

NERCHA

Fostering the future of rural health

NERCHA Constitution

Constitution for the New England Rural Club for Health Alliance (NERCHA)

Amended October 2020

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1. Name

- 1.1: The official name of the Rural Health Club is: New England Rural Club for Health Alliance (NERCHA).

2. Definitions:

Hereafter:

- 2.1: "Club" shall mean the New England Rural Club for Health Alliance;
- 2.2: "NERCHA" shall mean the New England Rural Club for Health Alliance;
- 2.3: "UNE" shall mean the University of New England;
- 2.4: "NRHSN" shall mean the National Rural Health Students' Network;
- 2.5: "Constitution" shall mean the Constitution of the Club;
- 2.6: "Co-chair" shall mean the Co-Chair of the Club;
- 2.7: "Treasurer" shall mean the Treasurer of the Club;
- 2.8: "Secretary" shall mean the Secretary of the Club;
- 2.9: "Executive" shall mean the Executive of the Club;
- 2.10: "Executive Meeting" shall mean a meeting of the Executive members of NERCHA;
- 2.11: "AGM" shall mean the Annual General Meeting of the Club;
- 2.12: "SGM" shall mean a Special General Meeting of the Club;
- 2.13: "General Meeting" shall mean a gathering of NERCHA members such as a SGM or AGM;
- 2.14: "Health Course" shall mean any medical, nursing or allied health course at the University of New England, including but not limited to medicine, nursing, social work, pharmacy, psychology, exercise physiology, and biomedical science;
- Executive to oversee any voting at a General Meeting;
- 2.15: "Office" shall mean an elected position in the Club as provided for in Section 6.1 of the Constitution;
- 2.16: "Officer" shall mean a member who has been elected to an "office";
- 2.17: "Returning Officer" shall mean the individual appointed by the NERCHA; and
- 2.18: "Academic Day" shall mean a day on which the University of New England conducts lectures in a majority of faculties

3. Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the Club shall be:

- 3.1: To promote rural and remote health and future careers in rural and remote Australia across all health-related discipline students at UNE.
- 3.2: To foster relations between health students and rural health professionals.
- 3.3: To expose health students to the lifestyle and work of rural health professionals.
- 3.4: To increase understanding and knowledge of issues relevant to all disciplines surrounding rural and remote health in Australia.
- 3.5: To develop a multi-disciplinary relationship between students at UNE and at other Rural Health Clubs across Australia.

3.6: To maintain membership of the National Rural Health Students' Network (NRHSN) in accordance with NRHSN's aims.

3.7: To conduct such activities as the Club determines desirable, providing such activities are not contrary to the Constitution.

4. Affiliation

The Club is affiliated with:

4.1: The NRHSN;

4.2: The Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA);

4.3: The UNE; and

4.4: Any other club, society or organization that supports the aims and objectives of NERCHA.

5. Membership

5.1: Membership is free and open to all students studying a health course at UNE.

5.2: All members are entitled to attend social and educational functions held by the Club subject to availability.

5.3: All members are entitled and encouraged to apply for available positions at social and educational events held by the NRHSN such as national conferences and events organized by other Rural Health Clubs where NERCHA is invited.

5.4: Members must fill in membership forms to be considered a member of the Club.

5.5: All members are granted one vote each in Executive elections.

5.6: Membership to students from other Rural Health Clubs or Universities is at the discretion of the NERCHA Executive.

5.7: Graduates of health courses of UNE can become members of the Club.

5.8: Graduates of health courses can become members of the Club at the discretion of the NERCHA Executive.

5.9: Members of the Club are also required to become members of the NRHSN.

6. Executive

6.1: Management of NERCHA will be vested in the Executive committee that shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting by Club members.

6.2: The Executive shall be comprised of the following positions:

a) Co-Chair

b) Co-Chair

c) Secretary

d) Treasurer

e) Publications and Promotions Officer

f) Student Engagement Officer

g) Student Engagement Officer

h) Community Engagement Officer

i) Community Engagement Officer

j) Indigenous Engagement Officer

k) First-Year Representative

- l) Medicine Portfolio Holder
- m) Nursing Portfolio Holder
- n) Social Work Portfolio Holder
- o) Psychology Portfolio Holder
- p) Pharmacy Portfolio Holder
- q) Exercise Physiology Portfolio Holder
- r) Biomedical Sciences Portfolio Holder

6.3: Other positions, such as other Discipline Representatives or Sponsorship Officer, may be appointed at an Executive Meeting if decided by the Executive that such positions are required.

6.4: It is preferred for the Indigenous Engagement Officer role to be filled by an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander individual. Non-Indigenous candidates will only be considered if there are no Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander candidates.

6.4: Members of the Executive may resign their position in writing to the Co-Chairs and Secretary.

6.5: In the event of an Executive member resigning before the end of their term, NERCHA Executive members can vote on a replacement at the next Executive Meeting.

6.6: Nomination and election of the Co-Chairs will be carried out pursuant to Section 8.0 of the Constitution at the AGM.

6.7: Executive members shall be permitted to hold more than one office, except the Co-Chairs.

6.8: The Executive shall act on behalf of the Club between General Meetings of the Club providing such actions are not contrary to the Constitution or a resolution of a General Meeting.

6.9: The Co-Chairs shall act on behalf of the Club between Executive Meetings providing such actions are reported to the Executive, which may confirm, reverse or vary the validity of such actions.

6.10: The Treasurer will present financial reports to the Executive at every Executive Meeting if requested (including all income and expenditure). Biannual financial reports must include information about the NERCHA account, proposed budget plans and coordination of NRHSN Program funding.

6.11: The Co-Chairs, or in their absence, the Secretary, shall call meetings of the Executive. In the absence of the Secretary, a NERCHA Executive member in order of listing in Section 6.2 can call the meeting.

6.12: Decisions of the Executive shall be by a two-thirds majority vote and shall be recorded in the minutes.

6.13: The minutes of the Executive Meeting shall include the names of the persons that attended that meeting.

6.14: An Executive Meeting shall only be valid if either the Co-Chairs are in attendance or are notified.

6.15: A member of the Executive shall cease to be a member of the Executive if:

- a) The Co-Chairs and Secretary receives a letter of resignation from that member;
- b) The member is absent, without leave of absence being granted by resolution of the Executive for five Executive Meetings, of which the member was notified; or

- c) A resolution of a SGM called for the purpose, is supported by a two-thirds majority of Club members present, express a vote of no confidence in that Executive member
 - d) If a position is not filled at the AGM, the Executive has the power to fill the position at their discretion.
 - e) As requested by the Co-Chairs and Publications and Promotions Officer, each member of the Executive shall be responsible for writing a report for each of the Club's publications.
- 6.18: The duties and responsibilities of the respective Executive positions include:
- 6.18.1: All Executive members are expected to assist with NERCHA functioning and events
 - 6.18.2: Co-Chair:
 - 6.18.2.1: Oversee meetings, events, conferences, festivals, RHSVs, reporting, and communication with faculty at both a NERCHA level and NRHSN level
 - 6.18.2.2: Manage Executive Committee activities
 - 6.18.2.3 Maintain communication between all health disciplines involved in NERCHA, including both students and faculty representatives
 - 6.18.2.5: Supervise national reporting requirements
 - 6.18.2.6: Attend conferences on behalf of NERCHA
 - 6.18.2.7: Encourage and facilitate student participation in all NRHSN and NERCHA events
 - 6.18.2.1: Liaise with the NRHSN, staff and other student representatives
 - 6.18.3: Secretary:
 - 6.18.3.1: Has the responsibility of collating and distributing an agenda before each meeting, taking minutes and circulating these within 2 Academic days of the meeting, as well as formulating and maintaining an up to date contact list for the Executive in order to maintain constant communication and attendance.
 - 6.18.3.2: Is expected to relay NERCHA and NRHSN information to the committee and greater club via email by the database.
 - 6.18.3.3: Should maintain communication within the Executive Committee to organize regular meetings and ensure that committee members are able to attend meetings.
 - 6.18.4: The Treasurer:
 - 6.18.4.1: The Treasurer will work with the Executive to ensure NERCHA is on track with the expenses and reporting of club events.
 - 6.18.4.2: The Treasurer will perform their tasks in conjunction with the Administration/Financial officer within UNE and Co-Chairs
 - 6.18.4.3: The Treasurer will be responsible for obtaining the NERCHA balances for meetings
 - 6.18.4.4: The Treasurer will be responsible for advising on how members can claim expenses through the NERCHA account
 - 6.18.4.5: The Treasurer will help the Co-Chairs with regular reporting to the NRHSN Executive and Rural Health Workforce Agency (RHWA)

6.18.4.6: The Treasurer will be required to submit the financial report and budget to the NRHSN as requested

6.18.4.7: The Treasurer will be responsible for the maintenance of all NERCHA transaction records

6.18.4.8: In the absence of a Sponsorship Officer, the Treasurer is responsible for the responsibilities typically given to the Sponsorship Officer (6.18.11)

6.18.5: Publications and Promotions Officer:

6.18.5.1: This role aims to develop and implement effective marketing, promotion, and publicity strategies to boost the participation and impact of NERCHA in the community.

6.18.5.2: This position holder is responsible for advertising events, maintaining the NERCHA website and database, and maintaining the public face of NERCHA in the university and wider community.

6.18.5.3: This position is responsible for the formulation of the NERCHA newsletter and submission of NERCHA articles to the NRHSN and other media bodies

6.18.6: Student Engagement Officer/s

6.18.6.1: This role can be held by one or two people

6.18.6.2: The role of the Student Engagement Officer/s is to organize and coordinate any events throughout the year intended to engage all members of the University of New England student base. These events exclude those that fall under the scope of the Indigenous Engagement Officer (6.18.8) except in the absence of an Indigenous Engagement Officer.

6.18.6.3: They should work in partnership with the Executive Committee to organize venues, catering, decorations, inviting guests, coordinating guest speakers, and ensuring that the event is covered by our insurance.

6.18.6.4: The Student Engagement Officer/s may appoint a Special Event Convenor and/or subcommittee at the Executive Committee's discretion

6.18.6.5: If an event intended to engage only one or more specific health course/s (typically beyond the scope of the Student Engagement Officer/s) is to be organized, but that health course does not have a Faculty Portfolio holder, the Student Engagement Officer/s is responsible for organizing and coordinating that event instead.

6.18.6.6: After each event, the Student Engagement Officer/s are required to submit a report to the Executive Committee describing the event, identifying aspects that worked well, as well as those that could be improved on. This is intended to aid the following year's Officers in their event organization.

6.18.6.7: In the absence of an Indigenous Engagement Officer, the Student Engagement Officer/s and/or Community Engagement Officer/s (at the discretion of the Executive Committee) must coordinate at least one event with a primary focus on Indigenous health during the year.

6.18.7: Community Engagement Officer/s:

6.18.7.1: This role can be held by one or two people

6.18.7.2: The role of the Community Engagement Officer/s is to organize and coordinate any events throughout the year intended to engage the community outside the NERCHA member base. This community may include, but is not limited to, residents of the New England region and students attending secondary schools in the New England region.

6.18.7.3: The Community Engagement Officer/s must organize at least two RHSVs during the year, involving University students from all health disciplines willing to participate. During these visits, the participating University students involve secondary school students in activities, presentations, and small group discussions that focus on making healthy lifestyle choices and the opportunities available for them to study a health degree in a rural setting. Community Engagement Officer/s have access to NRHSN guidelines and suggestions for how to run these visits, with many options available for different activities and formats for running the sessions.

6.17.7.4: The Community Engagement Officer/s may appoint a Special Event Convenor and/or subcommittee at the Executive Committee's discretion

6.18.7.5: After each RHSV, the Community Engagement Officer/s are required to submit a report to NRHSN describing the visit, identifying aspects that worked well, as well as those that could be improved upon.

6.18.7.6: After each event, the Student Engagement Officer/s are required to submit a report to the Executive Committee describing the event, identifying aspects that worked well, as well as those that could be improved on. This is intended to aid the following year's Officers in their event organization.

6.18.7.7: In the absence of an Indigenous Engagement Officer, the Community Engagement Officer/s and/or Student Engagement Officer/s (at the discretion of the Executive Committee) must coordinate at least one event with a primary focus on Indigenous health during the year.

6.18.8: Indigenous Engagement Officer:

6.18.8.1: The role of Indig

6.18.8.1: The role of the Indigenous Engagement Officer is to organize and coordinate any events throughout the year intended to engage the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities or focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

6.18.8.2: Events may include, but are not limited to, NERCHA-hosted Health Information and Activity Days for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander secondary students, Speaker nights, and attendance at an Indigenous Festival with a group of NERCHA representatives.

6.18.8.3: The Indigenous Engagement Officer must organize at least one event during the year.

6.18.8.4: If organizing NERCHA's attendance at an Indigenous Festival, the Indigenous Engagement Officer must be in communication with Rural Health Clubs and NRHSN via teleconference, phone and/or email. The Indigenous Engagement Officer is responsible for organizing for NERCHA members to travel

and participate in the selected Indigenous Festival and completing a report within one month of the festival to provide to NRHSN.

6.18.8.5: After each event, the Indigenous Engagement Officer is required to submit a report to the Executive Committee describing the event, identifying aspects that worked well, as well as those that could be improved on. This is intended to aid the following year's Officers in their event organization.

6.18.9: First-Year representative:

6.18.9.1: Can represent and promote NERCHA at Australia-wide conferences and events

6.18.9.2: Can attend conferences with the Co-Chairs on behalf of NERCHA

6.18.9.3: Make themselves available to assist in submitting reports and any additional tasks

6.18.9.4: Should assist with the general functioning of NERCHA Executive and their responsibilities and events to explore future opportunities within NERCHA

6.18.9.5: This position will be elected at the beginning of the Academic year at the discretion of the Executive.

6.18.9.6: The First-Year representative position is the intended communication bridge between NERCHA and the first-year student body at UNE.

6.18.10: Faculty Portfolio holders:

6.18.10.1: This role is the communication bridge between NERCHA and the student body of each health course offered at UNE.

6.18.10.2: This is a reciprocal relationship, with the holder of this position bringing forward to NERCHA the needs, ideas, and initiatives of the particular students from that faculty, while also relaying information from NERCHA regarding events, conferences, scholarships, and placement information.

6.18.10.3: It is recommended that they attend the meetings of the student club from their faculty (if applicable) and represent NERCHA.

6.18.10.4: They are responsible for encouraging students from their faculty to participate in events and apply for festivals, conferences, and RHSVs.

6.18.10.5: The Faculty Portfolio holder is responsible for organizing and coordinating any events intended to engage only the students from that faculty.

6.18.10.6: If an event intended to engage only two or more (not all) health courses cohorts is to be organized, it is to be coordinated collaboratively by the Faculty Portfolio holders of those respective faculties.

6.18.11: Sponsorship Officer

6.18.11.1: To gain sponsorship from outside organisations to assist with the cost of NERCHA events and activities.

6.18.11.2: To negotiate and renegotiate the terms of sponsorship agreements with current and potential sponsors.

6.18.11.3: To liaise with the Executive as appropriate to allow sponsors to plan their attendance at events and activities.

6.18.11.4: To promote sponsors to NERCHA members.

6.18.11.5: To ensure all requirements as set out sponsor contracts are fulfilled.

6.18.11.6: To liaise with the relevant Executive members to obtain dates and information for events in the coming year to include in the Sponsorship Prospectus.

6.18.11.7: To revise and renew NERCHA's Sponsorship Prospectus for January distribution, with assistance from the Executive.

7. General Meetings

7.1: A General Meeting of the Club shall be the ultimate decision-making body of the Club and shall have the power to direct the Executive and the Officers of the Club.

7.2: A General Meeting may be called at any time.

7.3: The Co-Chairs, or in their absence, the Secretary, can call a General Meeting. In the absence of the Secretary, a NERCHA Executive member in order of listing in Section 6.2 can call the meeting:

- a) On their own volition;
- b) At the direction of the Executive; or
- c) Within five academic days of receiving a petition calling for a General Meeting from:
 - i) Six voting Executive members; or
 - ii) Fifteen Club members.

7.4: The quorum of a General Meeting shall be twenty members.

7.5: The minutes of each General Meeting shall include a list of those persons that attended that meeting.

7.6: Members of the Club shall be informed of a General Meeting of the Club at least five working days before the meeting by a notice of the meeting, which includes the time, date, and place of that meeting, emailed to members and placed on the NERCHA website.

8. The Annual General Meeting

8.1: The AGM shall be held before the end of the Academic year in order to:

- a) Receive reports from the Co-Chairs, Secretary, Events Officer/s, Indigenous Health Officer, Portfolio Holders, and Rural High School Visits Officer/s, Sponsorship Officer (if applicable);
- b) Receive the Annual Financial Statement from the Treasurer;
- c) Elect the Executive of the Club as provided for in Section 6.1 of the Constitution; and
- d) Transact other such business that may be conducted at a General Meeting.

8.2: The AGM shall be held on an Academic Day.

8.3: Members of the Club shall be eligible to nominate.

8.4: Nominations for elected offices shall be received until the open of the AGM. They shall include the name of the nominee and the office(s) for which the nominee is nominating for.

8.5: If none or one nomination is received for an office, nominations will be open on the floor.

8.6: The Officers elected at an AGM shall take office once the election has been finalized, within five academic days of the AGM, unless pursuant to Section 7.3, the relevant NERCHA Executive member receives a petition from fifteen members requesting a Special

General Meeting to contest the conduct of that election. Such a petition shall list the grounds for contesting the conduct of that election, upon which unless pursuant to Section 7.3, the relevant NERCHA Executive member shall call a Special General Meeting to be held within five academic days.

8.7: Leaving members of the Executive will stay on for 14 days as a handover period alongside the newly elected Executive Committee

8.8: If an SGM which rules that, with at least a two-thirds majority of members present, the election of one or more of the Officers at that AGM was unconstitutional, this shall nullify the election of those Officers. Following this, pursuant to Section 7.3, the relevant NERCHA Executive member shall call a further General Meeting to be held within five academic days to conduct an election for those offices.

8.9: If an SGM which does not rule that, with at least a two-thirds majority of members present, the election of one or more of the Officers at that AGM was unconstitutional, this shall endorse the result of the election of those Officers and those Officers shall take office within five academic days of that meeting.

8.10: If insufficient nominations are received at an AGM to fill all the Offices of the Club, the Executive shall have the power to appoint members of the Club to fill the offices that remain unfilled at the time of the AGM. This will be at the discretion of the Executive.

8.11: The quorum of an AGM shall be twenty members.

8.12: Voting for an election shall be by online voting. It will take place on the night of the AGM and all members are eligible to vote. The Returning Officer will count and publish the votes. The results of the election will be advertised within five academic days of the AGM.

8.13: Notice for the AGM shall be given to the members of the Club at least ten academic days before the AGM. The Executive shall ensure that a notice detailing the time, date, and place of the meeting as well as the positions the Club members may nominate for are:

- a) Emailed to each member on the member database;
- b) Placed on a public forum such as Facebook

9. Special General Meetings

9.1: An SGM shall be called if:

- a) It is desirable to dedicate a General Meeting to one purpose;
- b) A motion of no confidence in an Officer of the Club is to be made; or
- c) The result of an election is to be challenged pursuant to Section 8.6 of the Constitution.

9.2: A Special General Meeting may be called by written application to the Co-Chairs and Secretary supported by no less than fifteen members of NERCHA.

9.3: A motion of no confidence that is supported by at least two-thirds of the members present at a Special General Meeting shall terminate the Office of that Officer and pursuant to Section 7.3, the relevant NERCHA Executive member, shall call another General Meeting to elect another member to hold that office within five academic days.

10. Finances

10.1: The University of New England shall hold all funding from the NRHSN on behalf of NERCHA.

10.2: The Club is not for profit and therefore distribution of profit or gains to individual members is prohibited, as determined by the Australian Taxation Office.

10.3: The Executive, led by the Treasurer, shall prepare a funding proposal that must be submitted to the NRHSN as requested.

10.4: All transactions involving NERCHA funds shall be properly receipted and reported pursuant to Section 6.10.

10.5: The Treasurer and Co-Chairs shall only allow reimbursements for purchases that are pre-approved.

10.6: The Executive is ultimately responsible for the decisions made in the allocation of NERCHA funds. The Treasurer is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of all financial records.

10.7: The financial year of the Club shall end on the 31st of December each year.

11. Voting

11.1: The Chairperson of each meeting shall be the Co-chairs (if present) or otherwise in accordance to Section 6.11.

11.2: People who are eligible to vote include:

- a) Executive members at Executive Meetings
- b) Members present at AGMs and SGMs
- c) Members participating in online voting

12. General

12.1: In any matters not specified in this Constitution or in Regulations enacted by the Executive under this Constitution, the policies and procedures of the NRHSN shall apply.

13. Amendments to Constitution

13.1: The Constitution may be amended at a General Meeting of the Club by a two-thirds majority vote of members present, provided that five academic days' notice shall have been given of the proposed amendment by email.

14. Dissolution

14.1: Should the Club be disbanded or in any way become defunct then all assets of the Club shall be held in trust by the NRHSN.