

WAFarmers Rules Background Paper – February 2019

Under the Associations Incorporation Act 2015, there are a number of changes that must now be incorporated into the WAFarmers rules by the 30th of June 2019. This also provides an opportunity for a complete review of the current rules to ensure the provisions meet the needs of WAFarmers now and into the future.

A subcommittee including Dale Park, Melanie Tolich, Lyn Slade, Mike Norton, Colin Nicholl, Trevor De Landgraft and Tony Gooch have undertaken this review with input from General Council, Commodity Councils and Zones.

In addition to the changes required under the Act, there are a number of areas where our current rules are unclear, inconsistent with current practice and/or do not provide the flexibility to meet the current and future needs of the organisation.

The proposed new rules include:

1. Definitions

Definitions for Active Zones, Non Active Zones and Electronic meetings have been included. For a zone to be “active”, the zone would need to hold at least two meetings in a calendar year. One of these meetings could be held electronically.

2. Financial year

Change to January to December (currently December to November)

3. Classes of membership:

- Ordinary – any business or person engaged on a full or part time basis in agricultural primary production or any kindred industry in WA or who has retired from such engagement.
- Associate – Any organisation that seeks to support WAFarmers and has objects that do not conflict with those of WAFarmers. Associate members could include production groups and other commodity organisations (eggs etc)
- AgconnectWA – member of AgconnectWA
- Additional clause to allow for approval of other classes of membership such as allied businesses, micro/hobby farmers and supporters of WAFarmers (non voting)

Any other class of membership determined by the WAFarmers Board

4. Council Membership

There is currently a concern that there is no mechanism in the rules for representation from any area where a zone is not operating. To address this it is proposed that:

Zone representatives to Councils will be elected annually at the AGM of each “active Zone” or by a ballot of the membership in each non-active zone.

This would not preclude any zone taking the steps necessary to re-activate their zone through ensuring two meetings of zone members are held each year or through forming a zone executive.

5. Voting:

- Ordinary memberships may nominate up to:
 - Large: up to 6 voting members
 - Average: up to 4 voting members
 - Small: up to 2 voting members

This change will allow engagement with all generations and others involved in the farming business and help overcome some current problems with succession of membership. General Council has voted to support this.

(NOTE: these votes are not transferrable to a proxy)

- AgconnectWA – one vote at AgConnectWA meetings and AgconnectWA Conference.

Delegate voting will no longer apply under the new rules. All voting members will have the right to vote at the AGM of the General Section and all voting members of a membership that is actively engaged in that commodity will have the right to vote at a Section Council AGM.

6. Terms of office:

President: no change to current maximum 2 x 2 year consecutive terms.

Board members: maximum of 3 x 2 year consecutive terms.

7. Quorum for meetings:

- Special or AGM (WAFarmers Conference) – 30 voting members representing at least half of the active zones.
- Livestock, Grains AGM (Conference) – 20 voting members representing at least half the active zones with at least one member engaged in that commodity. (Note - this is for conference only. See below for the quorum for Commodity Section Council meetings)
- Commodity Council meetings – at least half of the Council members entitled to vote.
- Dairy AGM (Conference)– 10 voting members representing at least half of the active zones with at least one member engaged in that commodity.
- Beekeepers – 5 voting members.
- Zone meeting – 5 voting members.

The motion to adopt the new rules for WAFarmers will be voted on at Annual Conference and must be passed by not less than 75% of the delegates present and entitled to vote.

Members are encouraged to review the proposed changes by accessing the link in the WAFarmers email Newsletter or by contacting Mel Tollich on 9486 2100.