

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION - Drafting Guidelines 2024

# Constitutional Review: what you said about the Membership options

## Background

As part of the Constitutional Review Programme, the Codesign group was tasked with the remit to look at membership options for InternetNZ.

There were 19 respondents to this survey on the Membership Options.

## What the codesign group was aiming to achieve

There were four key themes identified by the codesign group that were to inform the proposals going forward, they are:

* 1. A clear value proposition for members
  2. A membership that reflects the diversity of Aotearoa, New Zealand, and we need to know what that looks like
  3. There should be no financial barriers to joining InternetNZ
  4. Members should understand, uphold, and adhere to the Society’s objects, values and code of conduct, taking responsibility for their actions and interactions with other members.

## What you said.

**Value Proposition.** Nearly half (49%) supported or strongly supported the proposed purpose statement for membership at InternetNZ. Another 20% responded in the middle, with 30% not supporting the statement.

Alongside this, there was a very clear direction that the purpose of membership should only relate to the Objects of the Society. The first proposed statement felt vague and favoured the benefit to InternetNZ not to the members themselves. Some would like to see a stronger statement that demonstrates how membership enables InternetNZ to give effect to its objects.

**Diversity.** We asked about collecting personal and demographic information to help us understand the membership and therefore work toward building a more diverse membership. There was helpful guidance on this, and primarily that this should be optional for members to provide. There were several comments relating to the importance of privacy.

The drafting guidelines has an enabling provision for the collection of information from members, however, providing this information will be optional. Specifics around what type of information is collected and how it is protected is operational and insights and insights will be used to inform our membership programme.

**Financial barriers & fees, and engagement.** There was a fairly even split between supporting, not supporting and ‘I’m not sure’ regarding there being no financial barrier to joining InternetNZ as an individual, with nearly half (47.4%) preferring the Fee be set by Council.

There was concern making membership free would lessen the value of being a member. Some form of barrier was seen as valuable to ensure that those becoming members do so with the right intent, i.e. no nefarious intent. Whilst there was general supportiveness for no-financial barriers some reflected that $21p/a is a low bar for entry, and that those joining should be here to support the objects. There were comments which related to addressing membership fees for groups who may be systemically disadvantaged by InternetNZ.

Engagement based membership where it’s a requirement to fill out a member survey, in lieu of a fee, was not supported. It seemed difficult to envision and there were multiple comments relating to the loss of income through the membership fee. Some noted that either it could be lower cost or free for targeted groups (i.e. seniors, low income / hardship etc).

NB *membership fees do not generate substantive income for InternetNZ. Our income is derived from the wholesale of .nz domain names.*

**Code of Conduct.** Just over two-thirds (68.4%) agreed that the constitution should require members to adhere to the code of conduct, with slightly more (73.7%) agreeing with the values listed that will form part of the Code of Conduct.

There was a range of feedback surrounding the nuances of a code of conduct and the contexts in which a code of conduct can be utilised. Some reflected a code of conduct being used as a tool to exclude or eject people from membership; and that it should only be used for events or the like.

We also asked about what a Disputes Resolution process should include, and the feedback aligns with an approach that is outlined in the legislation, in Schedule 2 of the Act. Fairness, transparency, and independence were some key themes. There was a question about who this would apply to, and others who would like to see smaller disputes resolved quickly. There were specific comments about disputes raised claims of racism and should be passed onto an external resolution provider.

*NB: It is a requirement in the new legislation that we have a disputes resolution process, which includes provision for addressing misconduct. A code of conduct will serve as a framework to address any conduct of a member that may be cause for a dispute. One comment was made regarding our mandatory framing of this. Whilst the legislation specifies that we ‘may’ create a dispute resolution process, section 26(j) specifies that a Constitution ‘must contain’ procedures for resolving disputes.*

**Engagement & Participation.** There were mixed comments here ranging from general support for member participation through to enabling discussion on topics of interest. A few expressed that bringing back the mailing list would be good and that it seems that many communications have been shut down. Some commented that Slack was a good channel to engage with, and that they would enjoy more focused discussion channels by topics, rather than general channels. Many were of the view that engagement and participation should be self-motivated, though for varying reasons i.e. to ensure safety, not wanting to receive emails from some members; to wanting more open communication with all members.

**Fellows.** Nearly 80% of respondents said they support the Council to set processes, decision-making criteria and parameters for new Fellows. There was slightly stronger support for retaining current constitutional criteria compared with amending it. There were comments that the current Constitution does have these ‘proposed’ provisions, but they’re not implemented in the way the intent of these proposals do.

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