

AUSTRALIAN REHABILITATION & ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED

BY-LAWS – as amended 16 July 1999

1. NAME, MISSION

1.1 The name of the organisation shall be the Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association Incorporated. The name may be abbreviated to ARATA and accompanied by a description such as “advancing technology for people with disabilities” but the description shall not be part of the name.

1.2 The purpose of the Australian Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Association is to serve as a national forum for issues in rehabilitation and assistive technology.

2. MEMBERSHIP

2.1 Categories of Membership are as follows:

- (a) Ordinary Member
- (b) Such other categories as the Board may designate.

2.2 Any person with a demonstrated interest in rehabilitation and assistive technology shall be eligible for membership of ARATA.

2.3 Members may organise themselves into groups representing special interest areas of rehabilitation and assistive technology.

2.4 Membership is not transferable .

2.5 The category Ordinary Member does not include membership by organisations or their representatives.

3. FEES

3.1 The membership year shall be the calendar year, and annual subscriptions shall fall due on the first day of the calendar year.

3.2 Annual subscriptions shall be paid by March 31; after this time the membership has lapsed and all membership privileges shall be suspended.

3.3 The joining fee is payable when first joining ARATA or when renewing a lapsed membership. In the case of a lapsed membership, the joining fee may be waived at the discretion of the membership officer.

3.4 Part membership fees are not refundable on retirement of a member from ARATA.

3.5 New members joining in the last three months of the year will be granted membership until the end of the following calendar year. In this case, the member is considered to be financial only in the second year.

3.6 Financial membership in the year of an ARATA National Conference and the preceding year qualifies the member for a registration discount at the conference.

3.7 Fees shall be established by a two-thirds majority of the Board.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 The management of ARATA shall reside in the Board of ARATA and others, as specified herein. It is the function of the Board to determine and implement the philosophy and official policy of ARATA.

4.2 Unscheduled vacancies on the Board shall be filled by appointment by the President, with the concurrence of the Board.

5. OFFICE-BEARERS

5.1 All office-bearers are ex officio members of all other committees without vote.

5.2 The President shall be the principal officer of ARATA.

(a) The President shall preside at all meetings of the membership of ARATA.

(b) The President shall vote only to resolve ties.

(c) The President shall serve as Chairperson of the Board.

6. STANDING COMMITTEES

6.1 Permanent standing committees shall include:

Communications Standing Committee
Conference Standing Committee
Consumer Focus Standing Committee
Membership Standing Committee
Publications Standing Committee
Special Interest Group Standing Committee.

(a) The chairperson of each standing committee shall, with the approval of the Board, be appointed by the President and serve one year. A chairperson whose term of office has expired shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed and is ready to serve. A standing committee chairperson is limited to serving no more than four successive terms.

(b) A majority of all standing committee members shall be members of ARATA. Members of committees shall be appointed by the respective committee chairpersons and approved by the President. The term of office of all committee members shall be one year and is renewable.

(c) Standing committee subcommittees may be organised and directed by committee chairpersons.

(d) The President may establish other committees as deemed necessary or as directed by the Board.

(e) All standing committees shall meet and report in writing to the President or Board at least once per year prior to the annual business meeting.

6.2 The Communications Standing Committee is responsible for inter-agency liaison with professional, consumer and international organisations, and information exchange formats for communication with and between members.

6.2 Conference Standing Committee. The primary responsibility is to plan for and organise the national conference. In addition, the committee is responsible for the development of policies for the relationship between ARATA and an external conference organiser, or co-manager.

6.3 The Consumer Focus Standing Committee is responsible for encouraging consumer interest in ARATA and maintaining a consumer focus by ARATA.

6.4 Membership Standing Committee. This committee is responsible for maintaining updated membership information, the promotion of ARATA to potential members and election matters (see Clause 7. Elections)

6.5 The Publications Standing Committee is responsible for the publication of the official newsletter of ARATA, and other publications.

6.6 Special Interest Group Standing Committee. The primary responsibility of the Committee is to provide a forum for increasing the knowledge and interaction of members with similar interest in the field of rehabilitation and assistive technology.

(a) The Committee shall administer a special interest group program and monitor the activities of the individual special interest groups for ARATA.

(b) The Committee shall submit to the Board, for review and approval by the Board, plans for special interest groups activities for subsequent years.

7. ELECTIONS

7.1 The Membership Committee will seek candidates for Board positions from the membership. The request for nominations will remain open for at least 60 days.

7.2 The Membership Committee shall present to the Board a list of nominations received. The Board shall give due consideration to representation from all constituents who contribute to the objectives of ARATA, and may request the Membership Committee to seek extra nominations. The final list will be sent to the membership.

7.3 Voting papers and information on all of the nominees, shall be sent to the membership, at least 30 days before the close of the ballot (Rule 14 (6)).

7.4 The Membership Committee shall appoint a Returning Officer, not being a member of ARATA, who shall administer the distribution of voting papers and the counting of votes, and shall submit to the Secretary a full report on the ballot indicating the number of ballot papers distributed, the number received, the number of valid votes, a written declaration of the result of ballot and any other relevant matters. The Returning Officer may take action and give such directions as are considered necessary to ensure the secrecy of the ballot and that no irregularities occur in connection with the election.

8. VOTING SYSTEM

8.1 The voting system shall be that known as 'first past the post' and shall allow for the voter to mark as many positions as are vacant, without showing an order of preference.

8.2 Where the intention is clear, the vote will be included in the count. This intention may be indicated by a cross or tick or another clear mark.

8.3 All votes shall be considered as primary votes of equal rank.

8.4 The candidate receiving the highest number of votes shall be the first successful candidate; the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes shall be the next successful candidate, and so on according to the number of candidates to be elected.

8.5 If two or more candidates receive the same number of votes the Returning Officer shall determine by lot the successful candidate or candidates.

8.6 The office bearers shall be determined by ballot at the first meeting of the newly elected Board.

9. CONSUMER REPRESENTATIVE

9.1 One Board position is reserved for a Consumer Representative. The Consumer Representative will have full voting rights on the Board, and to ensure a dedicated consumer focus, will not be eligible for nomination as an office bearer on the Board.

9.2 At least 90 days before the close of nominations for Board elections, three nominations for the consumer representative position are to be sought from the National Caucus of Disability Consumer Organisations. Nominees must agree to become members of ARATA. The representative will be elected by the members of ARATA at the same time as (but in a separate ballot from) the Board elections.

9.3 Should nominations not be received by the close of nominations for the Board election, or should selection of the Consumer Representative be required to fill a casual vacancy, the selection of nominees will be conducted by the Board.

10. AMENDMENTS

10.1 Proposed amendments to the By-laws may be submitted, in writing, to the Secretary by any member of the Board or by petition signed by fifteen (15) individuals who are members of ARATA.

10.2 Proposed amendments or petitions for amendments shall be so identified and shall be transmitted in writing to all members of the Board by the Secretary at least 30 days prior to the meeting of the Board at which the issue is to be decided.

10.3 A proposed amendment to the By-laws is adopted upon an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds majority of the Board voting members. The tally of votes shall include those of members attending the Board meeting at which it is considered, and signed mailed ballots received from absent members within 30 days following the Board meeting.

10.4 An adopted amendment to the By-laws shall become effective 60 days following the meeting at which it was introduced.

10.5 The Secretary shall advise all ARATA members of the amendment in the next issue of the newsletter following adoption.