

AUSTRALASIAN
SECULAR ASSOCIATION

ESTABLISHED 1ST AUGUST, 1882.

R U L E S

ORDERED TO BE REPRINTED AS AMENDED.

1883.

Name.

1. This Association is called "The Australasian Secular Association."

Acknowledgment.

2. The Provisional Committee appointed to draw up the Rules of the Australasian Secular Association has been guided by the Rules of the National Secular Society, the Eclectic Association of Victoria, and the Free Discussion Society, and has made such alterations and additions as were deemed necessary.

Principles and Objects.

3. The objects of Secularism are to maintain the Principles and Rights of Freethought, and to direct their application to the Secular improvement of mankind.

4. By the Principles of Freethought are meant the exercise of the understanding upon relevant facts, independently of every intimidation.

5. By the Rights of Freethought are meant the liberty of free criticism for the security of truth, and the liberty of free publicity for the dissemination of truth.

6. Secularism relates to verifiable knowledge, and to actions, the issue of which can be tested by experience.

It declares that the promotion of human improvement and happiness is the highest duty, and that the test of morality is utility.

That human improvement and happiness cannot be effectually promoted without civil and religious liberty; and that, therefore, it is the duty of every individual to actively attack all barriers to equal freedom of thought and utterance for all, upon political, theological, and social subjects.

7. A Secularist is one who deduces his moral duties from considerations which pertain to human welfare, and who, practically recognising the above duties, devotes himself to the promotion of his own and the general good.

8. The objects of the Australasian Secular Association are to disseminate the above principles by every legitimate means in its power, the Formation of Branches and the Affiliation of Kindred Societies, and to secure concerted action throughout Australasia on all matters pertaining to the general good.

Membership.

9. Members may be either Active or Passive.

10. The Active List consists of those who do not object to the publication of their names as Members of this Association.

11. An Active Member's duty is to send, as often as possible, reliable reports, to the President or Secretary, of Special Events, Sermons, Lectures, or Publications affecting Secular Progress. He should also aid in the circulation of Secular Literature, and generally in the Freethought propaganda of his neighborhood. Where a local Society exists, he ought to belong to it, whether or not it be a Branch of this Association.

12. The Passive List consists of those whose position does not permit the publication of their names, except at the risk of serious injury. The knowledge of these names is to be confined to the Executive, and the members will be referred to only by initials.

13. It is earnestly requested that persons in an independent position will enrol themselves only as Active Members.

14. Member's Yearly Subscription shall be—For Adult Males, 10s. ; for Ladies, 6s. ; for persons under 18 years, 5s. ; and for families, 20s., and shall be paid quarterly, half-yearly, or yearly, in advance. Persons may be admitted free on satisfying the Executive that they are unable to pay the subscription, and that they are doing good Secular work.

15. Any person who shall be nominated by a Member of the Association, or who shall sign a form of declaration, as hereinafter provided, and forward it to the Secretary, with not less than one quarter's subscription, may, in the discretion of the Executive, be admitted a Member of this Association. Should any candidate be not admitted, the subscription shall be returned.

16. Any Member more than six months in arrears may, provided due notice of his default shall have been sent to him, and disregarded by him, be erased from the Roll of Membership.

17. The Executive shall have power to expel any Member, but the Member so expelled shall have power to appeal to the next General Meeting of Members, or to a Special-General Meeting called for that purpose.

Meetings, Officers, &c.

18. The Executive Council shall consist of a President, three Vice-Presidents three Trustees, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, and twenty Members of Committee, nine of whom shall form a quorum.

19. The Executive Council and two Auditors shall be elected by ballot at the Annual Meeting ; they shall hold office for one year, and be eligible for re-election, and shall be nominated verbally or in writing to the Secretary, with the consent of the nominee, not less than seven days prior to the Annual Meeting.

20. Any Member of the Executive Council absenting himself from three consecutive Meetings, without a satisfactory explanation, shall be deemed to have vacated his office : and any vacancy occurring, through resignation or otherwise, shall be filled at the next Ordinary Meeting of the Association.

21. The Executive Council Meetings, for the Election of Members and transacting Executive Business, shall be held each month.

22. The Ordinary General Meetings, for receiving contributions and transaction of general business, shall be held every quarter.

23. Annual Meetings, for receiving Committee's and Auditors' Reports and Balance Sheet, the Election of Officers, and transacting any other business that may be deemed of sufficient importance by a vote of the Meeting, shall be held at such times and places as the Council shall determine.

24. Special Meetings may be called by the Executive at any time.

25. The Executive shall call a Special Meeting upon a requisition, signed by not less than 50 Members, fourteen days prior to holding the Meeting, due notice of which Meeting shall be given by circular to every member not less than seven days prior to date of Meeting. No business, other than that of which due notice has been given, shall be transacted.

26. Rules shall in no case be adopted, altered, or rescinded, unless at a Special Meeting called for that purpose, and thereat carried by an absolute majority ; and due notice of every new rule, alteration, or rule proposed to be rescinded, must be forwarded to the Secretary.

27. The Secretary shall keep minutes of the proceedings of all Meetings of the Association, and of all Meetings of the Council ; keep all books, issue members' cards, receive and hand weekly to the Treasurer all monies, furnish quarterly financial statements, transact all correspondence, and hand over all books, papers, and monies of the Association in his possession, at the request of the Association.

28. The Treasurer shall pay in all monies received to the Bank of the Association weekly, and present the Bank Pass-books and Vouchers for all payments weekly to the Secretary, and to each yearly Meeting of the Association ; and the Bank Pass-books made up to date to every Quarterly Meeting.

29. The property of the Association shall be vested in the Trustees of the Association.

30. All payments shall be made by cheque, signed by the Treasurer, and three Trustees.

31. When convening the Annual Meeting, the Secretary shall issue a circular epitomising the year's proceedings for the information of Members generally.

32. At every Meeting of the Association, the President, or one of the Vice Presidents, shall take the chair, or, in their absence, a Chairman shall be elected, and he shall regulate the proceedings, decide questions, keep order, and carry into effect all the rules of the Association. His decision in all disputes shall be final, and he may always exercise, at his discretion, his right to vote.

33. The Secretary shall be paid a salary fixed by the Association.

34. The Treasurer shall be paid a salary of 1s. per year.

35. The Executive Council, subject to the ratification of the Association, shall, when possible, engage a Lecturer, who may also be an Officer of this Association, at a remuneration agreed to by both parties.

Affiliated Societies.

36. Affiliated Societies, whose members join the Australasian Secular Association, shall pay 6d. per year, per member. All such Societies shall each elect a member to the Council of the Australasian Secular Association, who may be an addition to the already existing Council. Branches wishing to nominate those living at a distance, may appoint corresponding Members.

Standing Orders.

37. At all Executive Council Meetings, and at Ordinary General Meetings, Annual Meetings, and Special General Meetings, the first business to be entertained shall be—reading the minutes of the previous Meeting, and their adoption or otherwise. The consideration of business arising from the minutes, postponed business to take precedence. Correspondence to be read ; each letter or communication to be disposed of before entering upon other business. Then shall follow general business, including appeals, reports of Committees to be adopted, objected to, or referred to Committee for further consideration.

38. Any Member, when proposing a motion or amendment, or discussing any question, must rise and address the Chairman ; and no Member shall be interrupted, unless by a call to order, when he shall sit down ; the member calling to order shall then state his point of order, and the Chairman shall decide upon the same.

39. Any Member desirous of proposing either an original motion or amendment, must state the nature of such motion or amendment before addressing the chair in support thereof, and shall write it in form, if required, sign and deliver it to the Secretary, who shall add thereto the name of the seconder ; and no motion or amendment shall be withdrawn without the sanction of the Meeting, nor shall any motion be entertained until seconded.

40. If more than one Member rise at the same time, the Chairman shall decide which is entitled to precedence.

41. The Mover of any motion or amendment shall be held to have spoken to the same in the discussion of either.

The Secunder of a motion or amendment shall not be held to have spoken if he has only seconded the same without remark.

No Member shall be allowed to speak more than once, except strictly in explanation, or in contradiction of a misstatement, excepting the mover of the motion, who shall have the right of reply, and no speaker shall occupy a longer time than ten minutes. No further discussion shall take place after the mover of the motion has replied.

42. No Member shall propose more than one amendment upon any motion.

43. The Chairman's decision shall be final on all questions of order or practice, and he shall state the same without comment or argument.

44. Only one amendment shall be discussed at one time, and, upon the adoption of any amendment, the original motion shall be deemed rejected, and the amendment carried shall be acted upon as an original motion. It is competent whether the amendment is carried or not to receive other amendments, one at a time, to be disposed of in like manner, and decided on until the subject is disposed of.

45. Should the Chairman desire to speak to any question under discussion, he must do so before the reply of the mover of the original motion.

46. Questions touching the interpretations of the Rules shall not be considered or answered unless submitted to the Secretary in writing prior to the opening of the Meeting.

47. In the event of any Officer or Member of the Association having urgent business to place before the Association, it shall be competent for him to move the suspension of Standing Orders, and, if agreed to by the Association, such business shall take precedence of all other.

48. All questions brought under discussion at any Meeting, shall be decided by the majority of Members present, by show of hands.

49. In case of any doubt or difficulty arising as to questions of practice and points of order that are not met by these Standing Orders, reference shall be had to Parliamentary usage.

Discussion and Debate Rules.

50. The Lectures, Discussions, and Debates shall be held in such halls, and on such dates as the Council may determine, and shall each evening be open to the Public on condition that they conform to the rules.

51. The Secretary shall arrange for securing eligible lecturers for week-night debates, and for sufficient attendance to take collections or admission fees at the door, to which two Members of Council shall always attend in person.

52. The introductory Lecture, on evenings set apart for general discussion, shall occupy no more than 30 minutes, and may be extended to 45 minutes by special permission of the Chairman. No speaker except the Opener shall speak twice in the discussion, unless in default of Speakers and by special permission of the Chairman. No speech shall exceed 10 minutes, except that of the Opener, who shall have 15 minutes after the discussion to reply, not later than a quarter to ten, and that of the leading opponent, who may be allowed 20 minutes.

53. No person shall take part in the discussion unless present at the commencement of the Lecture, except by special permission of the Chairman.

54. If the Chairman desire to speak to the question he must do so before the Opener's reply.

55. Set debates, conducted according to rules agreed to on both sides, may be held at any time and place, subject to approval.

Library Rules.

56. The Executive Council shall be also the Library Committee of the Association.

57. The Committee shall meet to inspect the Library and books prior to the annual meeting in each year.

58. The Library shall be maintained and extended by donations, or loans of books from Members, and by purchase by the Committee.

59. The Librarian shall keep a catalogue of all the books, and a clear record of the Members to whom, and the dates on which any book shall be issued.

60. Each book may be detained for one month ; after which month threepence per week shall be charged.

61. The Librarian shall collect and pay to the Secretary all fines for over-detention or damage etc., as laid down in rules 60 and 65 ; and he shall report to the Secretary monthly all such monies which may be due and unpaid, and shall issue no more books to defaulters.

62. There shall be no additional subscription : but Membership of the Association shall confer all the advantages of access to the Library.

63. No more than one book at a time shall be issued to any member.

64. No book shall be issued to any person not a member of the Association.

65. Any volume lost, mutilated, defaced or soiled to the dissatisfaction of the Committee shall, if required, be paid for to the Librarian at the valuation of the Committee by the Member in whose possession it was when so misused.



MEMBER'S DECLARATION.

I am desirous of joining the Australasian Secular Association, in order to extend its principles, and I pledge myself to do my best, if admitted as a Member, to co-operate with my fellow-members to obtain the objects set forth in its rules.

NAME

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

DATED THIS

ACTIVE OR PASSIVE MEMBER