

# Member FAQ – Constitution and Regulations 2026

Bronte Surf Life Saving Club

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## About this FAQ

During the review process for the draft Constitution and Regulations, members asked a consistent set of questions. The intention of this FAQ is to answer those questions directly.

The FAQ should be read alongside the Member's Guide for broader context of why the review was undertaken and the principles behind it. This document is designed to give an additional layer of detail around frequently raised questions.

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## Award Membership

**What is Award Membership, and why has it been introduced?** Award Membership is a standard SLSA/SLSNSW membership category, not something Bronte has invented – it already exists in the wider Surf Life Saving movement's model documents, including the SLSNSW Club Constitution Template we've used as the basis for our own. We've adopted it because it takes more than one kind of skill to run a patrol. It creates a genuine pathway of valuable contribution to the Club beyond the Bronze Medallion – for example, a paramedic who isn't confident in the water could hold First Aid, Advanced Resuscitation Technique and Radio Operator awards and still contribute meaningfully on the beach. A Member who qualifies is recognised, and rewarded with a vote, on the same basis as any other active, contributing Member.

**Which certifications qualify someone as an Award Member?** Qualifying awards are strictly SLSA-issued, from a specific list set in the Regulations: the Surf Rescue Certificate, Advanced Resuscitation Technique Certificate, First Aid Certificate, Radio Operator Award, UAV (drone) Operator Award, or any other SLSA award the Board specifically resolves to add. A certificate from another organisation doesn't qualify, no matter how relevant the skill.

**How many hours does an Award Member need to complete each year?** Thirty hours of patrol or recorded Club service per year – the same figure that applies to Active Patrol Members.

**Does Award Membership cost more than other membership categories?** No. Award Members pay whatever fee the Board sets for that category in the Club's annual Subscription Schedule, using exactly the same process as every other membership category.

**What happens if an Award Member doesn't complete the required hours in a given year?** Award Membership, and the vote that comes with it, is reassessed at every annual renewal against the preceding year's hours. A Member who falls short in a given year simply doesn't qualify as an Award Member (and doesn't carry the vote) at that renewal – they remain a Member under their base category and can requalify in a future year.

**Are Award Members rostered onto patrols and logged in SurfGuard the same way as everyone else?** Yes. SurfGuard recognises two standard ways of recording Club service hours – patrol hours and water safety hours – and both currently require a Bronze Medallion.

Because Award Members aren't Bronze Medallion holders, they aren't able to perform water safety duties, so their qualifying hours come through the regular patrol roster instead. Award Members are allocated to a patrol team like any other patrolling Member, with their hours captured through the same patrol operations app already used for everyone else – this isn't a new administrative system or burden for the office.

**Does Award Membership come with a vote?** Yes, but only once someone is correctly classified as an Award Member – which itself requires both holding a qualifying award and meeting the annual hours and service obligation, the same structure used for Active Patrol Members. There's no version of Award Membership that carries a vote without also carrying real, reassessed-every-year Club contribution.

*If you want the detail: Constitution rule 8.3, and Regulations Part 1.*

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## **Board of Directors – term and composition**

**Why is the Director tenure cap set at nine years?** This was extensively debated – the Board's consensus range was seven to nine years, and nine reflects an explicit recommendation from Phil Ayres, Chief Operating Officer at SLSNSW, who oversees clubs' adoption of the template. Part of the reasoning: Presidents typically come up through the Board first, and a realistic succession pathway looks like around four years as a portfolio Director followed by around four years as President – eight years in total, which nine accommodates with a small buffer. The Board's view is that the Constitution should be a safety net against entrenchment, not the thing that produces good governance on its own – that comes from the Board's own culture, succession planning, and members stepping forward each year to nominate.

**Is the nine-year cap a fixed term of office?** No. Every Director, without exception, faces election at every single AGM – there's no multi-year uncontested appointment anywhere in the Constitution. Nine years is a cap on how many consecutive annual re-elections one person may accumulate before a mandatory reset (a reset being a continuous absence from the Board of at least twelve months), not a length of appointment.

**Why must at least four of the eight Directors hold a Bronze Medallion?** This keeps lifesaving experience at the centre of how the Club is governed. The Director of Lifesaving, plus at least three more of the eight Directors, must be "Bronze-Qualified" – meaning awarded a Bronze Medallion by Surf Life Saving Australia specifically. The three additional portfolios that carry the requirement are named in the Regulations (currently Education, Nippers and Cadets) and are kept adjustable by Board resolution, so the list can be updated without needing a Special Resolution.

**Does the tenure cap apply to Directors who already have long service on the Board?** The nine-year cap applies prospectively only, starting from the date the new Constitution is adopted – past service doesn't count against it. This preserves continuity of the current Board through the transition.

**Why does the Constitution keep a fixed Board of eight named portfolio positions, rather than a more flexible model?** This has been considered directly and endorsed unanimously by the Board on two separate occasions, and it also matches at least twelve years of continuous Bronte practice going back to 2014. It remains open to a future

amendment if members want to revisit it, but it isn't something this review is proposing to change.

**Can a member nominate themselves for a Director position?** Yes. The nomination needs to be signed by two other Members (not the candidate) plus the candidate's own written consent – so it still represents two other Members' support, but the candidate doesn't need someone else to put their name forward first. Each year's call for nominations will also state, portfolio by portfolio, whether the incumbent is standing again, whether the seat is open because of the nine-year cap, or vacant for another reason – so it's clear where a nomination is actually needed.

**Can a Director nomination be submitted electronically, rather than only on paper?** Yes. The Constitution requires nominations to be "made in writing," but it also defines "writing" to include messages sent by electronic mail. So a nomination form that is completed, signed, scanned and emailed satisfies the requirement, the same as a paper original delivered by hand or post.

**How will a contested Director election be conducted?** By secret ballot – this is now the default method set out in the Regulations for any contested Director election.

**How can a Director be removed from the Board?** There's no single "the Board votes to remove a Director" provision. The Board can declare a Director's position vacant on specific grounds set out in the Constitution, or discontinue a Director's Club membership itself if they breach the Constitution, the Regulations, or a Board resolution (since a Director must also be a Member). Separately, members can remove a Director directly by Special Resolution at a General Meeting.

*If you want the detail: Constitution rules 18 to 20, and Regulations Part 2.*

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## **Patron and Vice Patron**

**Why does the Patron role have a two-year renewal cycle?** So that the appointment stays a live, current Board decision rather than one made once and never revisited – the Board can reinvoke the same person for a fresh two-year term indefinitely, and a renewal simply requires a positive Board resolution. A long-serving Patron, such as our current Patron Graham Ford, can keep being reappointed for as long as the Board wishes.

**Why was the Patron role moved out of the Constitution and into the Regulations?** The Patron role doesn't appear in the SLSNSW template at all – it isn't a shared role across the movement, but one Bronte created for distinguished individuals decades ago. Because it's also an honorary role with no vote and no Board responsibilities, we've decided to follow the template's approach and keep it out of the Constitution altogether, retaining it in the Regulations, where the Board can review and adjust it directly rather than needing a Special Resolution at a General Meeting to change it.

**Do we still have a Vice Patron role?** No – the Vice Patron role has been removed from the Regulations. It hadn't actually been used in around 14 years, and the Regulations now allow the Board to appoint more than one Patron if it wishes, which makes a separate Vice Patron role unnecessary.

*If you want the detail: Regulations, Patron and Vice Patron.*

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## Membership categories and voting rights

**Why is Life Membership grouped within “Honorary and Service Membership” rather than listed as its own category?** This follows the SLSNSW template’s own category structure, and it’s also how membership categories are represented in SurfGuard, the national system every club (including Bronte) administers its Register of Members through. Life Membership isn’t diminished in substance anywhere: it has its own definition, its own row in the Sub-categories table, and its own dedicated process requiring a 75% Special Resolution at a General Meeting to confer – well above the bar for ordinary Honorary or Service Membership.

### **What is the difference between Community Membership and Associate Membership?**

A Community Member doesn’t perform Club activities and has no independent access to Club facilities – membership just covers things like attending social events in the Clubhouse – and isn’t covered by Club insurance as a result. An Associate Member also doesn’t perform Club activities, but does have independent access to facilities such as the change rooms or gym, and is covered by Club insurance because of that access.

**Which membership categories carry voting rights at General Meetings?** Active 18+ Patrol Members, Reserve Active Members, Award Members (once qualified), Long Service Members and Life Members – they receive formal notice of General Meetings as of right, and have the right to attend, debate and vote. Every other category is Non-Voting – they may receive notice at the Board’s discretion, may attend, and may speak, subject to the chairperson’s power to keep debate orderly.

**How are 15-17 year old patrolling members treated under the new documents?** Only Members aged 18 and over vote at General Meetings, and this is now stated directly in the Constitution rather than left to the Regulations. Active Patrol Member is split into two separate sub-categories – Active Patrol Member (15-17) and Active 18+ – and a Bronze Medallion is not required at 15-17, matching how the Club actually runs this age group in practice, while it remains required at 18+. The Director of Cadets’ portfolio has always covered this age group, but the wording in the previous Constitution left some ambiguity about ongoing responsibility for the 15-17 patrol cohort specifically. That responsibility is now stated explicitly, removing the ambiguity rather than changing who is responsible.

*If you want the detail: Constitution rules 8.2, 8.3 and 16, and Regulations Part 1.*

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## AGM and governance process

**Is the motion to affiliate with Branch and SLSNSW required every year, or is it a one-off?** Every year – it’s part of the Constitution’s standard AGM business, alongside consideration of accounts and election of Directors.

**Has the Life Membership nomination and voting process changed?** The core mechanism continues a process the Club has already used since at least 2019: a Board recommendation followed by AGM confirmation, with any Member able to put a name forward for the Board’s consideration in the first place. What’s new is the confirmation threshold – a 75% Special Resolution rather than the previous ballot – and a formal written acceptance from the nominee.

**How will member disputes and grievances be handled?** The Club still has its own internal Grievance Committee – it now operates within Surf Life Saving Australia’s established grievance and discipline framework, rather than a separate Bronte-only process. This keeps procedures professionally run and consistent across the movement while keeping the Club’s own committee in place.

*If you want the detail: Constitution rules 11 to 13, and Regulations Part 8.*

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## **Clubhouse, social use and community**

**Has the number of social events allowed at the Clubhouse each year changed?** Yes, but it’s a Council planning matter, not a Constitution or Regulations question. The Club’s Development Application approval sets the number of events the Clubhouse may host each year, and that cap has increased from previous limits. The detail will sit in the Club’s Operational Plan of Management once the current Council lease negotiation is finalised.

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## **How the Constitution and Regulations work together**

**Once members vote to adopt the new Constitution at the AGM, when does it actually take effect?** Not immediately. The AGM vote approves the new Constitution, but it only takes legal effect once the NSW Commissioner for Fair Trading approves and registers it. The Board will wait for that registration before separately meeting to adopt the new Regulations.

**What is the difference between the Constitution and the Regulations?** The Constitution is the Club’s foundational governing document – changing it needs a 75% Special Resolution of members at a General Meeting. The Regulations sit beneath it, covering day-to-day operational rules, and can be updated directly by Board resolution, provided they stay consistent with the Constitution. That’s why detail that may genuinely need to change more often – qualifying awards, fee schedules, specific officer duties – is deliberately kept in the Regulations rather than the Constitution.

*If you want the detail: Constitution rule 36.*

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If you have a question about any part of the review that isn’t covered here, please contact me directly.

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*Matt Kuppe, Chair, Constitution Review Committee – 2026. Prepared on behalf of the Bronte SLSC Board of Management.*