

# WAIKATO JEWISH ASSOCIATION

## CONSTITUTION

### PREAMBLE:

The Waikato Jewish Association (hereafter referred to as “WJA” or “the Association”) was formally established on March 6, 1996 by a small local group of long-time Jewish residents of Hamilton. It is a community organisation, which has been continually active since its inception. Although there is currently no synagogue or other visible Jewish establishment in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty, the Association is publicly listed in the Hamilton City Council’s Register of Community Organisations and with the Citizen’s Advice Bureau.

The WJA comprises Jewish families and individuals in the Waikato and Bay-of-Plenty region. This community includes both New Zealand-born Jews and émigrés from the four corners of the globe. The WJA represents a cross-section of people from different backgrounds, nationalities, ages and professions who range across a spectrum of religious and political views. The Association also liaises with other Jewish individuals and organisations, in New Zealand, Israel and internationally. It meets regularly to support and celebrate our collective cultural/religious identity and respond to the needs of our members.

The Association is coordinated by an Executive Committee whose members are elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. The voluntary Executive Committee meets regularly to plan and coordinate an annual schedule of events, and deal with issues of importance to the Jewish community and members of the WJA in particular. The Association regularly meets to observe the major Jewish and Israeli festivals and events, some Shabbat gatherings, and for special events which are announced as they arise.

The Association and the Executive Committee aim to be responsive to the needs of its members, to develop new initiatives, and encourage active participation by its members. The Association has developed the following “Core Values Statement” and “Aims and Objectives” as guiding principles:

### I. CORE VALUES STATEMENT:

The Association embraces, and is committed to, upholding the following core values:

- treating each other with dignity and respect at all times;
- inclusiveness and welcoming participation of members and friends in an atmosphere of safety and security;
- non discrimination;
- the nurturing of Jewish education for people of all ages;
- Jewish pluralism that allows for a wide variety of political, religious and socio-cultural perspectives;
- supporting Israel as a democratic and sovereign homeland for all Jewish people;

- nurturing social, cultural, religious and economic relationships with other Jewish communities in New Zealand, Israel and other countries worldwide;
- dignity and respect of other religions, ethnic groups, cultures and beliefs.

All members and their invited guests are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to these Core Values at all WJA events, activities, and functions, both in person and in all correspondence.

## **II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

- To actively nurture Jewish spiritual and cultural values, traditions and customs;
- To hold communal activity in celebration and commemoration of Jewish and Israeli festivals and other significant events, and encourage wide participation;
- To work for the preservation of the identity of the Jewish people of the Waikato-Bay of Plenty region through the fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education;
- To undertake initiatives in Jewish education in order to increase Jewish consciousness and identity, and to assume an informational and educational role in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty;
- To coordinate appropriate responses to issues of interest or concern to the Association membership, and to represent the Association in the public forum;
- To promote and maintain care and concern for members of the Association, and where necessary and practicable, lend assistance and support to members and other Jewish persons and their families in need;
- To establish a Jewish community centre;
- To assume both a watchful and an active role, and to respond to anti-Semitism, defamation and other issues of concern or interest, and where necessary, liaise with other groups (such as national and international organizations, the media, police, the justice system, and the Human Rights Commission) in responding to such incidents;
- To acknowledge members' rights to make their own decisions about their personal preferences and practices of Judaism.

## **III. MEMBERSHIP POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:**

### **A. Eligibility for Membership:**

1. Membership shall be open to:
  - a. Jewish persons, that is, those who can trace and identify a genuine Jewish heritage by birth (mother or father born Jewish), or
  - b. a person who has converted to Judaism, or
  - c. a person who is or was the spouse/partner/parent/child of a Jewish person.
2. Prospective members must:
  - a. first submit a membership application to the Executive Committee for consideration,
  - b. the Executive Committee will consider each application and make a decision, after which the prospective member will be notified of the status of their application,

- c. if approved, membership shall be finalized upon the payment of the subscription fee.
3. Members must pay an annual membership subscription in order to retain their membership.

**B. Definition of Membership:**

1. A member is one who has:
  - a. qualified for membership, as set out in Section III A 1 and 2 above, and,
  - b. paid the annual membership subscription, or
  - c. reached a financial arrangement with the Executive Committee.

**C. Subscription:**

1. The annual membership subscription shall be set each year at the AGM.
2. Annual membership subscriptions run from 1 April to 31 March of the next year.
3. New membership subscriptions received in the middle of a subscription year may be pro-rated at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Any subscriptions received after the 15<sup>th</sup> of December of each year shall be credited to the next year's subscription, which begins on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April.

**D. Guest Policy:**

1. Persons who are not members are considered 'guests'.
2. Guests may attend events and functions of the Association at the invitation of members or the Executive Committee.
3. Members, as a measure of courtesy, are requested to notify event organizers *in advance* that guests have been invited. This is necessary to ensure that sufficient accommodation and provisions are available at events and functions.
4. Members, on behalf of their invited guests, are expected to pay the Guest Fee for events requiring a fee.
5. Members inviting guests to attend WJA events and functions are requested, as a measure of courtesy, to introduce their guests to other members of the Association.
6. At events where Jewish services or rituals may be conducted, it is expected that those unfamiliar with our cultural and/or religious practices will observe sensitivity and respect the appropriate protocols expected for the occasion. Members are therefore requested to inform their guests regarding cultural and religious sensitivities, which may apply to the event or function.

**E. Cessation of Membership:**

Any *current* member of the Association shall cease to be a member if:

1. by notice in writing, such member resigns.
2. a majority of the total members present at a Special General Meeting (SGM) called for the purpose of canceling a member's membership, vote to cancel that membership, provided that:
  - a. the meeting of the Executive Committee at which such a motion is to be considered has been convened by the giving of *not less than two weeks notice* to Executive Committee members and the member affected, setting out the proposed motion to cancel that member's membership; and,
  - b. the member directly affected is invited, with due notice, to attend the Executive Committee meeting and the Special General Meeting to respond to the proposed motion to cancel that member's membership.

#### **IV. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

##### **A. The Executive Committee**

1. The duties of the Executive Committee are to manage the affairs of the Association on behalf of its members.
2. The Executive Committee will meet no fewer than 6 times per year as necessary, at a time and location chosen by its members or by telephone conference, video or any other electronic means available from time to time.
3. Notices of regular Executive Committee meetings are to be posted on the Association website.
4. Members, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, may attend meetings but cannot vote. The Executive Committee has the power to declare itself "In Committee" at which point others present are excluded from the proceedings.
5. Agenda items shall be circulated to all members of the Executive Committee and, on request, to general members.
6. Any member may propose items for discussion or draft motions for the Executive Committee, provided these items are submitted in writing to the Secretary at least one week prior to an Executive Committee meeting.
7. There will be no postal or absentee voting, but votes may take place by telephone conference or other electronic means as long as the Executive Committee member voting has been present by telephone or video conference for the entire discussion of the matter.
8. Voting shall be open and decisions made by simple majority. In the event of a tied vote, the President receives a second casting vote.

9. The Secretary shall take minutes and a draft shall be circulated for confirmation at the next meeting. Minutes should record the date and location of the meeting, members present, apologies received, correspondence received and sent, motions, outcomes and action required. Significant matters discussed but not leading to a motion should be noted in summary. Minutes, once confirmed, are to be archived and shall be accessible to members upon request.

## **B. Members of the Executive Committee:**

1. The Executive Committee shall comprise a President, a Secretary, a Treasurer, and additional Committee members.
2. The Executive Committee shall comprise no fewer than 4 members and no more than 7 members. If, however, 4 members do not put themselves forward at the AGM, then the Executive Committee may be constituted and has the authority to function with a minimum of 3 members. In such cases, the Executive Committee is empowered to co-opt additional members onto the Committee as required, up to a maximum of 7 members.
3. The President and remaining members of the Executive Committee are elected at an AGM after being nominated and seconded by members of the Association. The process for nominations is set out in section V A 8 below.
4. The Executive Committee is empowered to appoint or assign the roles of President, Secretary and Treasurer, to any members of the Executive Committee, as necessary.
5. A Quorum of the Executive Committee is  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the Executive Committee or at least 2 members, whichever is the higher number.
6. Members of the Executive Committee retain their positions for one year until either:
  - a. a new Committee is elected at a subsequent AGM, or
  - b. they resign from the Committee.
7. If during the year any vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee is empowered to appoint a member of the Association to fill such vacancy.

## **C. Eligibility and Terms of Service**

1. Nominees for election to the Executive Committee must have been members of the Association for at least one year immediately prior to the AGM unless decided otherwise at the AGM.
2. Nominees for election to the office of President should ideally have served a minimum of one year on the Executive Committee. However, if no person

with such experience puts themselves forward, then the office of President may be held by someone without such experience.

3. No member may hold the office of President for more than five consecutive years, unless decided otherwise at the AGM.
4. No member may serve on the Executive Committee for more than five consecutive years unless decided otherwise at the AGM.
5. For both President and Executive Committee members, stand down is a minimum of one year unless decided otherwise at the AGM.

#### **D. Roles and responsibilities of Executive Committee Members:**

1. The President shall:
  - a. preside over all events and functions of the Association or appoint someone else from the Association to do so;
  - b. chair all meetings of the Executive Committee, the AGM, and any Special General Meetings, or appoint someone else from the Association to do so;
  - c. prepare an Annual Report to be presented at the AGM;
  - d. be the spokesperson for the Association. The President can delegate this function to other members of the Executive Committee, or another Association member for a particular issue, with the approval of the Executive Committee.
2. The Secretary shall:
  - a. communicate regularly with members about upcoming events and functions and important matters;
  - b. respond to enquiries and requests for information from outside the WJA membership and, where necessary, bring them to the notice of the Executive Committee;
  - c. maintain the Association mailing list;
  - d. in consultation with the President, prepare an agenda for meetings of the Executive Committee, the AGM, and any Special General Meetings, and distribute them as required by this Constitution;
  - e. take minutes at all meetings;
  - f. keep records of correspondence, minutes and necessary documents for the proper functioning of the Association.
3. The Treasurer shall:
  - a. receive and bank income of the Association and pay its accounts;
  - b. maintain records of income and expenditure;
  - c. maintain a list of all financial members of the Association;
  - d. make a financial report to each meeting of the Executive Committee;
  - e. make a financial report at the AGM and propose a budget for the coming year.
4. Executive Committee members may establish other committees or take on special tasks which may change from time to time, as appropriate. Other

Association members who are not on the Executive Committee may also be delegated to assume these roles.

#### **E. Communication with the General Membership**

1. The Secretary, or another deputed member of the Executive Committee, is responsible for regular communication between the Executive Committee and the general membership.
2. The Association shall maintain an email account for communication with its members and others on the mailing list, and shall also maintain a website. All contact details shall remain confidential.
3. The Secretary, or another deputed member of the Executive Committee, is responsible for regular maintenance and checking of the account and the website and for responding to general enquiries for information.
  - a. The Secretary is empowered by the Executive Committee to reply or respond to routine matters or queries for information without having to consult the Executive Committee.
  - b. In matters considered to be non-routine or extraordinary, the Secretary must consult with the members of the Executive Committee.
4. The email account is to be secured with a password. This password will be shared with all Executive Committee members, and must remain secured at all times and never shared with others. This password may be changed from time to time, but this must first be discussed and agreed to by all Executive Committee members.
5. Other individuals or groups may be notified of events at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

#### **V. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS:**

##### **A. The Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

1. An Annual General Meeting shall be held each year in March at a day to be determined by the Executive Committee, or at the nearest date after March that is practicable.
2. A quorum for the purposes of the Annual General Meeting shall not be less than 20% of members eligible to vote.
3. The Secretary shall inform members of an upcoming AGM, giving at least 21 days advance notice, and shall include a request for nominations for President and other members of the Executive Committee.
4. Nominations for election to the Executive Committee must be sent in writing to the Secretary and be received 14 days before the date of the AGM. Nominees have the opportunity to submit a written statement for distribution.
5. Members must be given at least 7 days notice of the agenda and the nominations along with nominees' written statements, for the election of President and other members of the Executive Committee.
6. The AGM shall be chaired by the President.

7. The business of the AGM shall be to:
  - a. confirm the minutes of the previous AGM;
  - b. receive an annual report from the President;
  - c. receive an annual financial report from the Treasurer;
  - d. elect the officers of the Association (President and other Executive Committee members); nominees shall be allocated a maximum of 5 minutes to speak to their candidacy.
  - e. consider a draft budget prepared by the Treasurer, and review the annual subscription amount;
  - f. transact any other requested business received in writing by the Executive Committee at least 14 days prior to the meeting and included on the agenda.
8. Nominations and Voting
  - a. only members of the Association are eligible to vote at the AGM or nominate candidates for election to the Executive Committee. A member is defined as a person who qualifies for membership as described above (Section III A 1) and has paid the subscription for the year just ending.
  - b. Nominations for the election of office holders to the Executive Committee, including the names of the nominator and a seconder, must be received by the Secretary at least 14 days before the meeting date. Self-nominations, along with a seconder, are also acceptable. Members making nominations to the Executive Committee should note the eligibility requirements set out above (in Section V A 7 a).
  - c. A single membership entitles a member to one vote. A Family membership entitles two votes for two adult family members attending the AGM, or one vote for one attending.
  - d. Decisions shall be by simple majority. In the event of a tied vote, the President shall receive an additional casting vote.
  - e. People who are not members may attend the AGM and with the permission of the President may speak. They cannot vote.
  - f. Any member unable to attend an AGM or SGM due to medical reasons, temporary absence from permanent residence in the Waikato region, or through living in a city or a township other than Hamilton although within the Waikato-Bay of Plenty region, and who is otherwise entitled to vote under these rules, shall be permitted to record a proxy vote as an Absentee in respect of the business of the AGM. A proxy vote (one for election of officers, if relevant and separate ones for each individual notice of motion), must be placed by the member voting in a sealed envelope with the voter's name in print and ordinary signature recorded on the back of the envelope. The envelope is to be handed to the President (or whoever is chairing the meeting). This person is the only person entitled to open it and they will do so at the meeting. An alternative to proxy voting is voting by video or other electronic means, provided the member voting has been present by telephone or video conference throughout any relevant discussion.

## **B. Special General Meetings (SGM)**



1. The Executive Committee may convene a Special General Meeting if required, or if it receives a request, in writing, from not fewer than 33% of the Association members eligible to vote.
2. A quorum for the purposes of the Special General Meetings shall not be less than 33% of members eligible to vote.
3. At least 14 days' notice of the date and purpose of the meeting shall be provided to the Association membership.

## **VI. GRIEVANCE POLICY:**

- A. Members shall feel free and welcome to raise concerns to the Executive Committee if they have any grievance.
- B. The Executive Committee will undertake, where possible, to attempt to resolve any issues that may arise from time to time or explore alternative options of dispute resolution. However, the Executive Committee will not undertake to resolve criminal offenses, should they occur.
- C. The Executive Committee will, at all times, endeavor to handle grievances with tact, diplomacy, and confidentiality.

## **VII. ALTERATIONS OR AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

- A. This constitution shall be amended only by Special Resolution of the members provided that the Executive Committee is entitled to make any amendment considered necessary to correct a manifest error of an administrative or other immaterial nature.
- B. Any major alteration to the constitution may only be considered at an Annual or Special General Meeting convened with the required written notice of the proposal. Any major alteration or amendment must be proposed by a member and seconded by another member. Such alterations or amendments shall be passed if supported by not less than 2/3 of those members present at the meeting, assuming that a quorum has been achieved.

## **VIII. WINDING UP AND DISSOLUTION**

- A. For the purpose of winding up or dissolving the Association, a quorum shall be 75% of the members entitled to vote.
- B. The Association may be wound up or dissolved by a special resolution of the members provided a quorum has been achieved and that a majority of the members present confirm the proposal.
- C. On winding up or dissolution, any funds remaining after payment of all administrative and winding up expenses shall be distributed to one or more Jewish charities as decided by a special resolution of the members.