

# **NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER VALLEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC CONSTITUTION.**

## **1. NAME**

- 1.1 The name of the society is Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society Inc.
- 1.2 The short name of the society shall be NEWCAVES.

## **2. INTERPRETATION**

- 2.1 The following terms, unless otherwise indicated shall mean
  - 2.1.1 Society - The Newcastle and Hunter Valley Speleological Society Inc.
  - 2.1.2 Committee - The committee of the Society.
  - 2.1.3 Member - A financial member of the Society.
  - 2.1.4 Male/female genders may be freely interchanged.

## **3. OBJECTS**

- 3.1 The Object of the Society shall be to:
  - 3.1.1 Encourage, foster, promote, develop and extend speleology within the Newcastle and Hunter District community.
  - 3.1.2 Encourage investigation of all types of subterranean phenomena
  - 3.1.3 Place on record the results of such investigations and, with Committee approval, offer them for publication in relevant scientific and other publications.
  - 3.1.4 Encourage the conservation of caves and to endeavour to cooperate with any other bodies in the attainment of such conservation.
  - 3.1.5 Subscribe to, become a member of, to amalgamate and/or cooperate with any other organisation whose Objects are altogether or in part, similar to those of the Society.
  - 3.1.6 Acquire, maintain and dispose of, from time to time, items of plant and equipment necessary or desirable for the attainment of the Society's Objects, and for this purpose to raise such funds and in such manner as the Committee deems appropriate.

## **4. MEMBERSHIP**

- 4.1 Each Membership year of the society shall commence on the first of July.
- 4.2 There shall be three (3) classes of membership:
  - 4.2.1 Novice
  - 4.2.2 Full
  - 4.2.3 Honorary (Life member)
  - 4.2.4 The only non member association to the society shall be:- Subscriber to the societies newsletter.
  - 4.2.5 The qualifications and requirements of each class of membership are detailed in the By-Laws of the Society.
- 4.3 Upon receipt of the prescribed fee, membership shall be open to any persons:
  - 4.3.1 aged 18 years and over who subscribe to the Objects of the Society;
  - 4.3.2 under the age- of 18 years provided that in respect of all Society activities such person(s) are sponsored and accompanied by a parent or guardian or full member and that sponsor accepts full responsibility for the person(s).
- 4.4 Membership may be terminated by:
  - 4.4.1 Lodging with the Secretary written notice of resignation.
  - 4.4.2 Ceasing to be a financial member.
  - 4.4.3 Expulsion - as detailed in the By-Laws.
- 4.5 Discipline: the Society shall establish a code of conduct and reserves to itself the enforcement of such code according to the By-Laws.

## **5. OFFICERS**

- 5.1 Officers are members of NEWCAVES who hold Committee position(s).

- 5.1.1 The Executive Officers are those members of the committee who hold the following positions: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
- 5.1.2 The Committee shall consist of the Executive, Training Officer, Equipment Officer, Editor (Newcaves Chronicles), Librarian, Publicity Officer and Australian Speleological Federation (ASF) Delegate. Note, that the ASF Delegate is nominated by the Executive.
- 5.2 The Committee Shall:-
- 5.2.1 Manage the affairs of the Society in accordance with this Constitution, act in a manner conducive to the well being of the Society, the attainment of its Objects and be subject to the decisions of a General Meeting.
- 5.2.2 Formulate, manage and enforce suitable By-Laws to achieve the above.
- 5.2.3 Be elected at each Annual General Meeting.
- 5.2.4 By ordinary resolution, appoint Member(s) to fill casual vacancies occurring from time to time.
- 5.2.5 Have the power to co-opt such Member(s) to carry out specific roles designated by the Committee.
- 5.2.6 Elect an ASF Delegate to act as councillor on behalf of the Society. The councillor must not be elected for a period exceeding 2 years.
- 5.3 Each Committee member may :
- 5.3.1 With Committee approval, form and disband as necessary a Sub-Committee to assist him in the execution of his duties.
- 5.3.2 Hold only one (1) office on the Executive at any one time, with the proviso that the position of ASF Delegate may be jointly held.
- 5.4 The responsibilities of each Committee member are detailed in the **By-Laws**.
- 6. MEETINGS**
- 6.1 The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** shall be held in June each year.
- 6.2 **GENERAL MEETINGS** shall be held at such times, dates and places as may be decided at the Annual General Meeting.
- 6.2.1 The quorum for General Meetings shall be 6 or more financial members.
- 6.3 A **SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING** shall be convened within 21 days, by the Secretary for reasons as stated in 6.3.1 and 6.3.2.
- 6.3.1 an ordinary resolution of the Committee OR
- 6.3.2 written request signed by six (6) financial Members.
- 6.4 Quorums at all Special General Meetings shall be six (6) members.
- 6.5 In the absence of both the President and Vice-President at any meeting, the Members present shall appoint a Chairman (from the Members present) to conduct that meeting.
- 6.6 NOTICE OF MEETINGS**
- 6.6.1 Notice of all General Meetings shall be given to all financial Members in the Society's newsletter.
- 6.6.2 Should any General Meeting be convened before notice can be given in the newsletter, Members will be notified of such meeting by mail, email or telephone at least seven (7) days in advance.
- 6.7 COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
- 6.7.1 The committee shall meet as often as it deems necessary.
- 6.7.2 Quorums at Committee meetings shall be a majority of Committee members.
- 6.7.3 Any three (3) Committee members may act on behalf of the Society in an emergency provided that at least one (1) such person is an Executive member.
- 6.7.4 An emergency is hereby defined as any situation requiring action by the Society before any of the above meetings can be called.
- 6.8 Should a quorum not be present at any meeting within thirty (30) minutes after the appointed time, the meeting shall be adjourned to such time and place as may be decided by the Members present in accordance with Clauses 6.6.1 and 6.6.2 of this Constitution.
- 6.9 Notice of any such adjournment shall be given to all financial Members and those Members present at the adjourned meeting shall be entitled to carry out the meeting- whether there be a quorum present or

not.

- 6.10 Procedures at all meetings of the Society shall be in accordance with the normal rules of meetings. In cases of dispute, "Guide for Meetings and Organisations"(by N. E. Renton) shall be deemed to be the authority.

## **7. FINANCE**

- 7.1 The financial year of the Society shall commence on the first day of June each year.  
 7.2 The annual membership fee shall be determined at the Annual General Meeting.  
 7.3 No Member shall incur any expenditure on behalf of the Society without the approval of the Committee.  
 7.4 All funds and properties shall be under the control of the Committee and shall be invested, applied, disposed of and used for the well being and promotion of the Society and as authorised by the Committee.  
 7.5 The committee may appoint an Honorary Auditor who may conduct an **audit** of the Society's accounts for the financial year preceding the Annual General Meeting and furnish a report thereon to the Annual General Meeting, if the committee deems necessary.

## **8. GENERAL**

- 8.1 Members shall notify the Secretary of any change of address and relevant personal information.  
 8.2 Every Member shall be deemed to have full knowledge of and shall observe and abide by this Constitution and the By-Laws, Rules and all other resolutions that may be duly passed at General and Committee meetings.  
 8.3 Any notice which may be or is required to be given to a Member under this Constitution or By-Laws shall be deemed to be duly given if handed to, or posted to or otherwise delivered at the Member's address as recorded in the Register of Members maintained by the Secretary.

## **9. DISSOLUTION**

- 9.1 The society may be dissolved by resolution at a Special General Meeting convened for the purpose, provided that the motion for dissolution be supported by three-fourths of the Members present.  
 9.2 The records of the Society shall be offered to the Australian Speleological Federation.  
 9.3 Upon dissolution, all funds, equipment, plant and property of the Society shall thenceforth be offered to any other Society or organisation with similar aims and objectives as decided by the Members present at the meeting for dissolution.

## **10. AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION**

- 10.1 This Constitution may be amended by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Members present at an Annual or Special General meeting convened for the purpose.  
 10.2 Notice of motion concerning such amendment shall be lodged with the Secretary at least twenty-one (21) days prior to the date of the meeting and at least seven (7) days notice of the proposed amendment shall be given to every member.

# NEWCASTLE AND HUNTER VALLEY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY INC

## BY-LAWS

### 1. BADGES

- 1.1 Badges and emblems of the Society in any form shall only be sold to members.
- 1.2 The selling price of badges, emblems and other items shall be determined by the committee.

### 2. INTERPRETATION

- 2.1 The Committee shall have absolute discretion and interpretation on all matters where these By-Laws and other Codes of the Society are otherwise silent.
- 2.2 The abbreviation 'ASF', where used in these By-Laws, shall mean the Australian Speleological Federation Inc.

### 3. DISCIPLINE

- 3.1 Reprimands or suspension or expulsion may be issued to members for **any** of the following reasons:
  - 3.1.1 Infringements of the ASF Code of Ethics or ASF Safety Code;
  - 3.1.2 Infringements of the Constitution or By-Laws or other codes of the Society.
  - 3.1.3 Conduct which is detrimental to the name or functioning of the Society.
- 3.2 Disciplinary action will only be instigated at a Committee meeting of which the member(s) involved shall be notified at least seven (7) days in advance. Failure to attend such Committee meeting, without valid reason, will be deemed as acceptance of any decision the Committee may make.
- 3.3 In the event of disciplinary action being taken, the member(s) involved shall be informed of such action, in writing, within seven (7) days.
- 3.4 Provided that the Society is notified, in writing, within twenty-one (21) days of disciplinary action having been taken, the member(s) so affected shall have right of appeal to a Special General Meeting.
- 3.5 Upon receipt of Notice of Appeal the Committee shall call a Special General Meeting where the members present at such meeting shall consider the appeal and thence accept, modify or reject the disciplinary action of the Committee.
- 3.6 Pending the outcome of an appeal, all disciplinary action will be suspended.

### 4. MEMBERSHIP

NEWCAVES members both Novice and Full shall be categorised as Family, Single, Student or Introductory members so as to determine fees due when applying for, or renewing membership. Honorary membership is dealt with in item 4.4.

**Family member:-** includes spouse and dependents who join the society. Dependents of a family can remain covered by family membership until such time as they cease to be a dependant (as per the taxation laws). The Family pays family membership fees at the rate set by the society for a given membership year.

**Single member:-** An individual who joins the society but does not qualify for the other categories set out in this By-Law and pays single membership fees at the rate set by the society for a given membership year.

**Student member:-** An individual person who joins the society and who is a full time student, pensioner or is unemployed and pays student membership fees at the rate set by the society for a given membership year.

**Introductory:-** An individual who becomes a member for the first time or casually from time to time and pays introductory membership fees at the rate set by the society and for the time period set by the society.

#### 4.1 NOVICE MEMBERS

Shall be those persons who:

- 4.1.1 have expressed an interest in speleology and are within their first 12 months of membership with the society; OR
- 4.1.2 have not progressed to other membership status as defined below.

**4.2 FULL MEMBERS:**

Shall be those persons aged 18 years and over who satisfy the Committee that they have a responsible and safe attitude towards caving. They must demonstrate the ability to:

- 4.2.1 Possess, use and maintain their own equipment in good working order;
- 4.2.2 Be conversant with the ASF Code of Ethics and the Safety codes of the Society and ASF. Accept the principles in these codes and undertake to cave by these standards.
- 4.2.3 Have completed at least 20 hours caving with the Society or as otherwise approved by the Committee.

**4.3 HONORARY MEMBERS (Life Members):** Shall be those persons who:

- 4.3.1 are recommended in writing by the Committee and
- 4.3.2 are elected to such membership by a seventy-five (75) percent majority at a General Meeting in recognition of special qualities and/or services rendered to the Society.
- 4.3.3 shall enjoy all the privileges of a FULL member for LIFE or for such other length of time as may be determined by the Society.

**4.4 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION.**

- 4.4.1 Any changes in the categories of members shall be confirmed or otherwise by a General Meeting of members.

**5. DUTIES OF OFFICERS.****5.1 The PRESIDENT will :**

- 5.1.1 chair all meetings at which he is present, in accordance with the Society's Constitution, By-Laws and meeting procedures;
- 5.1.2 ensure that Committee members are executing their portfolios;
- 5.1.3 encourage new members to be active and vocal in the Society's affairs;
- 5.1.4 ensure that all members are treated fairly and equally;
- 5.1.5 prepare an Annual Report outlining the Society's aims and achievements for the proceeding year.
- 5.1.6 In general terms, the President is to be like a company managing director:-
  - converting members' wishes into realistic policies.
  - being visionary & versatile and able to foresee trends both within & outside the Society and advise & guide the Society accordingly -giving leadership but be willing to delegate authority.
  - having an overall knowledge of all the Society's activities, , particularly those of the Officers, without dominating or concentrating unduly on any particular area.
  - above all, representing the Society, its principles and objectives.

**5.2 The VICE-PRESIDENT will :**

- 5.2.1 assist the President, and in his absence, assume the role of President;
- 5.2.2 Oversee that a thorough training program is being provided for members;
- 5.2.3 advise the Society of new techniques and safety concepts and recommend amendments of By-Lays and safety codes;
- 5.2.4 prepare an Annual Report on safety and accidents within the Society.
- 5.2.5 In general terms, the Vice-President:
  - complements the activities and duties of the President.

**5.3 The SECRETARY will:**

- 5.3.1 be the information and administration centre of the Society;
- 5.3.2 record business transacted at all meetings;
- 5.3.3 conduct the correspondence of the Society;
- 5.3.4 prepare the Annual Report of the Committee for the Annual General Meeting ;
- 5.3.5 maintain a register of members, including addresses, membership grading and other relevant details;
- 5.3.6 ensure that trip reports are submitted.
- 5.3.7 distribute "NEWCAVES CHRONICLES" to financial members and other subscribers.

**5.4 The TREASURER will:**

- 5.4.1 maintain the accounts of the Society in an accurate and responsible manner;
- 5.4.2 receive and bank monies;
- 5.4.3 pay accounts as directed by the Committee;

- 5.4.4 record all receipts and payments of the Society;
- 5.4.5 present regular statements of accounts to meetings;
- 5.4.6 prepare the Annual Budget of the Society
- 5.4.7 ensure that expenditure is reconciled with the Annual Budget;
- 5.4.8 prepare the Annual Accounts of Receipts and Expenditure together with supporting statements/documentation;
- 5.4.9 present the audited Annual Accounts of Receipts and Payments to the Annual General Meeting if the committee deems it necessary.

**5.5 The EQUIPMENT OFFICER will:**

- 5.5.1 acquire, store and maintain equipment owned by the Society
- 5.5.2 ensure that all equipment is in safe working condition and recommend the disposal of unsafe equipment;
- 5.5.3 maintain a register of equipment and goods, their acquisition and disposal;
- 5.5.4 establish and maintain an Equipment Loans Book;
- 5.5.5 prepare an Annual Report including details of equipment held, acquired and disposed of during the year;
- 5.5.6 recommend to the Committee items of equipment for inclusion in the Annual Budget;

**5.6 The EDITOR will :**

- 5.6.1 disseminate information on the Society's activities to its own members and others associated with speleology;
- 5.6.2 produce on a regular basis the Society's newsletter "NEWCAVES CHRONICLES" and ensure a high standard of articles and publication is maintained;

**5.7 The LIBRARIAN will:**

- 5.7.1 collect and maintain information pertaining to speleological & other relevant activities;
- 5.7.2 establish and maintain a catalogue of all publications owned by the Society;
- 5.7.3 ensure that publications are kept in a safe, neat and orderly manner;
- 5.7.4 recommend acquisition of publications considered desirable for this Society ;
- 5.7.5 establish and maintain a Library Loans Book;
- 5.7.6 prepare an Annual Report including publications acquired and use of the Library resource during the year;
- 5.7.7 establish and maintain a register of resources availability;
- 5.7.8 take into archives all trip and other reports pertaining to the activities of the Society.

**5.8 The PUBLICITY OFFICER will:**

- 5.8.1 publicise activities in an attempt to increase the membership and status of the Society in the community;
- 5.8.2 ensure adequate publicity of Society functions and activities;
- 5.8.3 arrange for the production and distribution of posters, handbills and notices;

**5.9 The TRAINING OFFICER will:**

- 5.9.1 Arrange and assist in the training of members to further their caving skills in accordance with the ASF Caving Leadership Scheme.
- 5.9.2 Notify the Executive when a member has gained appropriate skills to be recommended for a higher qualification.
- 5.9.3 Nominate at a general meeting, any person who has (in the opinion of the Training Officer), gained the appropriate skills of a leadership qualification. ie Trip leader - Horizontal, Vertical Laddering, Vertical SRT, Vertical multi pitch.
- 5.9.4 Maintain a register of the members qualification and leadership grading. Liase with the secretary to ensure that both registers are up-to-date.
- 5.9.5 Maintain an up-to-date training manual in accordance with the ASF Caving Leadership Scheme, and provide updated copies to the nominated members as detailed in the manual for Preparation, Maintenance and Control of Training Documents.
- 5.9.6 The Training Officer shall arrange Search and Rescue exercises at a time and venue to be of most benefit to NEWCAVES members, (preferably one per year).

**6. TRIPS**

- 6.1 Official trips of the Society are those which have been approved by the committee and announced to the membership by newsletter or at a General Meeting or as defined in 6.4.
- 6.1.1 The trip leader should ensure that the trip be announced well in advance to all members.
- 6.2 Restricted trips are defined as official trips which are not open to all members by virtue of:
- 6.2.1 restrictions on numbers by the landowner/manager. In such cases, members will be accepted in order of application or noted on a reserve list if the number limit has been reached;
- 6.2.2 nature, location and/or level of competence required for safe participation. In such cases, the decision of the Trip Leader is final and absolute.
- 6.3 Any member wishing to participate in a trip shall contact the Trip Leader or the President before the closing date.
- 6.4 Other trips not defined above may be arranged at short notice by a member, but must be approved by 2 executive members and recorded in the trip register.
- 6.5 Trip Leaders must be FULL members of the Society and be person(s) approved by the Committee as holding leadership qualifications according to ASF standards suitable for the trip being undertaken.
- 6.5.1 Trip Leaders of cave diving trips must further demonstrate to the committee that they are a suitably certified cave diver through acceptance into the ASF Cave Diving Special Interest Group.
- 6.5.2 Additionally, all participating cave diver's on the trip must be suitably certified cave divers who demonstrate this to the committee through acceptance into the ASF Cave Diving Special Interest Group.
- 6.6 Provided that the Constitution, By-Laws and various codes to which the Society subscribes are not contravened, the Trip Leader has:
- 6.6.1 authority over all members on the trip;
- 6.6.2 the duty of determining the location of the nearest telephone and emergency procedures;
- 6.6.3 the responsibility of collecting trip fees and forwarding such fees to the Treasurer.
- 6.6.4 the responsibility of submitting a verbal or written trip report to the following monthly meeting and ensuring that a written trip report is completed, and submitted for publication in the Newcaves Chronicles;
- 6.7 persons requiring transport to and/or from trips will:
- 6.7.1 share fuel costs as determined by the driver;
- 6.7.2 abide by the driver's time schedule and wishes.

## **7. FEES**

- 7.1 Members who have not paid the prescribed membership fees after 3 months of them falling due automatically have their membership terminated. They shall remain as members until such action is taken.
- 7.1.1 Introductory members automatically have their membership terminated at the end of the prescribed period of membership unless further fees are paid.
- 7.2 The prescribed membership fees are determined annually at the Annual General Meeting.
- 7.3 Trip fees are not charged to members when participating in Training or Rescue training exercises.
- 7.4 Trip fees will be established at each Annual General Meeting and may be varied from time to time at a Special General meeting.

## **8. PERSONAL & SAFETY**

- 8.1 The following equipment is the minimum acceptable to allow members to participate in Society trips;
- 8.1.1 Protective lightweight helmet with a properly attached chin strap.
- 8.1.2 Suitable outer clothing such as combination overalls.
- 8.1.3 Main light source, preferably a helmet mounted variety (e.g. miners' wet-cell/dry cell pack with lamp).
- 8.1.4 Secondary light source (e.g. waterproof torch, , candles and waterproof matches)
- 8.1.5 Spares for the above light sources (e.g. globes, batteries)
- 8.1.6 Strong, soled and deep treaded boots or sandshoes, etc, without hooked eyelets, hobnails, tricounis or other fittings/ attachments liable to cause damage to formations in caves.
- 8.1.7 Five metre of webbing which may be used as an abseil sling/seat or hand line.

- 8.1.8 a supply of energy rich food plus water
- 8.1.9 a basic first aid kit including at least:-
  - a triangular bandage
  - emergency space blanket
  - band aids
  - a dressing pad and bandage
  - antiseptic (individually packed swabs are recommended)
  - small notebook and pencil
  - any personal medication.
- 8.2 Details of any accident must be reported as soon as possible to the Vice-President.
- 8.3 Any physically dangerous situation in a cave or dangerous practices being carried out are to be reported to the Safety Officer.
- 8.4 Explosives are to be used only with the express approval of the Committee and then only by persons suitably qualified and licensed to use explosives.
- 8.5 The Society shall endeavour to arrange or participate in at least one (1) Search and Rescue exercise in each calendar year.

## **9 GENERAL**

### **9.1 SOCIETY EQUIPMENT**

- 9.1.1 Equipment is available for all official trips.
- 9.1.2 Loan of equipment to individual members and/or for other trips is at the discretion of the Equipment Officer.
- 9.1.3 Society equipment:
  - 9.1.3.1 must be signed for when borrowed and countersigned by a Committee member when returned;
  - 9.1.3.2 is to be returned to the Equipment Officer within three (3) days after the conclusion of a trip unless otherwise arranged;
  - 9.1.3.3 must be returned clean and neat and in proper working order;
  - 9.1.3.4 that is damaged or suspected to be damaged must be brought to the attention of the Equipment Officer and not used until declared safe by the Equipment and/or Safety Officers.

### **9.2 LIBRARY**

- 9.2.1 Books, periodicals and other publications held by the Society are available on loan to members at no charge for a period of up to one (1) month.
- 9.2.2 Loans may be renewed at the discretion of the Librarian.
- 9.2.3 A late fee of \$1.00 per overdue item is payable for each month or part thereof.
- 9.2.4 All loans must be signed for when borrowed and countersigned by a Committee member upon return.

### **9.3 CAVE NAMES**

- 9.3.1 The proposed name(s) of any newly discovered system, cave or feature should be in accordance with the ASF Nomenclature Code.
- 9.3.2 Members proposing names must submit them to the Committee for ratification and recommendation to a General Meeting.
- 9.3.3 Proposed names may not be mentioned in any publication until ratified by the Committee.

## **10 AMENDMENT OF BY-LAWS**

- 10.1 These By-Laws may be amended by:
  - 10.1.1 the affirmative vote of a seventy-five (75) Percent majority at a General Meeting OR
  - 10.1.2 ordinary resolution of the Committee, subject to confirmation by the next General Meeting of the Society.
- 10.1.2 Proposed amendments shall be notified to members in the manner detailed in Section 10.2 of the Constitution.