

CONSTITUTION

1. NAME OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The name of the Association is the VETERINARY NURSES ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

2. DEFINITIONS.

In this constitution, the following words shall have the respective meanings hereby assigned to them, unless there is something in the subject of context inconsistent therewith:

2.1 "The Association" means the South African Veterinary Nurses Association.

2.2 "The Committee" means the office-bearing members of the Committee hereby constituted.

2.3 "Members" means those persons who have qualified for membership of the Association.

"Membership" has a corresponding meaning and includes the following members:

- i) Inaugural members
- ii) Ordinary members
- iii) Honorary members
- iv) Life members
- v) Associate members
- vi) Student members

2.4 "In Writing" means written or printed, or partly written or partly printed.

2.5 "Month" means one calendar month.

2.6 "President" means the person who presides at a meeting of the Association or at a meeting of the Committee, or a member of the Committee who presides in the place of the President.

2.7 Words importing the singular include the plural and visa versa.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSOCIATION ARE:

3.1 To promote, improve and protect the interests and status of the veterinary nursing profession, and to maintain the dignity of this honorable profession.

3.2 To originate and promote improvements in the laws affecting the said profession, and to support or oppose alterations therein.

3.3 To afford advice and disseminate information on all matters affecting the said profession, and to arrange for the printing and circulation of papers, periodicals, etc. as may seem conducive to the attainment of the objectives of the Association.

3.4 To further veterinary practice by loyal and competent dedication.

3.5 To be cognizant of the prevention of cruelty to animals.

3.6 To provide financial assistance to members of the profession or to student veterinary nurses as the Association may deem fit.

3.7 To remove discrimination and to promote equality in the nursing profession.

4. FUNDS OF THE ASSOCIATION.

4.1 Moneys may be collected and such funds and property of the Association, however obtained, may be applied to further the objectives of the Association.

4.2 Subject to the provisions of the constitution, the Association shall be empowered to own loose or fixed assets through buying, hiring or otherwise.

4.2.1 To lease, mortgage or sell such property or assets;

4.2.2 To borrow or lend money;

4.2.3 To invest the funds of the Association and to change the investment thereof from time to time;

4.2.4 To do all such other things as may be done legally and may be deemed necessary for the attainment of the objectives of the Association.

5. MEMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP.

5.1 Inaugural Members.

Any person who qualifies for registration with the S.A Veterinary Council as a veterinary nurse and who attended the inaugural meeting of the Association may, after application on the prescribed form and approval by the VNASA Committee, become a member of the Association. They have no voting rights.

5.2 Ordinary Members.

Any nurse that qualified at Onderstepoort, and received a Dip.Cur.Anim or Diploma in Veterinary Nursing. Such a person may be registered with the S.A Veterinary Council as a veterinary nurse and may, after application on the prescribed form and approval by the Committee, become an ordinary member of the Association. They have voting rights.

5.3 Life Members.

Are ordinary members who have paid membership fees for 20 years, or have paid 20 annual subscription fees in one payment in advance. Such members have voting rights and are no longer required to pay membership fees.

5.4 Honorary Members.

Any person may be appointed an Honorary Member, or Honorary Life Member or an Honorary Official by the Committee for any period of time. Such members shall not be required to pay membership fees. Honorary Members shall have no voting rights but may attend and address meetings.

5.4.1 Honorary Life Members.

These members are veterinary nurses or other suitable candidates, that have, because of their outstanding contribution and devoted service to the Association and the profession, been recognized and Honorary Life Membership bestowed on them.

- If the candidate is a veterinary nurse, they must have been registered with the S.A Veterinary Council and have been a long standing member of the Association. Such a candidate retains their voting rights.
 - If the candidate is not a veterinary nurse, they should be judged on merit for outstanding service to the Association and profession. Such a candidate has no voting rights.
- i) Suitable candidates must be nominated by members of the Association, who are registered with the S.A Veterinary Council.
 - ii) Nominations must be forwarded to the Committee of the Association for consideration, with a curriculum vitae (CV) from the nominee and a letter motivating the reasons for the nomination.
 - iii) Once the Association Committee has approved the nomination, it will be put to the members of the Association at the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) for approval.

5.5 Professional Associate Members.

Members who are registered with, or authorized by, the South African Veterinary Council as veterinary nurses and hold equivalent qualifications. A Professional Associate Member shall have the right to vote and to be elected to office on the Committee of the Association.

5.6. Associate Members.

Members who are registered with, or authorized by, the South African Veterinary Council or similar regulatory body, as Veterinary or Para-veterinary professionals (not veterinary nurses) and hold equivalent qualifications. Members who have been authorized to practice as veterinary nurses following Competent Specific Registration. An Associate Member shall not have the right to vote or to be elected to office on the Committee of the Association.

5.7. Support Staff Members.

Support Staff Members are members working in the veterinary nursing industry but who do not have a formal or recognized qualification as a veterinary or para-veterinary professional as recognized by the South African Veterinary Council. They may attend and address meetings but shall have no voting rights or be elected to office on the Committee of the Association. Receptionists, lay staff, kennel men/assistants, practice managers and Animal Welfare Assistants are recognized in this category.

5.8 Student Members.

Are members enrolled as student veterinary nurses at a South African University. Such students may attend and join in discussions. 3 votes are held by the student appointed representative and 2 other student members appointed by the students. (All 3 students need to be from the 2nd year class.) These representatives need to be present at the meeting to exercise their right to vote.

5.9 Election and Resignation of Members.

5.9.1 Application for ordinary, student, professional associate, associated and support staff membership shall be in writing on a form prescribed by the Committee, and which shall contain such information as is required by the Committee. It shall be signed by the applicant.

5.9.2 Application for ordinary membership, student, professional associate, associated and support staff membership shall be considered by the Committee and if the Committee is of the opinion that the applicant is suitable for membership of the Association, the application shall be approved.

5.9.3 Membership shall start once proof of payment has been received in full or the member's name may be deleted from the membership list. All benefits of membership will lapse at this time.

5.9.4 Should any member, in the opinion of the Committee be guilty of any of the following:

- commit any willful breach of the constitution of the Association;
 - be guilty of improper or dishonest conduct or conduct unworthy of the profession;
 - be guilty of conduct unbecoming or prejudicial to the interests of the Association;
 - fail to make payments due to the Association after due notice;
- the Committee shall have the power to:
- expel or deprive such member of any or all the rights and advantages of their membership during such time or period as the Committee at its absolute discretion may deem fit or advisable;
 - call upon such member, in writing by the vice-president or treasurer, to resign, and if they fail to resign within fourteen (14) days of the date of such request, to expel them;
 - call upon such member to appear before the Committee to explain their conduct. Should such member fail to appear when called upon to do so, to expel or otherwise deal with such member as provided in this constitution.

5.10 Membership Fees.

An inaugural member, ordinary member, professional associate member, associate member, support staff member and student member, shall after approval by the Committee, pay membership fees as laid down by the Committee.

This subscription is due and payable annually, as of 31 May of each year. The Committee may in its discretion, suspend payment of the annual subscription, or any portion thereof, of any individual member, as it may deem fit.

6. BRANCHES OF THE ASSOCIATION.

The Committee of the Association may permit the formation of branches of the Association in such places as the Committee may determine. No branch may be established without a minimum of 10 members.

6.1 A branch committee shall consist of:

A Chairperson and not less than three (3) committee members. The Chairperson and not less than three (3) committee members shall be members of the Association, and will hold a term of office for one (1) year. There shall be no limitation upon the number of consecutive terms of office that the branch Committee may serve. Proviso: such members shall be re-elected as branch Committee office bearers by the members at the Annual meeting of the branches.

Each branch with 20 or more members shall elect a branch representative (or alternative) to the Committee. The branch elected member of the Committee (or alternative) shall have full voting rights, and hold office for one (1) year only, but may be re-elected for a further one (1) year term.

Agendas and minutes of branch meetings, as well as agendas and minutes of annual meetings of branches, shall be submitted within 14 days to the Committee of the Association.

The constitution of a branch of the Association shall be approved by the Committee of the Association.

In the event of branches not qualifying to elect a branch representative to the Committee, a representative from the said branch may attend Committee meetings as an observer and in an advisory capacity, but shall have no vote.

7. THE COMMITTEE

7.1 The Election of Committee Members.

All members who wish to stand for election must be current members of the Association with their membership fees paid in full. They have full voting rights. Only Ordinary Members, Life Members and Professional Associate Members may stand for election.

7.2 The Constitution of the Committee.

The Committee shall consist of the following office bearers:

- President
- Vice-President
- Treasurer
- Editor(s)
- Public Relations Officer
- Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Representative
- Admin Clerk
- Student Appointed Representative
- Branch members specifically elected by branches to serve upon the Committee
- Co-opted members

The duties of the Secretary of the Association shall be performed by the Vice-President.

7.3 Terms of Office.

The terms of office of President and Vice-President shall be one year. There shall be an annual rotation of office as follows:

7.3.1 The person elected as Vice-President shall serve annual terms of office in the following order:

Vice-President

President i.e. a two year term

7.3.2 The term of office for the following office bearers shall be two years:

Treasurer

Public Relations Officer

Editor(s)

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Representative

Admin Clerk

7.3.3 There shall be no limitation upon the number of consecutive terms of office Committee members may serve. Proviso: such members shall be re-elected as Committee office bearers by the members at the Annual meeting of the Association.

7.4. Co-opted members will serve a term of one year and may be re-elected as Committee office bearers. Co-opted members may also be appointed at any time and for any period of time, but for no longer than a year, as deemed necessary by and at the Committee's discretion.

7.5 Co-opted members of the Committee shall have a vote at Committee meetings.

7.6 The South African Veterinary Council Representative represents the profession and does not need to be an ordinary member but will be given the status of a co-opted

member for their three year term and be allowed to attend Committee meetings and have the right to vote.

7.7 When a vacancy occurs on the Committee, the Committee shall appoint a member of the Association to fill the vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting of the Association.

The member elected at this meeting to fill the vacancy on the Committee, shall hold office for the unexpired term of the member of the Committee in whose stead they have been elected. Such member shall have a vote on the Committee.

Election of Committee members shall be by ballot or a show of hands as decided by the meeting, unless unanimously decided otherwise by the meeting.

7.8 Normal members may offer their services in a voluntary supportive role such as for task groups and in other areas but will not receive any benefits of a Committee member. These members may, however, thereafter be co-opted onto the Committee where they will have the benefits of a Committee member.

7.9 A member of the Committee shall vacate office if they absent themselves from three (3) consecutive meetings without prior leave of absence.

7.10 All bona fide decisions/ resolutions of the Committee shall be valid, irrespective of any proof of a defect in the election of its members.

7.11 The Committee shall have the power to:

7.11.1 Compile by-laws not inconsistent with the aims and objectives of the Association;

7.11.2 Do any such things as may be deemed necessary for the attainment of the objectives of the Association;

7.11.3 Engage and appoint, suspend or discharge or re-appoint persons to serve the interests of the Association and determine their terms of employment, at their absolute discretion;

7.11.4 Consider and decide upon all applications for membership;

7.11.5 Terminate membership in terms of clause 5.7.4;

7.11.6 Appoint Honorary Members of the Association in terms of clause 5.4;

7.11.7 Invest and deal with the funds of the Association at its absolute discretion;

7.11.8 Open a current banking account in the name of the Association; draw, accept, make and endorse cheques, bills of exchange and promissory notes in connection with the business of the Association, including the use of technological banking developments.

7.11.9 Ensure that the income of the Association is applied solely to the promotion and furtherance of the objectives of the Association and that no part thereof shall be paid directly or indirectly by way of dividend or bonus or otherwise to any person who at any time is or was a member of the Association, provided that nothing herein contained shall prevent the payment in good faith of remuneration to any employee or other person, for services rendered to the Association.

7.11.10 Ensure that proper books of account shall be kept by the Treasurer which shall be audited not less than once a year by an auditor appointed by the Committee. An audited balance sheet and statement of finances of the Association as at the end of the financial year together with the auditor's report shall be prepared and presented at the Annual General Meeting for discussion and adoption;

7.11.11 Donate or transfer any remaining property in the event of dissolution of the Association to any institution;

7.11.12 Appoint a member of the Committee to sign cheques together with the Treasurer for payments by the Association; and includes electronic payment methods where proof of transactions will be kept as deemed necessary by the appointed auditors;

7.11.13 Appoint attorneys or other legal representatives and auditors;

7.11.14 Institute or defend any legal proceedings by or against the Association or its office bearers or its employees at its absolute discretion;

7.11.15 Investigate and resolve disputes arising from interpretation of the constitution and by-laws;

7.11.16 Convene Annual General Meetings and special meetings;

7.11.16.1 The meetings and proceedings of any such committee shall be governed by the provisions of this constitution as are applicable to the Committee and shall not be superseded by any by-laws made by the Committee;

7.11.16.2 All bona fide acts by the Committee and / or any branch Committee of the Association shall be valid notwithstanding proof of any defect in the appointment of any member(s) of such Committee(s).

7.12 Indemnity.

All members of the Committee and its branch Committee(s) shall be indemnified by the Association against any losses, costs or expenses incurred in the execution of their office or duties in the interests of the Association, except where the same shall be incurred or occasioned by a willful act or default.

8. FINANCE.

8.1 All payments by the Association shall be made by cheque and includes electronic payments, which shall be signed by the Treasurer and / or (1) one nominated member of the Committee.

8.2 The financial year shall end on 31 May of each year.

9. LEGAL STATUS

The Association shall sue and be sued by any court of law in its name and shall be represented in any legal proceedings by a person or persons delegated for such purpose by the Committee.

10. MEETINGS.

10.1 The Annual General Meeting of members of the Association shall be held at such time as the Committee may determine, but not later than six (6) months after the close of the financial year.

Notice of such meeting shall be given and shall reach all members at least one (1) month prior to such meeting.

10.2 At the request of twenty (20) or more members of the Association a special general meeting of the Association shall be called and notice thereof together with the agenda, shall be posted or sent by electronic means, to all members by the Vice-President within two months after such a decision and at least one (1) month prior to such meeting.

10.3 The Committee may at its discretion convene a special general meeting. Notice thereof shall be given and the agenda posted or sent by electronic means, to all its members at least one (1) month prior to such a meeting.

10.4 The accidental omission to give notice of a meeting to, or the non-receipt of notice of a meeting by any person entitled to receive notice, shall not invalidate the proceedings of such meeting.

10.5 The President of the Association or another member of the Committee appointed by the President shall preside at all Committee meetings and at all the meetings of the Association.

10.6 Should the President fail to arrive within fifteen minutes from the time appointed for the meeting, the members present shall choose a member of the Committee to preside at the meeting.

10.7 At a meeting of the Association every member entitled to vote shall have one (1) vote. Proxies are acceptable in exceptional circumstances and as agreed on by the Committee of the day.

10.8 Voting shall be by ballot or a show of hands as decided by the meeting unless unanimously decided otherwise by the meeting.

10.9 Minutes of all general meetings shall be kept and these minutes shall be confirmed at the subsequent Annual General Meeting.

10.10 Proposals for amendments to the constitution and motions for consideration at an Annual General Meeting or a special meeting shall be in the hands of the Vice-President at least sixty (60) days before the date of the meeting at which they are to be considered.

10.11 Quorum:

10.11.1 The quorum for a general meeting shall be twenty (20) members.

10.11.2 If within fifteen minutes from the time appointed for a meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting, if convened upon requisition of members, shall be dissolved; in any case it shall stand adjourned for thirty minutes. The members then present shall constitute a quorum and shall be empowered to deal with the items on the agenda.

10.12 Minutes of the Annual General Meeting.

10.12.1 It shall be the duty of the Vice-President to minute the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting of the Association. In the absence of the Vice-President, the President shall appoint an office bearer to undertake such a task.

10.12.2 The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Association are to be printed and available for inspection by all interested parties at least one month prior to the subsequent Annual General Meeting.

Annexure:

* = what they receive

| Type of membership | Magazine (Paws for Thought) | Job ads (Itching Post) | Journal (Edu-Paws) | Voting rights |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Inaugural member | * | * | * | |
| Ordinary member | * | * | * | * |
| Life member | * | * | * | * |
| Honorary life member (vet nurse) | * | * | * | * |
| Honorary life member | * | | | |
| Professional associate member | * | * | * | * |
| Associate member | * | | | |
| Student member | * | *2 nd years | | 3 votes |
| Support staff member | Newsletter/Insert (Paws Support) | | | |