AUSTRALIA BHUTAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA (ABAC)

-For A Stronger Community

AUSTRALIA-BHUTAN ASSOCIATION OF CANBERRA(ABAC)

MEMBERSHIP POLICY– 2026

CHAPTER 1

TITLE, AUTHORITY, PURPOSE, SCOPE, DEFINITIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1.1 Title

1.1.1 This Policy shall be known as the **Australia-Bhutan Association of Canberra Incorporated (ABAC) Membership Policy** ("the Policy").

1.1.2 This Policy forms part of the governance framework of ABAC and shall be read together with the Constitution and other governance policies adopted by the Association.

1.1.3 Where any inconsistency arises between this Policy and the Constitution, the Constitution shall
prevail.

1.2 Authority

1.2.1 This Policy is made under the authority of the Constitution of the Australia-Bhutanese Association in Canberra Incorporated (ABAC).

1.2.2 It shall be administered in accordance with:
a. the Constitution of ABAC;
b. the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991 (ACT)* and associated regulations;
c. other applicable Commonwealth and Territory legislation; and
d. resolutions of the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

1.2.3 The Executive Committee is responsible for administering this Policy and ensuring that membership matters are managed fairly, consistently and in accordance with the Constitution.

1.3 Purpose

1.3.1 The purpose of this Policy is to establish a fair, transparent and consistent framework for the administration of membership within ABAC.

1.3.2 Specifically, this Policy aims to:
a. establish eligibility and membership categories;
b. prescribe procedures for admission, renewal, suspension and cessation of membership;
c. define the rights and responsibilities of members;
d. promote active participation, volunteerism and community engagement;
e. protect the integrity and reputation of the Association; and
f. support good governance and compliance with the Constitution.

1.4 Scope

1.4.1 This Policy applies to:
a. all applicants for membership;
b. all categories of members recognised by the Constitution or this Policy;
c. members of the Executive Committee and Advisory Board in relation to their membership responsibilities;
d. volunteers acting on behalf of the Association; and
e. any committee or person responsible for administering membership.

1.4.2 This Policy governs the entire membership lifecycle, including applications, admission, registration, renewal, resignation, suspension, termination and appeals.

1.5 Definitions

1.5.1 For the purposes of this Policy:

Association means the Australia Bhutanese Association in Canberra Incorporated (ABAC).

Constitution means the Constitution of ABAC, as amended from time to time.

Executive Committee means the governing body responsible for the day-to-day management of the Association.

General Meeting (AGM) means an Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting of the Association.

Policy means this Membership Policy.

Unless the context otherwise requires, words importing the singular include the plural and vice versa.

CHAPTER 2: MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

2.1 Membership Principles

2.1.1 Membership of ABAC shall be based on the following principles:
a. membership shall be open to eligible persons who support the objectives of the Association.
b. all membership applications shall be considered fairly, consistently and without unlawful discrimination.
c. members shall uphold the Constitution, this Policy and the values of the Association.

d. the Association shall encourage active participation, volunteerism and community engagement.
e. membership shall promote unity, mutual respect and the long-term sustainability of the Association.

2.2 Membership Categories

2.2.1 The Association recognises the following categories of membership.

a) Single Membership

i) A Single Member is an individual who satisfies the eligibility requirements prescribed under this Policy and the Constitution, has been admitted as a member and has paid the prescribed membership fee.

ii) Single Members constitute the primary membership of the Association and enjoy all rights and privileges provided under the Constitution, including voting rights where applicable.

iii) Single Members are expected to actively participate in the activities of the Association and contribute to the achievement of its objectives.

b) Family Membership

i) The Association may offer Family Membership to encourage participation by entire households.

ii) A Family Membership shall consist of parent/s and their dependent children under eighteen years of age.

iii) Only adults who individually satisfy the eligibility requirements under the Constitution shall exercise voting rights.

iv) Dependent children included within a Family Membership shall be entitled to participate in Association activities but shall not exercise voting rights unless they independently qualify under the Constitution.

(v) Each adult included in a Family Membership shall be individually recorded in the Register of Members and must satisfy the eligibility requirements of the Constitution to exercise any membership rights.

2.2.2 These categories are administrative membership categories adopted for the efficient administration of membership and membership fees. They do not create different classes of membership or alter the rights and obligations of members under the Constitution.

2.2.3 The Executive Committee may, by resolution, establish, amend or discontinue administrative membership categories for operational purposes, provided that such categories

are consistent with the Constitution and do not create or remove any constitutional rights or obligations of members.

2.3 Eligibility for Membership

2.3.1 A person is eligible to apply for membership if they:

a. satisfy the eligibility requirements of the Constitution;

b. support the objectives and values of the Association;

c. agree to comply with the Constitution and governance policies; and

d. meet the requirements for the relevant membership category.

2.4 Persons Eligible to Apply

2.4.1 Subject to the Constitution, membership applications may be accepted from:

(a) Bhutanese citizens residing in the Australian Capital Territory or surrounding regions;

(b) Non-Bhutanese individuals who support the objectives of the Association;

2.5 Equal Opportunity

2.5.1 Membership shall not be refused or restricted on the basis of: race, gender, age, disability, religion, political opinion, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, employment status, nationality, language, social background, or financial circumstances,

2.5.2 except where eligibility requirements contained in the Constitution reasonably require otherwise.

2.5.3 The Association is committed to compliance with Australian anti-discrimination legislation.

2.6 Acceptance of Constitution and Policies

By submitting a membership application, an applicant confirms that they have read, understood and agree to comply with the Constitution, this Policy and any other governance policies adopted by the Association.

2.7 Membership is Voluntary

Membership of ABAC is voluntary. Any person may apply for, continue or resign from membership in accordance with the Constitution and this Policy.

2.8 Membership Commitment

Membership of ABAC is both a privilege and a responsibility. Members are expected to actively support the objectives of the Association, uphold its reputation, and contribute positively to the Bhutanese community.

CHAPTER 3: MEMBERSHIP ADMINISTRATION

3.1 Membership Applications and Nomination:

3.1.1 Applications for membership shall be made in accordance with the nomination and application requirements set out in the Constitution and using the approved Membership Application Form prescribed by the Association.

3.1.2 The Secretary shall receive and process membership applications and refer eligible applications to the Executive Committee for determination in accordance with the Constitution.

3.1.3 The Executive Committee shall determine each application in accordance with the eligibility requirements and procedures prescribed by the Constitution.

3.1.4 As soon as practicable after a decision has been made, the Secretary shall notify the applicant of the outcome and, where the application is approved, provide details of any membership fees payable and the requirements for admission.

3.1.5 Membership commences only when the requirements for admission under the Constitution have been satisfied, including payment of any applicable membership fees and entry of the applicant's name in the Register of Members.

3.1.6 Incomplete applications may be returned to the applicant for further information.

3.2 Membership Register

3.2.1 The Secretary shall maintain an accurate and up-to-date Membership Register in accordance with the Constitution and applicable legislation.

3.2.2 Members shall promptly notify the Secretary of any changes to their contact details to ensure the Membership Register remains accurate and current.

3.2.3 The Membership Register may be maintained electronically and shall be kept securely and

confidentially.

3.3 Access to the Membership Register

Access to the Membership Register shall be restricted to authorised office bearers and persons authorised by the Executive Committee, except to the extent that inspection is required under the constitution or applicable law.

3.4 Membership Fees

3.4.1 Unless otherwise determined by resolution of the Executive Committee in accordance with the Constitution, the annual membership fees are:

a. **Single Membership:** AUD $20 per annum.

b. **Family Membership:** AUD $30 per annum.

3.4.2 Membership fees shall be payable in accordance with the Constitution. The Executive Committee shall notify members of any change to the membership fees or payment arrangements approved under the Constitution before the changes take effect.

3.4.3 Membership fees shall be used solely for the purposes of the Association and administered in accordance with the Constitution and the Financial Management Policy.

CHAPTER 4:

RIGHTS, BENEFIT, RESPONSIBILITIES AND CODE OF CONDUCT

4.1 Rights and Benefits of Members

Subject to the Constitution and this Policy, members of the Association are entitled to:

a. be part of a caring and supportive community that encourages members to assist one another during significant life events, including settlement, illness, bereavement, emergencies and other circumstances affecting the wellbeing of members, and their *parents* subject to the resources and policies of the Association.
b. receive reasonable assistance and information to support newly arrived Bhutanese families and individuals to connect with the local community and available services, where resources permit;
c. contribute to the preservation and promotion of Bhutanese culture, language, traditions and values while embracing Australia's multicultural society;
d. participate in cultural, religious, educational, social, sporting and community activities organised or supported by the Association;

e. attend and vote at Annual General Meetings and nominate or stand for elected office, where eligible under the Constitution;
f. participate in leadership, professional development and community capacity-building initiatives organised by the Association;
g. participate in the activities, programmes and affairs of the Association;
h. receive notices, reports and other information relating to the activities, governance and development of the Association;
i. inspects Association records where permitted by the Constitution and applicable law;
j. volunteer and contribute to committees, working groups and community projects;
k. be recognised for outstanding volunteer service and contributions to the Association and the Bhutanese community;
l. participate in member-only programmes and initiatives approved by the Executive Committee from time to time;
m. access community networking opportunities that encourage friendship, collaboration and mutual support among members;
n. be treated fairly, respectfully and without unlawful discrimination and receive procedural fairness in matters affecting their membership; and

The Association shall endeavour to provide these rights and benefits equitably and transparently. However, membership does not create an entitlement to financial assistance, employment, sponsorship, grants or any other material benefit unless expressly approved by the Association in accordance with its policies and available resources.

4.2 Responsibilities of Members

Every member shall:
a. comply with the Constitution, this Policy and other governance documents adopted by the Association;
b. uphold the objectives, values and reputation of the Association;
c. treat all members, volunteers and office bearers with dignity, courtesy and respect;
d. promote unity, inclusion and community participation;
e. pay membership fees when due;
f. protect the Association's property and confidential information;
g. disclose any actual or perceived conflict of interest where relevant; and
h. comply with all lawful decisions of the Association.

4.3 Code of Conduct

Members shall conduct themselves in a manner that promotes the objectives and reputation of the Association.

Without limiting this obligation, members shall:
a. act honestly, ethically and with integrity;
b. communicate respectfully and constructively;
c. refrain from bullying, harassment, discrimination or intimidation;
d. respect the confidentiality of Association information;
e. use the Association's name, logo and resources responsibly;
f. avoid conduct that may bring the Association into disrepute;
g. comply with applicable laws while participating in Association activities; and
h. respect the diversity of the Bhutanese and wider Australian community.

Members expressing personal opinions must not represent those opinions as the official position of the Association unless authorised to do so.

4.4 Breach of this Chapter

A breach of this Chapter may result in counselling, suspension, termination of membership or other action in accordance with Chapter 5 of this Policy.

Any disciplinary action shall be undertaken in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness and the Constitution.

CHAPTER 5: MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL, RESIGNATION, SUSPENSION, TERMINATION AND APPEALS

5.1 Renewal of Membership

5.1.1 Membership shall be renewed annually in accordance with the Constitution upon payment of the prescribed membership fee.

The Secretary shall take reasonable steps to notify members of renewal requirements before the due date.

5.1.2 A member who fails to renew their membership within the prescribed period shall cease to be a financial member and may forfeit the rights and privileges of membership until renewal is completed.

5.2 Resignation

Resignation of Membership

1. A member may resign from the Association in accordance with the Constitution by submitting written notice to the Secretary.
2. Any outstanding membership fees or other amounts owing to the Association must be paid before the resignation takes effect.
3. The resignation will take effect in accordance with the notice period specified in the Constitution, unless a shorter period is approved by the Executive Committee.
4. Upon the resignation taking effect, the Secretary will update the Register of Members accordingly.

5.3 Suspension of Membership

5.3.1 The Executive Committee may, by resolution, suspend a member from the rights and privileges of membership where it is satisfied that the member has:

a. persistently refused or neglected to comply with the Constitution, this Policy, or any lawful resolution of the Association; or

b. persistently and wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests, objectives or reputation of the Association.

5.3.2 Before confirming a suspension, the Executive Committee shall follow the disciplinary procedures and afford the member procedural fairness in accordance with the Constitution.

5.3.3 This clause shall be interpreted and applied consistently with the Constitution. To the extent of any inconsistency, the Constitution shall prevail.

5.4 Termination of Membership

5.4.1 Membership shall cease in accordance with the Constitution where a member:

a. resigns from the Association;
b. dies;
c. fails to renew membership or pay the prescribed membership fee;
d. no longer satisfies the eligibility requirements for membership; or
e. has been expelled or had their membership terminated by resolution of Executive Committee in accordance with the Constitution.

5.4.2 Before terminating a membership under paragraph (e), the Executive Committee shall provide the member with written notice of the proposed termination, the reasons for the decision, and a reasonable opportunity to respond.

5.4.3 The Executive Committee shall notify the member in writing of its decision and the reasons for that decision.

5.5 Appeals

5.5.1 A member who is aggrieved by a decision of the Executive Committee to suspend or terminate their membership may appeal in accordance with the Constitution.

5.5.2 An appeal shall be lodged with the Secretary in writing within the period prescribed by the Constitution after the member receives written notice of the Executive Committee's confirmed decision.

5.5.3 Upon receiving a valid notice of appeal, the Secretary shall arrange for the appeal to be considered at a General Meeting of the Association in accordance with the Constitution.

5.5.4 The appellant and the Executive Committee shall be given a reasonable opportunity to present their respective cases at the General Meeting in accordance with the Constitution.

5.5.5 The General Meeting shall determine the appeal in the manner prescribed by the Constitution, and the decision of the General Meeting shall be final.

CHAPTER 6: POLICY ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Administration

6.1.1 The Executive Committee is responsible for the administration of this Policy and for ensuring that membership matters are managed in accordance with the Constitution and applicable legislation.

6.1.2 The Secretary shall administer the day-to-day membership functions, including maintaining the Register of Members, processing membership applications and renewals, and keeping membership records up to date.

6.1.3 The Treasurer shall maintain accurate records of membership fee payments, issue receipts where appropriate and provide relevant financial information relating to membership.

6.2 Privacy and Confidentiality

6.2.1 The Association shall collect, use and maintain members' personal information only for purposes related to the administration of the Association and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation.

6.2.2 Membership information shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed except where authorised by the member, required by law, or necessary for the proper administration of the Association.

6.2.3 Members shall respect the confidentiality of information obtained through their involvement with the Association.

6.3 Review and Amendment

6.3.1 This Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure that it remains consistent with the Constitution, legislative requirements and the operational needs of the Association.

6.3.2 The Executive Committee may review and amend this Policy from time to time, provided that any amendment is consistent with the Constitution and applicable law.

6.4 Commencement

This Policy takes effect on the date it is approved by resolution of the Executive Committee and supersedes any previous Membership Policies or guidelines.