

# AMaGA

## Australian Museums and Galleries Association

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### PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS DISCUSSION PAPER

A Special General Meeting of the Association will be held in Canberra on Tuesday 18 April 2023.

Members will consider and vote on two resolutions, detailed below, to change the Association's financial year and to include online participation and voting at all meetings of the Association. Two motions are being proposed by the Association to make amendments to AMaGA's Constitution. This document outlines the motion as the associated changes to AMaGA's Constitution and the context for the proposed changes.

#### Change to financial year dates

AMaGA wishes to move from a calendar financial year (January to December) to a 1 July to 30 June financial year. The key reasons for this are:

- Widespread use - most companies, membership and arts organisations choose 30 June as the financial year-end because this is also the tax year-end. This makes the overall accounting simpler from an administrative perspective.
- Staff wellbeing - AMaGA is moving towards meeting workplace standards whereby leave cannot be excessively accumulated and creating a flexible working environment with the aim of giving employees a work-life balance. A January to December financial year makes it difficult for staff to take leave over the December/January holiday period. Moving the financial year away from the traditional holiday period encourages taking of leave and is in line with AMaGA's staff well-being commitments.
- AMaGA acts as Secretariat for ICOM Australia, and the November to February months are the busiest due to processing and renewing annual memberships at this time. Moving away from the calendar financial year limits pressure on staff to undertake End of Financial Year (EOFY) processes on top of processing ICOM memberships and allows for staff to take annual leave during the traditional holiday period.
- There are many pressures on AMaGA staff in the lead-up to the AMaGA National Conference, usually held in May each year, including preparing detailed documentation for the AGM. Therefore it is proposed that the AGM is decoupled from the conference to ease some of this pressure. Conference surveys have found that a small proportion of delegates attend the AGM at the National Conference, with members generally supportive of attending an online AGM, especially institutional members. This change allows AMaGA's governance to be more inclusive and accessible to members.

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## **Change to permit virtual participation and voting at meetings of the Association**

AMaGA wishes to change the Constitution to allow for online participation and voting at annual general meetings, general meetings and other meetings (members forums).

Key reasons:

- During the pandemic special legislation was introduced to allow Associations, and other bodies, to hold annual general meetings virtually to ensure an Association's business was not disrupted. AMaGA held online annual general meetings with great success.
- Federal legislation accelerated by the pandemic now allows for official meetings of Associations, and other bodies, to be quorate including online delegates.
- Widespread use - Associations, membership and arts organisations across the country, especially those with members across wide geographic locations (like AMaGA), are now managing their annual, and other general meetings online, and through a hybrid model (online and in person).
- Accessibility - Online participation at meetings allows more members to attend and participate in Annual General Meetings and General Meetings. At past conferences only around 20-25% of delegates attend the AGM, despite them being run during conferences with up to 500 delegates in attendance.
- Access to Annual General Meetings, General Meetings, and Members Forums can be prohibitive for members in rural and remote areas, those living with a disability, students, emerging and early career professionals, and those who experience low socio-economic circumstances. Online/virtual meetings may provide opportunities for such members to attend and participate in meetings of the Association.
- Inclusion and equity - Attendance at in person meetings, especially for a national organisation, is costly for those who do not reside in a meeting's location. Allowing for online participation will ensure a diversity of voices be included in important matters relating to AMaGA and provide for an Association fit for the future - regarding both access and remaining relevant to members.

Thank you for your consideration of the proposed changes to AMaGA's Constitution.