported or available for development elsewhere in the region (for example visual, literary and performance arts for/by our Members and persons within our communities).
- b. To provide supportive encouragement and the appropriate use of our premises to our Members and persons within our communities relative to sporting endeavours, and fundraising for sports activities – particularly those for and actively involving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, takataapui, fa’afafine and transgender communities, which are not openly supported or available for development elsewhere in the region.
- c. To provide organised recreation activities to our Members and persons within our communities
- d. To provide an appropriate library service, containing literature, texts and documents, of particular relevance to our Members and persons within our communities.

### **Social Acceptance**

**To represent and advocate for the interests and needs of our Members and communities in the wider (local and national) community of which we are a part.**

- a. To proactively address public issues of direct and indirect relevance to our Members and communities.
- b. To positively challenge, and provide education and awareness opportunities relative to the manifestations and implications of bigotry, oppression, homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, and HIV/AIDSphobia and related issues in educational institutions, statutory agencies, social service and health agencies, and in the wider community.
- c. To promote, encourage and support the rights of citizenship, social acceptance and equitable participation of our Members and communities in the wider community of which we are a part.

### 3. LEGISLATIVE COMPLIANCE

- a. Both as an organisation and as individuals we will comply with New Zealand law.
- b. We undertake to be informed on more specific legislative provisions, as these apply to the existence, functions, and Members of our Association. In particular, this refers to:
  - Incorporated Societies Act 1908
  - Sale of Alcohol Act 1989
  - Privacy Act 1993
  - Official Information Act 1982
  - Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992
  - Human Rights Act 1988
- c. We will adopt and utilise best practices for the purpose of ongoing and appropriate activity to support organisational and individual compliance. This will be achieved through strategic planning, a Code of Conduct, the accessing of appropriate external advice (and contracted services as deemed necessary), and access to informed Association Representatives.
- d. The Legislative Compliance Coordinator and/or other nominated Representatives will champion the Association's knowledge base and compliance activities.

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

- a. Any person of sixteen (16) years of age or over, and residing in New Zealand, who identifies as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, or fa'afafine, may apply to become a Member of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated by written request to the Committee and the payment of the annual subscription as set at the Annual General Meeting. The Committee shall, at its discretion, set part-year subscription fees.
- b. Any person of sixteen (16) years of age or over, and residing in New Zealand, who does not identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, or fa'afafine, may apply to become an Associate Member of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated by written request to the Committee and the payment of the annual subscription as set at the Annual General Meeting. Such persons may attend social, sporting, and recreational events or receive Notices and Newsletters with the same benefits as other Members of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated. However, Associate Members do not have voting rights at Special General Meetings or Annual General Meetings, or to hold Offices or Committee positions, since the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated primarily remains an organisation operated for and by the gay, bisexual, transgender, takataapui, and fa'afafine communities.

- c. The Committee has the authority to decline an application for Membership and Associate Membership with a written response to said applicant informing him/her of this decision and returning the annual subscription payment. Said applicant may request a review of this decision within fourteen (14) days of receipt of notification.
- d. Membership and Associate Membership is retained with an annual written Renewal of Membership and payment of the annual subscription. Failure of an existing Member or Associate Member to renew his/her Membership within one month of the Annual General Meeting renders said Membership lapsed.
- e. The Committee has the authority to terminate Membership with a written explanation, to the Member in question, to be sent to the last known address of the Member or Associate Member. Said Member or Associate Member may request a review of this decision within fourteen (14) days of receipt of notification.
- f. The Annual General Meeting has the authority to confer Life Member status to any member. Life Members are exempt from payment of the annual subscription, but are required to provide an annual written Renewal of Membership to ensure records are current.
- g. The Annual General Meeting has the authority to confer Foundation Life Member status to Members involved in the establishment of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated. Foundation Life Members are exempt from payment of the annual subscription but are required to provide an annual written Renewal of Membership to ensure records are current.
- h. Persons may cease to be Members or Associate Members of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated by written resignation to the Committee.

## **5. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

With the exception of the personal benefit and the related aspects of the Winding Up clause, the Official Constitution of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated may only be amended by a majority vote at any Special General Meeting or Annual General Meeting.

## **6. MEETINGS**

### **Community Meeting**

Regular meetings will be arranged, at such frequency as determined by the Committee, for mutual feedback with our focus communities. Community meetings may be held in conjunction with Special General Meetings and Annual General Meetings.

### **Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting shall be held not less than once each financial year. These are to be held as near as is practicable to the beginning of the new financial year.

All existing Members shall be notified in writing. A quorum shall consist of 50% of the current Committee Members and a further 30% of Members including proxy votes.

Proxy voting forms are to be provided with the written notification of the Annual General Meeting. Voting shall be by a show of hands or by ballot if requested.

The purpose of the Annual General Meeting shall be:

- To provide the annual Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet.
- To receive the Committees' Annual Reports.
- To receive feedback from affiliated groups; and to affirm Memorandums of Understanding with these groups.
- The election of Officers.
- To set the annual subscription fee.
- General business.

### **Special General Meeting**

On receipt in writing to the Committee of a request signed by not less than six (6) Members, a Special General Meeting shall be called. Notification, quorum and voting at these shall be the same as for an Annual General Meeting.

### **Committee Meeting**

These may be held as often as required by elected Members of the Committee but with no less than eight (8) meetings per financial year. Any Member of the Committee can request a meeting with reasonable notice. Quorum for a meeting shall be a majority of Committee Members. Voting may be by a show of hands or by ballot if requested.

## **7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- a. A Committee of not less than seven (7) persons deemed appropriate for the respective Offices by Members present at the election or such numbers as decided upon from time to time at any Annual or Special General Meeting of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated shall be elected at each Annual General Meeting. Such persons must have an awareness of the respective roles and responsibilities for said Offices.
- b. Where several persons may be standing for election to a particular Office, such nominees are required to provide a verbal or written indication of their commitment and intent relative to the task.
- c. Any vacancy occurring during the course of the year may be filled for the duration of appointment at any Special General Meeting of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.

- d. The Committee shall have the power to co-opt assistance as required. Such persons, if they are current Members, may be granted voting rights at Committee meetings for the remainder of that Committee's term of office.
- e. In the event of the number of Committee Members falling below seven (7), and there being no Members available to be co-opted onto the Committee, the President must call a Special General Meeting to take place within sixty (60) days of this situation coming to his/her attention.
- f. The Committee shall be comprised of:
- President – responsible for:
    - Facilitation of Meetings
    - Public representation (for example, media releases)
    - Public relations
    - Legal matters (for example, official documents)
    - Inter-agency liaison (for example, development and annual review of Memorandums of Understanding)
    - Remains on the Committee for the year following the year of Office to assist the incoming President, and to provide continuity.
  - Vice-President – responsible for:
    - Driving operational planning (that is, the internal operation, planning, development and review of service delivery)
    - Stands in for the president when she/he is absent.
  - Treasurer – responsible for:
    - Financial management of the accounts as set out in the Control of Funds clause.
    - Ensuring accounts are paid in a timely manner.
    - Ensuring the accounts are audited.
    - Presenting the Annual Accounts at the Annual General Meeting.
  - Secretary – responsible for:
    - Compiling and distributing the Minutes all Meetings
    - Incoming and outgoing correspondence, with exception of the specific responsibilities of other Officers.
    - Maintenance of Membership records
  - Legislative Compliance Coordinator – responsible for:
    - Privacy Officer responsibilities
    - Health and Safety monitoring
    - Responding to complaints
    - Reviewing incidents.
  - At least two (2) other Committee Members – responsible for:
    - Men's welfare
    - Women's welfare
    - Library
    - Assisting Officeholders

- g. The Committee shall identify which Committee Members shall undertake essential responsibilities required of the Committee.
- h. Additional representation from associated groups, which may be identified or deemed appropriate by the Annual General Meeting or the Special General Meeting, may also be represented on the Committee in addition to the abovementioned.

## **8. COMMON SEAL**

This shall be held in the custody of the Secretary and shall be affixed to all official undertakings of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated and signed by the President and one (1) other Member of the Committee.

## **9. CONTROL OF FUNDS**

- a. The Treasurer with the advice and sanction of the Committee shall direct the control of all funds of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.
- b. Funds shall be deposited in bank accounts under the name of Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated, and transactions by cheque be signed jointly by the Treasurer and any one (1) of the following – President, Vice-President or Secretary. Any changes to the operation of accounts must take place with the immediate past signatories.
- c. The Committee shall have the right to invest funds not required for present use, and generally act responsibly in all dealings, matters and transactions on behalf of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.
- d. No Member of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated or any other person associated with a Member shall participate in or materially influence any decision made by Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated in respect of the payment to or on behalf of that Member or associated person of any income, benefit, or advantage whatsoever.
- e. Any such income paid shall be reasonable and relative to that which would be paid in an arms length transaction (being the open market value). The provisions and effects of this clause shall not be removed from this document, and shall be included and implied into any document replacing this document.

## **10. POWER TO BORROW**

The Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated shall, at the discretion of the Committee, hold the right to borrow money on behalf of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated to pursue the Aims and Objectives of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated.

## **11. WINDING UP**

- a. The Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated may be wound up, if at an Annual General Meeting or a Special General Meeting requested by no less than six (6) Members, the Members pass a resolution that the society be wound up and this resolution is confirmed at a subsequent Special General Meeting called for that purpose and held not earlier than 30 days after the first.
- b. If upon winding up and dissolution of the Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated, there remains after all debts and liabilities are met, any property whatsoever, the same shall not be paid to or distributed among the Members but shall be given or transferred to some other charitable organisation or body having objects similar to those of Manawatu Lesbian and Gay Rights Association Incorporated, or for some other charitable purpose in New Zealand approved by the majority of Members in person or by proxy vote at the Winding Up Meeting.