



Australian Society for History of Engineering and Technology Incorporated

Guidelines for local and special interest groups

Local and special interest groups

ASHET encourages the formation of local groups and special interest groups.

Local groups may be formed in centres where there are sufficient ASHET members to organise and participate in activities such as talks, seminars, visits and tours. Special interest groups may be formed to facilitate communication between members, encourage study and research and to arrange an occasional event such as a meeting or symposium.

At this stage of its development ASHET requires that such groups be organised so that their programs of activities pay their way and make a contribution to the cost of services that ASHET provides. These services include public liability insurance cover for ASHET events and opportunities for communication through its website and email facilities.

ASHET policies

The following ASHET policies are relevant to the operation of local and special interest groups.

ASHET encourages the participation of non-members in its activities and expects that through appropriate charges for events they will contribute to meeting ASHET's overhead costs. ASHET publicises its activities to non-members through its website and email, through its contacts with other organisations and by word of mouth.

ASHET's areas of interest overlap with those of many other organisations, including state and local history associations, specialist history groups and professional organisations such as the Institution of Engineers Australia. ASHET aims to maintain friendly and cooperative relationships with these organisations, engage in joint activities where appropriate and to not compete with or upstage them in its programs of activities.

ASHET does not engage in lobbying, advocacy or making representations on behalf of organisations, individuals or good causes.

ASHET does not endorse or promote commercial products or services, and does not allow its membership records, mailing lists, website or activities to be used for any purposes other than pursuing ASHET's stated objectives. A statement of ASHET's objectives is included in its Constitution and on the home page of its website.

ASHET makes use of the internet, its website, email and telephone whenever possible as means of communication with members and others, because these services are convenient, efficient and cost-effective. ASHET communicates by post only with the small proportion of members who do not have internet access and when the physical transfer of documents is necessary.

ASHET does not reimburse members for the costs of meals, travel or accommodation incurred in attending committee or other meetings.

Management of ASHET and its local and special interest groups

ASHET is incorporated as a non-profit association in the state of New South Wales. This permits it to conduct activities anywhere in Australia. It is governed by a written Constitution that meets the statutory requirements of incorporation. ASHET is bound to conduct its affairs strictly in accordance with the Constitution. A copy of the Constitution can be downloaded from ASHET's website.

ASHET manages its affairs through an elected committee that meets regularly. It has no paid staff and its administration is carried out entirely by members on a voluntary basis. Members of the committee will willingly provide advice to new groups based on their own recent experience in establishing ASHET and organising its program of activities.

Local management of a group will be by a subcommittee operating under Clauses 21 and 22 of the ASHET Constitution. ASHET's committee will delegate functions to the subcommittee to allow it to conveniently and effectively manage the group. The functions delegated to the subcommittee will depend on the nature, size and requirements of the group and will include those needed to:

- arrange meetings and other events;
- make charges for activities, account for and bank the proceeds in ASHET's bank account;
- receive payments by cheque drawn on ASHET's bank account for the reimbursement of properly incurred and authorised out of pocket expenses;
- arrange for ASHET to pay by cheque authorised accounts in connection with group activities;
- conduct sub-committee meetings and make decisions on managing the group and its activities.
- participate in joint activities with other organisations that share its interests;
- have news and information on group activities promptly posted on ASHET's website;
- have an ASHET email mailbox for use in connection with group activities.

All the members of the subcommittee managing a group will be ASHET members. The subcommittee will have a clearly defined membership, keep minutes that record all decisions made by the subcommittee, and have effective procedures for controlling income and expenditure and safeguarding ASHET funds.

The subcommittee managing a group will maintain close contact with the group members and encourage their active participation in activities that further ASHET's objectives.

The subcommittee and the group will not:

- do anything that puts ASHET's reputation or its funds at risk;
- do anything that jeopardises the validity of ASHET's public liability insurance cover;
- enter into any agreement or contract involving expenditure on an item such as catering, venue or coach hire that is not wholly covered by related income already in hand.

ASHET will not underwrite the costs of any group activity such as a tour or a conference. ASHET will not pay on behalf of a group accounts for expenses for a group activity that are not wholly covered by related income already in hand or guaranteed.

Review of the guidelines

ASHET is at an early stage of its development as a society and at the time of adopting these guidelines has no active local or specialist groups. The committee will review the guidelines in the light of experience and modify them if necessary or appropriate.

If the guidelines appear to be inappropriate to a particular set of circumstances, then ASHET's committee, given a clear statement of the case and a reasonable time for consideration, will look at the case on its merits and make a decision accordingly.

Ian Arthur
Secretary, ASHET