

# **THE LISMORE GREENS CONSTITUTION as ratified at the Annual General meeting held 6 August 2018.**

## **PREAMBLE**

The Lismore Greens is a member-group of a political party known as The Greens NSW, which is affiliated with The Australian Greens.

## **1. MISSION STATEMENT**

- 1.1. The Lismore Greens is an organisation committed to four fundamental interdependent principles (the four principles):
  - 1.1.1. Ecological sustainability;
  - 1.1.2. Grassroots democracy;
  - 1.1.3. Social equity and economic justice; and
  - 1.1.4. Peace, non-violence and disarmament.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1. The objectives of the Lismore Greens are to promote:
  - 2.1.1. Ecological, social, economic and political change in accordance with the four principles; and
  - 2.1.2. The election to parliament and local government of candidates committed to the implementation of our Greens policy.
  
- 2.2. In furtherance of its objectives the Lismore Greens may:
  - 2.2.1. Promote and assist individuals, organisations and community networks that share and promote common objectives with the Lismore Greens;
  - 2.2.2. Participate in the formulation and promotion of Greens policies and legislation;
  - 2.2.3. Authorise campaigns on local, state, national and international issues to further the four principles;
  - 2.2.4. Endorse and support Lismore Greens candidates for public office at local, state and federal government levels; and
  - 2.2.5. Support Greens members elected to office at local, state and federal government levels.
  
- 2.3. The assets and income of the Lismore Greens shall be applied solely in furtherance of its above-mentioned objects and no portion shall be distributed directly or indirectly to the members of the organisation except as bona fide compensation for services rendered or expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation.

**3. MEMBERSHIP**

- 3.1. An application for membership is made by completing an official membership application and paying the appropriate membership fee.
- 3.2. An applicant becomes a member of the Lismore Greens following:
  - 3.2.1. Receipt of a membership application form and fee by the Lismore Greens Membership Secretary, or notification from the Greens NSW to Lismore Greens Membership Secretary of receipt of an application form and fee, whichever occurs last; and
  - 3.2.2. A resolution of a meeting of the Lismore Greens endorsing the applicant as a member of the Lismore Greens.
- 3.3. The Lismore Greens may refuse to accept an application for membership:
  - 3.3.1. Where the person is member of another political party, other than the Greens NSW or the Australian Greens; or
  - 3.3.2. Where the applicant is a member of a proscribed organisation as listed pursuant to the Constitution of the Greens NSW; or
  - 3.3.3. Where there is evidence the applicant is not committed to or does not endorse the four principles; or
  - 3.3.4. Where a duly convened meeting of the Lismore Greens determines as it sees fit to refuse an application for membership.
- 3.4. An applicant is a provisional member of the Greens NSW for 3 months following receipt of a membership application form and fee by the Lismore Greens Membership Secretary, or notification from the Greens NSW to Lismore Greens Membership Secretary of receipt of an application form and fee, whichever occurs last.
- 3.5. Provisional members cannot vote or be nominated for positions of office bearers of the Lismore Greens or be endorsed by the Lismore Greens for election to public office unless otherwise decided at a Lismore Greens Ordinary Meeting, or a Special Meeting called for this purpose.
- 3.6. A member of the Lismore Greens can:
  - 3.6.1. Vote for positions of office bearers of the Lismore Greens;
  - 3.6.2. Be nominated for positions of office bearers of the Lismore Greens;
  - 3.6.3. Be nominated for election to public office;
  - 3.6.4. Vote in preselection processes for candidates for election to public office;
  - 3.6.5. Participate in meetings of the Lismore Greens; and
  - 3.6.6. Participate in other such benefits membership may confer from time to

time.

- 3.7. The Register of Members is held by the Membership Secretary and can be viewed by any member on reasonable notice. A member, other than an office bearer, shall not be allowed to copy the Register of Members or any additional information held by the Membership Secretary unless this is authorised at an Ordinary or Special Meeting or the member has agreed to any additional information they have supplied being provided to other members.
- 3.8. Membership fees are due on July 1st each year.
- 3.9. Membership lapses:
- 3.9.1. When the membership renewal fee has not been received by 3 months after the due date;
- 3.9.2. By statement of resignation received by the Secretary; or
- 3.9.3. By a member being expelled or suspended pursuant to clause 10 or 11.
- 3.10. Where a person's membership has lapsed for reasons set out in 3.9.1 or 3.9.2, and that person, within 2 years of the date the membership lapsed, submits an application form with payment of the appropriate fee, the person may be accepted as a member without first serving as a provisional member.
- 3.11. Where a person has been expelled and that person subsequently submits an application form with payment of the appropriate fee, that person cannot again become a member of the Lismore Greens until:
- 3.11.1. The person attends a Dispute Mediation Committee Meeting (see clause 10) to assist the Committee in making recommendations to an ordinary meeting of the Lismore Greens; and
- 3.11.2. An ordinary meeting of the Lismore Greens resolves to accept the person as a provisional member; and
- 3.11.3. That person serves as a provisional member for 3 months.

#### **4. MEETINGS**

- 4.1. Meetings of the Lismore Greens are:
- 4.1.1. Ordinary Meetings which are held monthly at a time and place agreed or as otherwise notified. A quorum for an Ordinary Meeting is 5 members, or where the membership of the Lismore Greens exceeds 50, 10 members;
- 4.1.2. An Annual General Meeting at which office bearers are elected, annual

reports presented and constitutional changes adopted. The Annual General Meeting shall be held in August, unless an alternative date is agreed at an Ordinary Meeting. Members shall receive 28 days' notice of the AGM and its agenda. A quorum for an Annual General Meeting is 10, or where the membership of Lismore Greens exceeds 100, 15 members; and

- 4.1.3. A Special Meeting, which may be called in the event of a decision of importance needing to be made before the next scheduled Ordinary Meeting or Annual General Meeting by the written agreement of 5 members. All members shall be notified of the agenda at least 5 days prior to the Special Meeting. A quorum for a Special Meeting is the same as an Ordinary Meeting.
- 4.2. All meetings of the Lismore Greens will follow the Greens Safe Meeting Procedure as provided at Appendix 1.

## **5. OFFICE BEARERS**

- 5.1. The office bearers of the Lismore Greens are:
  - 5.1.1. Convenor, and an assistant if so elected;
  - 5.1.2. Secretary, and an assistant if so elected;
  - 5.1.3. Treasurer, and an assistant if so elected;
  - 5.1.4. Membership Secretary, and an assistant if so elected; and
  - 5.1.5. Such other positions as are resolved to be created and filled at an Annual General, Ordinary, or Special Meeting.
- 5.2. The duty of the Convenor includes:
  - 5.2.1. To make all practical arrangements such as organising the venue and necessary resources for the holding of meetings, including any meetings of the office bearers;
  - 5.2.2. Reporting to each meeting of the Lismore Greens;
  - 5.2.3. Act as spokesperson;
  - 5.2.4. Liaise with other Greens local groups, the Greens NSW and the Australian Greens; and
  - 5.2.5. Convene a Mediation and Disputes Committee if required (see 10 and 11).
- 5.3. The duty of the Secretary includes:
  - 5.3.1. Preparation, co-ordination and presentation of agendas, notices and business papers for meetings;
  - 5.3.2. Maintenance of conventions, policies, minutes and other formal documents; and

- 5.3.3. Management of correspondence.
  
- 5.4. The duty of the Treasurer includes:
  - 5.4.1. Receipt, banking and payment of monies; and
  - 5.4.2. Maintaining financial records and preparation of monthly and annual financial statements and electoral returns; and
  - 5.4.3. Reporting to each meeting of the Lismore Greens; and
  - 5.4.4. Receipt of membership returns and fees.
  
- 5.5. The duty of the Membership Secretary includes:
  - 5.5.1. Maintenance of a Register of Members comprising the names, postal addresses and electorate of members; and
  - 5.5.2. Liaise with Treasurer and Greens NSW about the receipt of membership fees; and
  - 5.5.3. Liaise with Secretary and Greens NSW about monitoring compliance with provisional membership conditions and associated required communications, and
  - 5.5.4. Report to meeting of the Lismore Greens; and
  - 5.5.5. Copy to the Secretary the names of new and lapsed members and those provisional members who have satisfied requirements for membership; and
  - 5.5.6. Liaise with the Greens NSW and prepare and submit membership reports.

## **6. DECISION-MAKING**

- 6.1. Decisions at Ordinary, Annual General or Special Meetings will be made by consensus or, in the event of no consensus, by resolution in the affirmative by at least 75% of those who vote. For further details of meeting procedures see “Meeting and Decision-Making Procedures for the Lismore Greens” – Appendix 2.
  
- 6.2. Quick Decision-Making Committee.
  - 6.2.1. A quick decision-making (QDM) process can be invoked by the Convenor to make urgent decisions required before the next Ordinary meeting.
  - 6.2.2. The members of the quick decision-making committee shall be the Convenor, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Secretary (Named Office Bearers). Or any other such makeup of Office Bearers consisting of no less than four Office Bearers and at least three of the Named Office Bearers.
  - 6.2.3. The Convenor shall present the members of the quick decision-making committee with the proposal(s) and request their agreement, abstention or

opposition within a time set by the Convenor.

- 6.2.4. Provided that at least 3 members of the committee agree with the proposal and none oppose it the proposal is carried.
- 6.2.5. This group may not commit the Lismore Greens to expenditure of over \$5000.
- 6.2.6. The Convenor shall keep a written record of the Committee's decision, report it to the next Lismore Greens meeting and seek ratification.

## **7. DELEGATES TO THE NSW GREENS**

- 7.1. The Lismore Greens, as a member-group of the Greens NSW, shall endeavour to send a delegate to each States Delegates Council (SDC) meeting.
- 7.2. The Lismore Greens may at any meeting elect an SDC Coordinator who will coordinate with delegates as they may be from time to time about SDC agendas and coordinate discussions at Lismore Greens meetings about SDC agendas and meetings.
- 7.3. The Lismore Greens SDC delegates shall be decided at the meeting of the Lismore Greens prior to the SDC or by way of QDM.
- 7.4. Delegates shall vote in accordance with decisions taken at meetings of the Lismore Greens and the Office Bearers. Should a delegate be required to vote on an issue not previously notified, they should use their best judgment in accordance with the four principles.

## **8. SPOKESPERSONS**

- 8.1. The Convenor, all Greens members elected to office at local, state and federal government levels, and any endorsed Greens candidates are official spokespersons.
- 8.2. An Ordinary Meeting, an Annual General Meeting, or a Special Meeting may appoint additional spokespersons upon such terms and conditions as determined.

## **9. SELECTION OF CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

- 9.1. Any member of the Lismore Greens who is eligible under the relevant electoral acts may nominate for preselection as a candidate for public office.
- 9.2. The preselection process shall be called for by resolution at a meeting prior to any anticipated election. A Returning Officer and Assistant

Returning Officer shall be appointed and prospective candidates must nominate in accordance with the preselection procedure in Appendix 3 – “Procedures for Preselection of Candidates”.

## **10. MEDIATING COMPLAINTS**

- 10.1. Where the Convenor or the Secretary has received a detailed written complaint from a member that provides evidence that another member (including a provisional member) has:
  - 10.1.1. Refused to comply with a provision of this constitution, or a resolution of the Lismore Greens, or the four principles; or
  - 10.1.2. Has acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of Lismore Greens;  
And the Convenor assesses that the complaint requires resolution by way of mediation, the Convenor shall write to the member the subject of the complaint detailing the conduct complained of, asking if the member is willing to co-operate with a mediation process and requesting, within a reasonable length of time, a written response. Evidence requires a clear account including times, dates and where possible witnesses to the alleged conduct.
- 10.2. The Convenor shall also write to the member making the complaint asking if they are willing to co-operate with a mediation process and requesting, within a reasonable length of time, a written response.
- 10.3. While a complaint procedure is in process members shall not make public statements concerning the complaint.
- 10.4. If both parties to the complaint agree to mediate the Convenor shall appoint a mediator who is a member of a Greens Local Group (but not necessarily the Lismore Greens) who will be neutral and impartial to assist the parties to attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, and no longer than 6 weeks.
- 10.5. The mediator may meet with the parties together and/or separately.
- 10.6. The mediator may not impose a result on any party.
- 10.7. The parties and the mediator will keep confidential all information and documents used during the mediation unless required by law to make a disclosure.

- 10.8. Any agreement reached at the mediation must be in writing, signed by the parties and handed by the mediator to the parties and the Convenor. The parties may request that the Convenor announce the agreement to the next Lismore Greens meeting.
- 10.9. If agreement is not reached the mediator shall report to the Convenor either that the mediation has failed or seek an extension of time as the parties may still reach agreement.
- 10.10. There may be some occasions (for example where criminal charges may flow from the complaint) where it may not be appropriate for the Lismore Greens to conduct a mediation or a disciplinary hearing.
- 10.11. If a complaint is made against the Convenor, they shall delegate their duties under 10 and 11 to another Office Bearer.
- 10.12. The Convenor may at any time at their absolute discretion refer a dispute to a Community Justice Centre – as provided for under the Community Justice Centres Act 1983.

## **11. DISCIPLINING OF MEMBERS**

- 11.1. If the mediation does not take place or fails and the Convenor has not referred the dispute to a Community Justice Centre the Convenor shall inform the next Ordinary or Special meeting that:
- 11.1.1. A complaint has been made giving brief details and naming the parties; and
- 11.1.2. If mediation has taken place agreement has not been reached.
- 11.2. The Convenor shall seek a direction from the Lismore Greens meeting in respect of further action which may include referral of the complaint to the Greens NSW or the establishment of a Lismore Greens Complaints Committee.
- 11.3. If the Lismore Greens meeting so directs the Convenor shall then call a Complaints Committee to consider the complaint and the response of any of the member the subject of the complaint. The Committee shall comprise 3 neutral and independent members of the Greens (but not necessarily Lismore Greens) and shall normally include the Convenor. The members of the Complaints Committee shall be appointed by the Convenor. If they so wish, the parties in dispute may bring another member of the Greens and/or a legal advisor to assist them before the Complaints Committee.



- 11.4. The Complaints Committee, after considering all relevant issues, may:
  - 11.4.1. Hold that the member has shown cause why no further action should be taken; or
  - 11.4.2. Reprimand the member; or
  - 11.4.3. Suspend the member from membership of the Lismore Greens for a period, and impose conditions on the suspension being lifted; or
  - 11.4.4. Expel the member.
- 11.5. The Complaints Committee must resolve what action to take by at least 2 out of 3 of the members agreeing.
- 11.6. The Complaints Committee shall give the parties its decision in writing.
- 11.7. The Convenor shall present the written report on the action taken at the next Ordinary or Special meeting.
- 11.8. A member disciplined under this clause or the complainant(s) may appeal to an Ordinary Meeting or a Special Meeting of the Lismore Greens by setting out a proposal in writing to the Convenor stating clearly what is being sought, within 14 days of being informed of the Complaint Committee's decision.
- 11.9. The meeting which considers the appeal has the powers in clause 11.4.
- 11.10. The appeal will be by way of rehearing. However, until the meeting which considers the appeal exercises the powers in clause 11.4 the Complaint Committee's decision remains in force.
- 11.11. The Convenor shall appoint the facilitator of the meeting considering the appeal. The facilitator shall be a member of the Greens (but not necessarily of the Lismore Greens).
- 11.12. If they so wish, the parties to the complaint may bring another member of the Greens and/or a legal advisor to assist them.
- 11.13. The meeting which considers the appeal shall follow the decision-making procedures contained in clause 6.1 and "Procedures for Meetings and Decision-Making of the Lismore Greens" - Appendix 2.

**12. SEPARATION OR DISBANDING OF THE LISMORE GREENS**

- 12.1. The separation or disbanding of the Lismore Greens shall be in accordance with procedures set out in the Constitution of the Greens NSW.
- 12.2. In the event of the organisation being dissolved, the amount of assets that remains after such dissolution and the satisfaction of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to another organisation with similar purposes which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.

**13. APPENDICES**

- 13.1. The appendices form part of this constitution.

**14. CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES**

- 14.1. This constitution may be amended at an Ordinary, Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting. Notice of motions to amend this constitution must be circulated to members at least 21 days before the meeting at which the motion is to be decided upon.

## **Appendix 1. Safe Meeting Procedures**

### **The Greens Safe Meeting Procedure**

1. Be here in good faith with the goal of what is in the best interests of the Greens.
2. Come with good intentions.
3. Have the intention of reaching consensus and a commitment to consensus decision-making.
4. Extend goodwill to all participants.
5. Try not to bring previous differences, difficulties and problems to this meeting.
6. Be honest.
7. Follow procedures laid down in the past which are known to be positive and successful.
8. Try to listen without preconceptions; be open to new ideas.
9. Show respect for others' opinions.
10. Address the issue not the person.
11. No aggressive verbal or non-verbal interaction.
12. No interjections or asides.
13. Endeavour to express yourself clearly, so others can understand your point of view.
14. If you do not want to listen leave the room.
15. If you want to have a conversation, have it far enough away from the room for it not to disturb the participants.

## **Appendix 2. Procedures for Meetings and Decision-Making of the Lismore Greens**

### **1. Preamble: Task Descriptions**

- 1.1. Convenor: The Convenor commences each meeting.
- 1.2. Facilitator: The facilitator is appointed at the beginning of meeting. The facilitator helps the members of the group decide what they want to accomplish at the meeting. They take the responsibility for reminding the group of its task, tests for consensus and suggests processes which the group may accept or reject. The facilitator must be aware of the agenda prior to meeting, have read the background papers and know which member of the group placed an item on the agenda, so that person can be called upon to speak to that item.
- 1.3. Minute-taker: The minute-taker is appointed at the beginning of each meeting. The minute-taker notes down the decisions arising out of the meeting and creates a task list for the next meeting. At a minimum, the minutes should record the names of those attending, the topics discussed, any documents referred to and the decisions reached.
- 1.4. Timekeeper: The timekeeper is appointed at the beginning of the meeting. The timekeeper draws the group's attention to occasions when the time limit set for discussion of an item is exceeded. The group can extend the time limits.

### **2. Procedures Prior to the Meeting**

- 2.1. The Secretary prepares an agenda before the due date of the meeting after consulting with the other office bearers. Members of the Lismore Greens who wish to add items to the agenda must provide those items with sufficient details (see 3 below) about the item to the Secretary at least eight days prior to the due date of the meeting. The Secretary should distribute the agenda to all members at least five days before the due date of the meeting.

### **3. Agenda Items**

- 3.1. Anyone placing an item on the agenda should supply the Secretary with some basic information such as: Is the item for information only, or does it require a decision from the meeting? If the item requires a decision from the meeting, a proposal should be submitted (which may include the suggestion of the formation of a sub-committee to report back at a

subsequent meeting). A realistic estimate of the time to be taken in dealing with the item at the meeting (including discussion) should also be included. The person who places the item on the agenda is expected to be present at the meeting. In the event that they are not at the meeting, the Secretary may determine to defer the matter.

#### **4. Procedures at the Meeting**

- 4.1. A suggested procedure for the meeting (subject to alteration by consensus of group) is:
1. Convenor reminds the meetings of Safe Meeting Practice – Appendix 1 of Constitution.
  2. Appoint a facilitator.
  3. Appoint minute-taker, and timekeeper.
  4. Acknowledgement of traditional custodians.
  5. Welcome to new attendees.
  6. Those present be asked to announce their names and town of residence.
  7. Apologies noted.
  8. Facilitator asks if there is any additional business to be raised. It is at this time that emergency and/or important items which could not be notified to the Secretary in advance may be added to the agenda, subject to the agreement of all members by consensus.
  9. Allocation of time to each item.
  10. Set the order that items are discussed. Ordinarily the order of business will be:
    - a) Minutes of Previous Meeting to be confirmed;
    - b) Business Arising from the Minutes;
    - c) Correspondence;
    - d) Finance Report;
    - e) General Business – Internal - Local - State – Federal;
    - f) Other Business;
    - g) Time and venue for next meeting; and
    - h) Closure of Meeting.

#### **5. Consensus Decision-Making**

- 5.1. The Lismore Greens follows consensus decision-making as per clause 6 of this Constitution. In consensus decision-making, someone puts forward a proposal. The proposal is then taken up, added to, or challenged. When it is apparent that most views have been expressed and new information has been given, the facilitator or someone else states the conclusion to

which the meeting appears to be moving. The facilitator may test for consensus. The facilitator should say:

“The proposal is X. Does anyone object? Do we all agree?”

If all participants agree, a full consensus is achieved.

If disagreement is apparent, objections and concerns should be heard, and the process continued until a proposal is endorsed by all. The decision reached may not completely satisfy everyone, but it must be one that all are willing to live with. In some cases, it may be appropriate to record the objections and names of the objectors in the minutes.

## **6. Escape from Deadlock Voting Procedure**

6.1. In the case of a deadlock, the Lismore Greens have adopted a procedure for modifying consensus: The steps are:

1. Finalise the wording of a substantive proposal.
2. Take a straw vote on whether or not to move from consensus to voting. The facilitator invites participants opposed to taking a vote, to give their reasons.
3. If necessary, as a procedural motion, the facilitator takes a vote of whether to vote on the substantive proposal, 75% of those present must be in favour.
4. Vote on the substantive proposal. 75% of those present must be in favour for the motion to be carried.

**Appendix 3. Preselection Procedures**

**TO BE PROVIDED**

**FEDERAL**

**STATE**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**