CONSTITUTION

OF THE

RUSSIAN AUSTRALIAN REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Under the Associations Incorporation Act 2009

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Part 1 Preliminary

1 Definitions

(1) Name:

The association is called the Russian Australian Representative Council (RARC), In this document the organization is also called "the Association", "Council", "RARC".

(2) In this constitution:

ordinary committee member means a member of the committee who is not an office-bearer of the association.

secretary means:

- (a) the person holding office under this constitution as secretary of the association, or
- (b) if no person holds that office the public officer of the association.

special general meeting means a general meeting of the association other than an annual general meeting.

the Act means the Associations Incorporation Act 2009.

the Regulation means the Associations Incorporation Regulation 2016.

- (2) In this constitution:
 - (a) a reference to a function includes a reference to a power, authority and duty, and
 - (b) a reference to the exercise of a function includes, if the function is a duty, a reference to the performance of the duty.
- (3) The provisions of the *Interpretation Act 1987* apply to and in respect of this constitution in the same manner as those provisions would so apply if this constitution were an instrument made under the Act.

2 Purpose

- (1) Russian Australian Representative Council aims to unite, represent and develop Russian-speaking community groups and individuals in Australia. It serves as a coordinating resource for Russian speaking communities in Australia to highlight and promote Russia's culture, traditions, to preserve Russian language in Australia, to unite Russian communities with the broader multicultural communities in Australia and to strengthening the relationship between Russian and Australia.
- (2) Main activities:
 - To promote the organisational and spiritual consolidation of Russian compatriots living in Australia, and their associations, strengthening their mutual cooperation.
 - Preservation and development of multifaceted ties of compatriots with the historical homeland.

- To support the efforts of associations and organisations of compatriots to preserve the Russian language and to Russian culture in Australia.
- To support the efforts of associations of compatriots to promote Russia's objective image in Australia's community life
- To support the efforts of organisations of compatriots to preserve ethnic and cultural identity of the Russian diaspora
- To assist the promotion of understanding and interest in the Russian heritage, including, but not limited to, in the fields of Russian language, literature, history, music, arts, crafts, sports and culture.
- Strengthen the links between Russian and Australian organisations, including but not limited to, in the field of business, science, sports, art and youth policy.
- To support and encourage the teaching of the Russian language in Australian schools and universities, as well as establish and maintain Russian Saturday/Sunday schools in Australia.
- To provide support and encouragement in visiting Australia to Russian artists, painters, writers, poets, musicians and representatives of the communities, and to support Australian artists and painters, writers, poets, musicians and community representatives visiting Russia.
- To support the idea of improving legislation on migration and travel between Russia and Australia.
- To support and encourage the screening of Russian plays, films and TV programs, as well as Russian music and songs during the cultural events in Australia.
- act not only within the framework of the above provisions, but also in other areas if it is necessary or useful for the implementation of the goals and objectives of Association.

Part 2 Membership

3 Membership generally

- (1) A person is eligible to be a member of the association if:
 - (a) the person is a natural person, and
 - (b) the person has applied and been approved for membership of the association in accordance with clause 3.
- (2) A person is taken to be a member of the association if:
 - (a) the person is a natural person, and
 - (b) the person was:
 - (i) in the case of an unincorporated body that is registered as the association a member of that unincorporated body immediately before the registration of the association, or
 - (ii) in the case of an association that is amalgamated to form the relevant association a member of that other association immediately before the amalgamation, or
 - (iii) in the case of a registrable corporation that is registered as an association a member of the registrable corporation immediately before that entity was registered as an association.
- (3) A person is taken to be a member of the association if the person was one of the individuals on whose behalf an application for registration of the association under section 6 (1) (a) of the Act was made.

4 Structure of Association

- (1) Russian Australian Representative Council shall consist of members from each Territorial Coordinating Council.
- (2) The maximum of two members representing Australian state or territory shell be elected to the RARC.
- (3) The RARC committee may decide to appoint no more than three additional RARC members to work on specific tasks of this constitution with the focus on a particular sector of work.
- (4) The World Coordinating Council of Russian compatriots may appoint one RARC member and The Region Coordinating Council of Russian compatriots may appoint one RARC member.

5 Application for membership

- (1) Application for Territorial Coordinating Council (TCC) membership
 - (a) TCC is a regional body representing RARC in Australian state or Territory. It is a platform for exchange of experience of Russian-speaking community associations, functioning on the territory of individual Australia states and territories, as well as for planning work jointly with other associations according the purpose of RARC.
 - (b) The operation of TCC is regulated by Standing Order (Attachment 1)

- (2) Application for Russian Australian Representative Council (RARC) membership.
 - (a) RARC is consist of:
- The maximum of two TCC members with casting votes from each Australian state/territory
- The maximum of three additional RARC members to work on specific tasks of this constitution with the focus on a particular sector of work.
- The World Coordinating Council of Russian compatriots may appoint one RARC member and The Region Coordinating Council of Russian compatriots may appoint one RARC member.
 - (b) An application by a person for membership of the RRAC:
- must be made in writing (including by email or other electronic means, if the committee so determines) in the form determined by the committee
- must be lodged (including by electronic means, if the committee so determines) with the secretary of the association.

6 Election of RARC members

- (1) The RARC members are being elected at the annual general meeting by TCC member with casting votes from all Australian states and territories or via electronic ballot being sent to TCC members from all Australian states and territories.
- (2) Nominations of candidates for election as the member of RARC must be made in writing and delivered to the secretary of the association at least 14 days before the election take place.
- (3) The candidates received the majority of the casting votes from the TCC members will be elected as a RARC members.
- (4) The term of membership of an elected RARC member shall be three (3) years. Upon conclusion of the term of membership RARC member can reapply for a new RARC membership as describes in clause 6.
- (5) A person nominated as a candidate for RARC member must be a member of TCC with the casting vote.

7 Cessation of membership

A person ceases to be a member of the association if the person:

- (a) dies, or
- (b) resigns membership, or
- (c) is expelled from the association.

8 Resignation of membership

(1) A member of RARC or TCC may resign from membership of the association by first giving to the secretary written notice of at least 1 month (or any other period that the committee may determine) of the member's intention to resign

- and, on the expiration of the period of notice, the member ceases to be a member.
- (2) If the member of RARC resign from RARC membership, he/she may remain the membership in TCC.
- (3) If the member of RARC resigns from TCC membership, his/her RARC membership also will be ceased.
- (4) If a member of the association ceases to be a member under subclause (1), and in every other case where a member ceases to hold membership, the secretary must make an appropriate entry in the register of members recording the date on which the member ceased to be a member.

9 Register of members

- (1) The secretary must establish and maintain a register of members of the association (whether in written or electronic form) specifying the name and postal, residential or email address of each person who is a member of the association together with the date on which the person became a member.
- (2) The register of members must be kept at the association's official address.
- (3) The register of members must be open for inspection, free of charge, by any member of the association at any reasonable hour.
- (4) If a member requests that any information contained on the register about the member (other than the member's name) not be available for inspection, that information must not be made available for inspection.
- (5) A member must not use information about a person obtained from the register to contact or send material to the person, other than for:
 - (a) the purposes of sending the person a newsletter, a notice in respect of a meeting or other event relating to the association or other material relating to the association, or
 - (b) any other purpose necessary to comply with a requirement of the Act or the Regulation.

10 Resolution of disputes

- (1) A dispute between a member and another member (in their capacity as members) of the association, or a dispute between a member or members and the association, are to be referred to a Community Justice Centre for mediation under the Community Justice Centres Act 1983.
- (2) If a dispute is not resolved by mediation within 3 months of the referral to a Community Justice Centre, the dispute is to be referred to arbitration.
- (3) The Commercial Arbitration Act 2010 applies to a dispute referred to arbitration.

11 Disciplining of members

- (1) A complaint may be made to the committee by any person that a member of RARC or TCC:
 - (a) has refused or neglected to comply with a provision or provisions of this constitution, or

- (b) has refused or neglected to comply with RARC Code of ethics, or
- (c) has wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the association and/or the members of association.
- (2) The committee may refuse to deal with a complaint if it considers the complaint to be trivial or vexatious in nature.
- (3) If the committee decides to deal with the complaint, the committee:
 - (a) must cause notice of the complaint to be served on the member concerned, and
 - (b) must give the member at least 14 days from the time the notice is served within which to make submissions to the committee in connection with the complaint, and
 - (c) must take into consideration any submissions made by the member in connection with the complaint.
- (4) The committee may, by resolution, expel the member from the association or suspend the member from membership of the association if, after considering the complaint and any submissions made in connection with the complaint, it is satisfied that the facts alleged in the complaint have been proved and the expulsion or suspension is warranted in the circumstances.
- (5) If the committee expels or suspends a member, the secretary must, within 7 days after the action is taken, cause written notice to be given to the member of the action taken, of the reasons given by the committee for having taken that action and of the member's right of appeal under clause 12.
- (6) The expulsion or suspension does not take effect:
 - (a) until the expiration of the period within which the member is entitled to appeal against the resolution concerned, or
 - (b) if within that period the member exercises the right of appeal, unless and until the association confirms the resolution under clause 12, whichever is the later.

12 Right of appeal of disciplined member

- (1) A member may appeal to the association in general meeting against a resolution of the committee under clause 11, within 7 days after notice of the resolution is served on the member, by lodging with the secretary a notice to that effect.
- (2) The notice may, but need not, be accompanied by a statement of the grounds on which the member intends to rely for the purposes of the appeal.
- (3) On receipt of a notice from a member under subclause (1), the secretary must notify the committee, which is to convene a general meeting of the association to be held within 28 days after the date on which the secretary received the notice.
- (4) At a general meeting of the association convened under subclause (3):
 - (a) no business other than the question of the appeal is to be transacted, and
 - (b) the committee and the member must be given the opportunity to state their respective cases orally or in writing, or both, and

- (c) the members present are to vote by secret ballot on the question of whether the resolution should be confirmed or revoked.
- (5) The appeal is to be determined by a simple majority of votes cast by members of the association.

Part 3 The committee

13 Powers of the committee

Subject to the Act, the Regulation, this constitution and any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, the committee:

- (a) is to control and manage the affairs of the association, and
- (b) may exercise all the functions that may be exercised by the association, other than those functions that are required by this constitution to be exercised by a general meeting of members of the association, and
- (c) has power to perform all the acts and do all things that appear to the committee to be necessary or desirable for the proper management of the affairs of the association.

14 Composition and membership of committee

- (1) The committee is to consist of:
 - (a) the president,
 - (b) the vice-president,
 - (c) the treasurer,
 - (d) the secretary.
- (4) A committee member may hold up to 2 offices (other than both the offices of president and vice-president).
- (5) The term of office of an elected RARC Committee member shall be three (3) years. There is two (2) maximum consecutive terms for which a committee member may hold office.
- (6) Each member of the committee is, subject to this constitution, to hold office until immediately before the election of committee members at the annual general meeting next following the date of the member's election, and is eligible for re-election.

15 Election of committee members

- (1) Nominations of candidates for election as office-bearers of the association:
 - (a) must be made in writing, and
 - (b) must be delivered to the secretary of the association at least 7 days before the date fixed for the holding of the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.
- (2) The ballot for the election of office-bearers is to be conducted at the annual general meeting in any usual and proper manner that the committee directs.
- (3) A person nominated as a candidate for election as an office-bearer must be a member of the association.

16 Secretary

- (1) The secretary of the association must, as soon as practicable after being appointed as secretary, lodge notice with the association of his or her address.
- (2) It is the duty of the secretary to keep minutes (whether in written or electronic form) of:
 - (a) all appointments of office-bearers and members of the committee, and
 - (b) the names of members of the committee present at a committee meeting or a general meeting, and
 - (c) all proceedings at committee meetings and general meetings.
- (3) Minutes of proceedings at a meeting must be signed by the chairperson of the meeting or by the chairperson of the next succeeding meeting.
- (4) The signature of the chairperson may be transmitted by electronic means for the purposes of subclause (3).

17 Treasurer

It is the duty of the treasurer of the association to ensure:

- (a) that all money due to the association is collected and received and that all payments authorised by the association are made, and
- (b) that correct books and accounts are kept showing the financial affairs of the association, including full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the association.

18 Casual vacancies

- (1) In the event of a casual vacancy occurring in the membership of the committee, the committee may appoint a member of the association to fill the vacancy and the member so appointed is to hold office, subject to this constitution, until the annual general meeting next following the date of the appointment.
- (2) A casual vacancy in the office of a member of the committee occurs if the member:
 - (a) dies, or
 - (b) ceases to be a member of the association, or
 - (c) is or becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the *Corporations Act 2001* of the Commonwealth, or
 - (d) resigns office by notice in writing given to the secretary, or
 - (e) is removed from office under clause 19, or
 - (f) becomes a mentally incapacitated person, or
 - (g) is absent without the consent of the committee from 3 consecutive meetings of the committee, or
 - (h) is convicted of an offence involving fraud or dishonesty for which the maximum penalty on conviction is imprisonment for not less than 3 months, or
 - (i) is prohibited from being a director of a company under Part 2D.6 (Disqualification from managing corporations) of the *Corporations Act* 2001 of the Commonwealth.

19 Removal of committee members

- (1) The association in general meeting may by resolution remove any member of the committee from the office of member before the expiration of the member's term of office and may by resolution appoint another person to hold office until the expiration of the term of office of the member so removed.
- (2) If a member of the committee to whom a proposed resolution referred to in subclause (1) relates makes representations in writing to the secretary or president (not exceeding a reasonable length) and requests that the representations be notified to the members of the association, the secretary or the president may send a copy of the representations to each member of the association or, if the representations are not so sent, the member is entitled to require that the representations be read out at the meeting at which the resolution is considered.

20 Committee meetings and quorum

- (1) The committee must meet at least 3 times in each period of 12 months at the place and time that the committee may determine.
- (2) Additional meetings of the committee may be convened by the president or by any member of the committee.

- (3) Oral or written notice of a meeting of the committee must be given by the secretary to each member of the committee at least 48 hours (or any other period that may be unanimously agreed on by the members of the committee) before the time appointed for the holding of the meeting.
- (4) Notice of a meeting given under subclause (3) must specify the general nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting and no business other than that business is to be transacted at the meeting, except business which the committee members present at the meeting unanimously agree to treat as urgent business.
- (5) Any 3 members of the committee constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a meeting of the committee.
- (6) No business is to be transacted by the committee unless a quorum is present and if, within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, a quorum is not present, the meeting is to stand adjourned to the same place and at the same hour of the same day in the following week.
- (7) If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within half an hour of the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting is to be dissolved.
- (8) At a meeting of the committee:
 - (a) the president or, in the president's absence, the vice-president is to preside, or
 - (b) if the president and the vice-president are absent or unwilling to act, one of the remaining members of the committee chosen by the members present at the meeting is to preside.

21 Appointment of association members as committee members to constitute quorum

- (1) If at any time the number of committee members is less than the number required to constitute a quorum for a committee meeting, the existing committee members may appoint a sufficient number of members of the association as committee members to enable the quorum to be constituted.
- (2) A member of the committee so appointed is to hold office, subject to this constitution, until the annual general meeting next following the date of the appointment.
- (3) This clause does not apply to the filling of a casual vacancy to which clause 18 applies.

22 Use of technology at committee meetings

- (1) A committee meeting may be held at 2 or more venues using any technology approved by the committee that gives each of the committee's members a reasonable opportunity to participate.
- (2) A committee member who participates in a committee meeting using that technology is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

23 Voting and decisions

- (1) Questions arising at a meeting of the committee appointed by the committee are to be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the committee present at the meeting.
- (2) Each member present at a meeting of the committee is entitled to one vote but, in the event of an equality of votes on any question, the person presiding may exercise a second or casting vote.
- (3) Any act or thing done or suffered, or purporting to have been done or suffered, by the committee is valid and effectual despite any defect that may afterwards be discovered in the appointment or qualification of any member of the committee.

Part 4 General meetings

24 Annual general meetings - holding of

- (1) The association must hold its first annual general meeting within 18 months after its registration under the Act.
- (2) The association must hold its annual general meetings within 6 months after the close of the association's financial year.

25 Annual general meetings - calling of and business at

- (1) The annual general meeting of the association is, subject to the Act and to clause 24, to be convened on the date and at the place and time that the committee thinks fit.
- (2) In addition to any other business which may be transacted at an annual general meeting, the business of an annual general meeting is to include the following:
 - (a) to confirm the minutes of the last preceding annual general meeting and of any special general meeting held since that meeting,
 - (b) to receive from the committee reports on the activities of the association during the last preceding financial year,
 - (c) to elect office-bearers of the association
 - (d) to receive and consider any financial statement or report required to be submitted to members under the Act.
- (3) An annual general meeting must be specified as that type of meeting in the notice convening it.

26 Special general meetings - calling of

- (1) The committee may, whenever it thinks fit, convene a special general meeting of the association.
- (2) The committee must, on the requisition of at least 30% of the total number of members, convene a special general meeting of the association.
- (3) A requisition of members for a special general meeting:
 - (a) must be in writing, and
 - (b) must state the purpose or purposes of the meeting, and
 - (c) must be signed by the members making the requisition, and
 - (d) must be lodged with the secretary, and
 - (e) may consist of several documents in a similar form, each signed by one or more of the members making the requisition.
- (4) If the committee fails to convene a special general meeting to be held within 1 month after the date on which a requisition of members for the meeting is lodged with the secretary, any one or more of the members who made the requisition may convene a special general meeting to be held not later than 3 months after that date.

- (5) A special general meeting convened by a member or members as referred to in subclause (4) must be convened as nearly as is practicable in the same manner as general meetings are convened by the committee.
- (6) For the purposes of subclause (3):
 - (a) a requisition may be in electronic form, and
 - (b) a signature may be transmitted, and a requisition may be lodged, by electronic means.

27 Notice

- (1) Except if the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary must, at least 14 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, give a notice to each member specifying the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.
- (2) If the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the association, the secretary must, at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, cause notice to be given to each member specifying, in addition to the matter required under subclause (1), the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution.
 - Note. A special resolution must be passed in accordance with section 39 of the Act.
- (3) No business other than that specified in the notice convening a general meeting is to be transacted at the meeting except, in the case of an annual general meeting, business which may be transacted under clause 25 (2).
- (4) A member desiring to bring any business before a general meeting may give notice in writing of that business to the secretary no later than 7 days prior to meeting who must include that business in the next notice calling a general meeting given after receipt of the notice from the member.

28 Quorum for general meetings

- (1) No item of business is to be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of members entitled under this constitution to vote is present during the time the meeting is considering that item.
- (2) 50% members present (being members entitled under this constitution to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a general meeting.
- (3) If within half an hour after the appointed time for the commencement of a general meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting:
 - (a) if convened on the requisition of members—is to be dissolved, and
 - (b) in any other case—is to stand adjourned to the same day in the following week at the same time and (unless another place is specified at the time of the adjournment by the person presiding at the meeting or communicated by written notice to members given before the day to which the meeting is adjourned) at the same place.

29 Presiding member

- (1) The president or, in the president's absence, the vice-president, is to preside as chairperson at each general meeting of the association.
- (2) If the president and the vice-president are absent or unwilling to act, the members present must elect one of their number to preside as chairperson at the meeting.

30 Adjournment

- (1) The chairperson of a general meeting at which a quorum is present may, with the consent of the majority of members present at the meeting, adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place, but no business is to be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.
- (2) If a general meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, the secretary must give written or oral notice of the adjourned meeting to each member of the association stating the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting.
- (3) Except as provided in subclauses (1) and (2), notice of an adjournment of a general meeting or of the business to be transacted at an adjourned meeting is not required to be given.

31 Making of decisions

- (1) A question arising at a general meeting of the association is to be determined by:
- (a) a show of hands or, if the meeting is one to which clause 36 applies, any appropriate corresponding method that the committee may determine, or
- (b) if on the motion of the chairperson or if 50% or more members present at the meeting decide that the question should be determined by a written ballot—a written ballot.
- (2) If the question is to be determined by a show of hands, a declaration by the chairperson that a resolution has, on a show of hands, been carried or carried unanimously or carried by a particular majority or lost, or an entry to that effect in the minute book of the association, is evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of or against that resolution.
- (3) Subclause (2) applies to a method determined by the committee under subclause (1) (a) in the same way as it applies to a show of hands.
- (4) If the question is to be determined by a written ballot, the ballot is to be conducted in accordance with the directions of the chairperson.

32 Special resolutions

A special resolution may only be passed by the association in accordance with section 39 of the Act.

33 Voting

- (1) On any question arising at a general meeting of the association a member has one vote only.
- (2) In the case of an equality of votes on a question at a general meeting, the chairperson of the meeting is entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.
- (3) A member is not entitled to vote at any general meeting of the association unless all money due and payable by the member to the association has been paid.
- (4) A member is not entitled to vote at any general meeting of the association if the member is under 18 years of age.

34 Proxy votes not permitted

Proxy voting must not be undertaken at or in respect of a general meeting.

Note. Schedule 1 to the Act provides that an association's constitution is to address whether members of the association are entitled to vote by proxy at general meetings.

35 Postal or electronic ballots

- The association may hold a postal or electronic ballot (as the committee determines) to determine any issue or proposal (other than an appeal under clause 12).
- (2) A postal or electronic ballot is to be conducted in accordance with Schedule 3 to the Regulation.

36 Use of technology at general meetings

- (1) A general meeting may be held at 2 or more venues using any technology approved by the committee that gives each of the association's members a reasonable opportunity to participate.
- (2) A member of an association who participates in a general meeting using that technology is taken to be present at the meeting and, if the member votes at the meeting, is taken to have voted in person.

Part 5 Miscellaneous

37 Insurance

The association may effect and maintain insurance.

38 Funds - source

- (1) The funds of the association are to be derived from donations and, subject to any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, any other sources that the committee determines.
- (2) All money received by the association must be deposited as soon as practicable and without deduction to the credit of the association's bank or other authorised deposit-taking institution account.
- (3) The association must, as soon as practicable after receiving any money, issue an appropriate receipt.

39 Funds - management

Subject to any resolution passed by the association in general meeting, the funds of the association are to be used solely in pursuance of the objects of the association in the manner that the committee determines.

40 Association is non-profit

Subject to the Act and the Regulation, the association must apply its funds and assets solely in pursuance of the objects of the association and must not conduct its affairs so as to provide a pecuniary gain for any of its members.

Note. Section 5 of the Act defines pecuniary gain for the purpose of this clause.

41 Distribution of property on winding up of association

- (1) Subject to the Act and the Regulations, in a winding up of the association, any surplus property of the association is to be transferred to another organisation with similar objects and which is not carried on for the profit or gain of its individual members.
- (2) In this clause, a reference to the surplus property of an association is a reference to that property of the association remaining after satisfaction of the debts and liabilities of the association and the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the association.

Note. Section 65 of the Act provides for distribution of surplus property on the winding up of an association.

42 Change of name, objects and constitution

An application for registration of a change in the association's name, objects or constitution in accordance with section 10 of the Act is to be made by the public officer or a committee member.