

Nationalisation Update

Towards a single professional organisation for Occupational Therapy in Australia

February update for NSW members



Member questions

An OT AUSTRALIA NSW member forwarded these questions to the Association. She requested the answers be published in the NSW newsletter.

Please note that the majority of information about the future National organisation for occupational therapists is published in the National CONNECTIONS magazine. NSW members are welcome to contact either OT AUSTRALIA National directly or OT AUSTRALIA NSW and we will seek information on your behalf where ever possible.

Members are always welcome to ask questions as this helps the process for the NSW Board and Secretariat in investigating these matters on behalf of the membership.

1. Who are the members of the new single entity and how will fees be paid, please include membership categories

Members of the new organisation will include individual occupational therapists, student occupational therapists and people engaged in a profession associated with occupational therapy.

Fees will be paid directly to the new organisation as there will be no separation of fees to State or National as there is currently. That being said, the collection of fees may occur through the future State offices for simplicity and therefore the process of payment may seem unchanged for individual members, encouraging a seamless transition for members where ever possible. These finer details will require further exploration and confirmation closer to the commencement of the new organisation.

Membership categories as outlined in the proposed constitution are Fellow Member; Full Member, Associate Member (non voting), Student Member (non voting) and Honorary Life Member. Each class of membership has the potential to be divided into subclasses.

Details of membership can be found in section 2.2 of the proposed constitution on the National website at www.ausot.com.au. Please note there is a direct link to the proposed constitution on the home page.

2. How will current members rights change (if at all) under new structure, for example, will individual members still have voting rights as is currently the case? Will there be rights lost or gained etc? Individual members will have voting rights as is currently the case. Student members and associate members do not having voting rights. The proxy process is also the same as it is with the

current Associations across Australia. Members can pass on their proxy vote to another member who is attending any general meeting (Association-wide general meeting or Divisional general meeting).

3. **Briefly outline of why objects of constitution are written as they are.** The objects are written to reflect the core business of the organisation and to maintain the tax exemption status the current organisation has had. In the proposed constitution the objects and powers are exactly the same as the current National Constitution.
4. **How will "branches" in each State operate?** The current offices that house and support the current State Associations will be retained so that, as in the case of NSW, there is a State-based office (the office at Newington) which is the contact point for members in the NSW Division of the new organisation. Each State Division will oversee and coordinate member services in that State. Member services can be tailored to suit the needs of that Division where ever possible and should remain aligned with the broader direction and priorities of the whole organisation. To reduce replication, it is possible that some office functions currently duplicated in each State may be centralised at a National level for better use of our resources. The finer details of this will be explored by relevant working groups as the transition process progresses further.
5. **Who will make up the new board and how are they selected or voted on, especially by whom etc?**

The new board will consist of no more than 10 members, specifically:

- Immediate Past President
- 3 Directors (Councillors) who are nationally elected members. These Directors (Councillors) are voted by the National membership in the same way as current Nationally Elected Councillors are voted in, that is, nominations are received from the membership, these are seconded and if nominations exceed places available there will be a vote of the entire membership.
- Up to 4 Directors (Councillors) nominated by National Advisory Committee. The National Advisory Committee will comprise representatives from all Divisions to ensure representation and will appoint 4 Directors (Councillors) taking into account skills and experience the candidates they can bring to the National Board.
- Up to 2 Directors (Councillors) co-opted as necessary who are voted in by Board.

Once elected to the board, a Director (Councillor) can no longer hold a position on the National Advisory Committee or the Divisional Advisory Committee whilst he/ she is serving on the National Board of the new organisation.

The members from the following membership categories are eligible to be nominated as Directors (Councillors) on the National Board of the future organisation: fellow member, full member, honorary life member.

6. **Who will be voting for the new constitution?** Members will be aware that there is currently an additional consultation period underway. Feedback and amendments will be then taken to the National Council for ratification.

Ron Hunt CEO at OT AUSTRALIA National is recommending to National Council that all members vote on the wind up and transfer of assets of current OT AUSTRALIA National. Individual member votes to wind up OT AUSTRALIA National can therefore be based on the individual's support for winding up and support for the new organisation including the ratified constitution.

7. If the current associations are wound up, is it deemed we are all individual members of the new body so a vote can occur or is our membership not transferred?

Any voting at a National level in relation to winding up and starting a new organisation needs to be done prior to the new organisation becoming operational and having members. When the new organisation becomes operational members will have membership transferred (for the State Associations that are in mid membership year) or members will rejoin as a member of the new organisation (for State Associations at the end of their membership year when the transfer is due to occur). If members are transferred in mid-year their membership of the new organisation will continue until their member association membership would have finished, at no extra charge.

8. How will assets be wound up?

Assets of the current National and State Associations will be transferred to the new organisation, a new company limited by guarantee with similar (in fact the same) aims as the current Associations. This procedure is embedded in our current NSW constitution. Once assets are transferred, both the current National and current NSW organisations will be "shell" organisations which no longer function. The current NSW Association can then be deregistered following the ASIC (Australian Securities and Investments Commission) regulations. The current National Association will also be wound up.

Should members have further questions please contact either OT AUSTRALIA National (03) 9415 2900 or OT AUSTRALIA NSW send them to info@otnsw.com.au or (02) 9648 3225.

Key NSW contacts:

Jan Erven, President
Dianne Croker, State Elected Councillor

NSW Member Teleconference CHANGED: Tuesday 12th February 2007 8am.

- Four NSW Board members and the NSW Executive Officer will be on line to hear feedback from members about the Nationalisation journey. The group will also seek to answer any questions about NSW involvement in and future plans regarding the process or refer any broader questions that require further clarification to the National group.

Access numbers: Sydney metro: 9696 0695; Pin-1259#
Outside metro: 1800 333 803; Pin- 1259#

Please continue the dialogue as we head into this final phase and let us know what you think