

# CONSTITUTION

Preamble.....	1
1 NAME.....	1
2 PURPOSE.....	1
3 MANAGEMENT AND POWERS .....	2
4 MEMBERSHIP .....	2
5 MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP .....	3
6 STEERING COMMITTEE .....	4
7 OFFICERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE.....	4
8 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS .....	5
9 FINANCE .....	5
10 DISPUTES .....	6
11 DISSOLUTION .....	6
12 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION .....	6

## Preamble

Partners and families of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) staff play a significant role in the success of MFAT officers' careers by supporting their partner and other family members both in Wellington and offshore, enabling staff to better represent New Zealand and contribute to New Zealand's success on the international stage.

Partners, both at home and overseas, have a vital interest in the terms and conditions under which their partner is employed, and in any changes in the way the Ministry operates which impact on job opportunities and conditions of employment. Life overseas can be very rewarding, but offshore environments can also be very challenging. MFAT staff, their partners and families are well aware of the costs of overseas service, including the long-term implications of broken careers, lost superannuation and income opportunities, and culture shock. For families deployed overseas, issues of interest include family income, housing, education, health care, leave provisions, family reunion policy, study assistance, language training and MFAT's expectations of the MFAT staff member. The nature of many positions in Wellington also requires staff to travel frequently with significant impact on partners and families.

## 1 NAME

- 1.1. The name of the association will be: **"Kiwis At Home and Abroad (KAHA): Supporting New Zealand Foreign Affairs Partners and Families"**, (the Association).

## 2 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The aims of the Association will be to:
  - 2.1.1 Promote and protect the interests of Members, partners and families both in NZ and overseas;
  - 2.1.2 Provide a forum and the opportunity for Members, partners and families to network, to share information and experience and to discuss issues of interest or concern;

- 2.1.3 Represent the views of partners and families on issues of importance to MFAT management, the government, members of parliament and (if appropriate) the public;
- 2.1.4 Advocate for Members, partners and families, including to MFAT management, and (if appropriate) the government and the public;
- 2.1.5 Form relationships with like-minded organisations, including: Foreign Service Association Incorporated and the Public Service Association; and,
- 2.1.6 Foster collegiality amongst Members, partners and families of MFAT staff.

### **3 MANAGEMENT AND POWERS**

- 3.1 The Association will be governed and managed by the Steering Committee.
- 3.2 To further the aims of the Association, but not otherwise, the Steering Committee may exercise the power to:
  - 3.2.1 Take any form of lawful action that is necessary to achieve the Association's Purpose;
  - 3.2.2 Promote the work of the Association and organise meetings, events, seminars etc.;
  - 3.2.3 Employ staff;
  - 3.2.4 Effect insurances in respect of any undertaking or activity of the Association, as agreed by the Steering Committee;
  - 3.2.5 Appoint sub-committees for specific matters within the Purpose, and if necessary, confer such powers upon the sub-committee as it deems necessary to enable the sub-committee to act;
  - 3.2.6 Levy Members or establish membership fees;
  - 3.2.7 Protect the identity of Members to maintain anonymity, if required; and,
  - 3.2.8 Appoint a patron(s).

### **4 MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 The following persons are eligible to apply to become Members of the Association:
  - 4.1.1 The partner of a serving MFAT staff member;
  - 4.1.2 The partner of a former MFAT staff member;
  - 4.1.3 The former partner of an MFAT staff member;
  - 4.1.4 Children of Members and/or a serving MFAT staff member; and,
  - 4.1.5 Anyone who, from time to time, is appointed or accepted by the Steering Committee as an Honorary Member.
- 4.2 'MFAT staff member' means: any employee of MFAT including permanent staff and staff employed under contract, and regardless of the type of role performed; and also included

are: persons that have been engaged on a "contract for service" to deliver work that may be considered as "business as usual" for MFAT's programme of work.

- 4.3 'A serving MFAT staff member' means an MFAT staff member that was serving on the day that the partner's membership application and/or nomination (Rule 6.3) was received by the Steering Committee.
- 4.4 All Members may resign their membership by providing the Secretary with notice.
- 4.5 All Members are expected to adhere to the rules of the Association.
- 4.6 All Members will provide their name, contact details, and the name of their partner or their connection to MFAT.
- 4.7 Only Members of 15 years of age or over are eligible to serve on the Steering Committee.
- 4.8 Where it is considered membership would be detrimental to the aims or activities of the Association, the Steering Committee will have the power to refuse membership.
- 4.9 Membership may be terminated or suspended by the Steering Committee at any time.

## **5 MEETINGS OF THE MEMBERSHIP**

- 5.1 Meetings of the Membership include: Annual General Meetings (AGMs), General Meetings and Special General Meetings.
- 5.2 The AGM, or a Special General Meeting convened for the purpose, has the power to elect or re-elect Officers as required.
- 5.3 The President or their delegate will chair Meetings of the Membership.
- 5.4 The AGM will take place no later than 31 October each year.
- 5.5 Members may participate in Meetings of the Membership electronically, if required.
- 5.6 At least 14 days written notice to all Members will be given before the AGM takes place.
- 5.7 All Members over the age of 15 years old are entitled to vote at Meetings of the Membership.
- 5.8 A quorum for all Meetings of the Membership will be 12 Members.
- 5.9 Voting will be decided based on the majority by a show of hands, or through an online vote that enables Members based outside New Zealand to vote.
- 5.10 If voting is tied the chair of the meeting has the discretion either to decide the matter in the interests of the Association, or resolve it by the toss of a coin.
- 5.11 Voters who abstain from voting or cast a vote of abstention are counted separately, if at all. It will be the votes 'for' and 'against' that are counted to determine whether a majority has been reached or not.

- 5.12 A Special General Meeting may be held at any time, including at the same time as an AGM. At least 28 days' notice will be given to all Members.
- 5.13 A General Meeting may be held at any time. At least seven days' notice will be given to all Members, unless there is an urgent matter.

## **6 STEERING COMMITTEE**

- 6.1 The Steering Committee will comprise no less than five and no more than 15 persons, hereafter referred to as Officers.
- 6.2 The Steering Committee has the power, by two-thirds majority secret ballot vote, to remove any Officer.
- 6.3 The Steering Committee or its representative will call for nominations prior to the AGM. If the number of nominations is greater than the number of vacancies, an election by ballot will be held for those vacancies.
- 6.4 At any time the Steering Committee may appoint a person to fill a vacancy on the Steering Committee. An Officer so appointed will hold office until the subsequent AGM.
- 6.5 The Steering Committee may co-opt no more than one person to the Steering Committee. To be eligible for such an appointment, the person will possess specific skills or experience identified and assessed as lacking on the Steering Committee.
- 6.6 It is desirable that the Steering Committee be comprised of: a majority (50% or more) of Officers who are Members by virtue of Rule 4.1.1; and, a majority of the Officers have overseas posting experience so that they can bring first-hand knowledge to posting-related issues.
- 6.7 Significant matters and decisions will be communicated to Members within seven days. This includes informing Members about decisions: to appoint an Officer to fill a vacancy, to remove an Officer and/or to co-opt an Officer. Other matters included are: to provide a notification when Officers have resigned; and, to notify if Rule 6.6 has not been complied with and the reason(s) why.
- 6.8 It is desirable for the Steering Committee to maintain a representative on the Foreign Service Association Executive.

## **7 OFFICERS OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

- 7.1 Officers of the Steering Committee (Officers) include:
  - 7.1.1 President: one person may be appointed; to be eligible to serve as President the person will be a partner of an existing MFAT staff member on the date the appointment is made;
  - 7.1.2 Vice President(s): up to two persons may be appointed;
  - 7.1.3 Secretary;
  - 7.1.4 Treasurer; and,

- 7.1.5 Officer for Information and Communication Technology.
- 7.2 Only Members will be eligible to be Officers.
- 7.3 Officers will be deemed elected for a term that will not exceed two years.
- 7.4 Any person may be co-opted as an Officer for a term that will not exceed one year. Up to one person may be co-opted to serve on the Steering Committee at any one time.
- 7.5 Officers may resign from office at any time.

## **8 STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

- 8.1 The Steering Committee will convene as frequently as required, but at least three times a year.
- 8.2 A quorum for Steering Committee meetings will be four Officers.
- 8.3 All Officers should be given at least seven days' notice of when a meeting is due to take place, unless there is an urgent matter.
- 8.4 Officers may participate in Steering Committee Meetings electronically, if required.
- 8.5 The Steering Committee will be chaired by the President or a designated deputy in her/his absence.
- 8.6 All meetings will be minuted and the minutes made accessible to Members, and any other interested parties unless deemed otherwise by the Steering Committee.

## **9 FINANCE**

- 9.1 Any money acquired by the Association, including donations, contributions and bequests, will be paid into an account operated by the Steering Committee in the name of the Association. All funds will be applied to the aims of the Association and for no other purpose.
- 9.2 Bank accounts may be opened and operated in the name of the Association. Any cheques etc relating to the bank account will be signed by at least two nominated Officers;
- 9.3 Any income or expenditure will be the responsibility of the Steering Committee who will be accountable to ensure funds are utilised effectively and that the Association stays within budget. Accounts will be maintained, and will be examined annually by an independent person who is not a member of the Steering Committee. An annual financial report will be presented at the AGM. The Association's accounting year will run from 01 July to 30 June.

## **10 DISPUTES**

- 10.1 Disputed matters between Members or between Members and Officers will be resolved where possible by the Steering Committee. If the matter is referred to a meeting of the Members at least 14 days notice of the matter to be considered will be given.


## **11 DISSOLUTION**

- 11.1 The Association may be dissolved if deemed necessary by the Members by a two-thirds majority vote at a Special General Meeting. Any assets or remaining funds after debts have been paid will be returned to their providers or transferred to local charities or similar groups at the discretion of the Steering Committee.

## **12 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- 12.1 Any changes to this constitution will be agreed by a two-thirds majority vote at a Special General Meeting.
- 12.2 Proposed amendments to this constitution or dissolution of the Association will be conveyed to the Secretary formally in writing. The Steering Committee will provide notice of such proposals to a Special General Meeting.

This Constitution was adopted by the AGM held at Wellington on 8 November 2012 by the persons present.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: President, Jo Mika-Thomas  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: Vice President, Jacqui Goodall  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: Secretary, Suzette Holm  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed: Treasurer, Simon Laube