

# Chatswood Public School Parents and Citizens Association

## Proposed changes to by-laws

### May 2019

#### Significant adjustments:

**a) Motions.** (*Sections 5, 6, 10.*) The proposed By-laws simplify the rules of Motions. The old By-laws and Operating Guidelines had a four-step process of (1) Proposal (2) must be a published Agenda item (3) Motion On Notice at one meeting becoming (4) Motion to be voted at the following meeting. This was to ensure that Motions of significant impact were not hastily raised and voted in a single meeting without due publicity or consideration.

That system is now replaced by a much simpler process. Any ideas for Motions of expenditure are still vastly preferred via a Proposal (as we have been doing in the past) with inclusion in the advertised Agenda before each Meeting. However under proposed new By-laws:

- Motions can be raised, discussed, and voted within a Meeting... enabling agility regarding routine and urgent matters, BUT
- \*Any\* Member can request (without contest, ie they do not have to justify or explain) that voting any given Motion be deferred to the following Meeting. This means that if any Member at all has any concerns at all, eg that an interested person should be brought into the discussion or that more research is needed, voting \*will\* be postponed. This grants the Association continued protection against undue haste.

**b) Meeting dates.** (*Sections 8 and 9.*) The By-laws used to stipulate our meeting dates precisely, making it hard to accommodate eg timetable clashes with major school events. The proposed By-laws:

- make the stipulated meeting dates "by default" only
- allow simple Motions to change or cancel meeting dates
- by default, no General Meeting in the first week of a term (due to the difficulty of preparing required notice and agenda by the end of the previous term). Note that by happenstance this gives us two P&C meetings each term plus one AGM.

#### Other adjustments:

**c) Removal of duplication.** Throughout, various places in the By-laws merely repeated clauses of the Constitution, in some cases with slight or erroneous differences. The Constitution always overrides the By-laws. These duplications have generally been removed.

**d) Elected positions** (*sections 3 and 4*). The By-laws used to state "No person will serve more than three consecutive years in the same ... position unless approved by the Association" which has given rise to the oddity of passing a Motion for someone to nominate plus a Ballot (or Motion) to approve their appointment. To clarify the intention, the proposed By-laws state: "No person will serve more than three consecutive years in the same ... position unless there is no other nominee and the additional term is approved by the Association." Note this means that an incumbent cannot stand for a fourth term in a position if an alternative person is nominated.

**e) Sub-committees** (*Section 4*) will no longer specifically stipulate a "Strategic Planning Sub-committee" (for major capital works) but the proposed changes allow that generally the P&C Association may establish (and dissolve) sub-committees over time. The existence of a Canteen and Uniform Shop are still explicitly stipulated in the new By-laws.

**f) Members** (*Section 5*) now defers primarily to the Constitution for most of the rules of Membership. However Section 5 now closes a technical gap of "no members" at the first Meeting each year by clearly delineating the duration of annual membership as lasting to the end of the first General Meeting of the following year. The section now also explicitly lists the rights of Members.

**g) Expenditure of funds.** (*Section 6*) used to stipulate that "Proposals for expenditure on items exceeding \$5000 should usually include a minimum of two independent quotes". This is a good principle, but the word "usually" makes it not a "rule". Additionally it's not always possible to find two quotes. As such, it's not suitable for By-laws because it's not practically enforceable. The principle is instead retained in our "Standard Operating Guidelines".

**h) Expenditure of funds** (*Section 6*) also includes limits on the amount the President jointly with Treasurer can commit on behalf of the Association for "contingency items". The proposed changes update the value, as several years have gone by since the value was last set, and simplify the rules to a single \$3,000 limit. The proposed changes now also stipulate that all such discretionary expenses must be itemised to the Association at the next Meeting.

**i) Financial year and budget** (*Section 7*) the proposed by-laws move the Budget presentation (officially) to the AGM, in line with what has actually been happening.