



# Supreme Council 33° of the The Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite for Australia

## Administration Handbook for Chapter Recorders & Council Grand Secretaries

### **Preface**

This handbook is intended to assist administrators in the discharge of their various responsibilities. The information contained herein is not intended to be exhaustive, but to provide direction where the Regulations are silent. It must also be noted that this document is not intended to supplant the primacy of the Regulations and in all cases where that document provides guidance, it is to be acknowledged.

The duties of the Chapter Recorder and Council Grand Secretary can be identified under the following categories:

- duties to the District;
- duties to the Supreme Council; and
- duties appertaining to the District Chapters and Councils;
- duties appertaining to the Higher Degrees.

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## Duties

### 1. *Distribution of Summonses*

- The Chapter Recorder or Council Grand Secretary will prepare and send an electronic copy of each summons, in any popular document format (e.g. MS Word, Open Office or PDF) or hardcopy to each member at least seven (7) days before the meeting date.
- A copy of the summons must also be sent to the Regional Commander, District Commander and District Recorder.

### 2. *Minutes*

- The Chapter Recorder or Council Grand Secretary will prepare the agenda, under advisement of the Sovereign or Grand Commander, prepare and circularise summonses and records the minutes of all Chapter or Council and committee meetings.
- The Recorder or Grand Secretary should circulate the minutes of the previous meeting, along with copies of any important inwards correspondence and audited statements of annual accounts with the summonses, to expedite the business meeting.
- The minutes of all meetings are to be confirmed in open meeting, and should be jointly signed by the Sovereign or Grand Commander, and the Recorder or Grand Secretary.

### 3. *Meeting Reports and Application Forms*

- Before forwarding, the Recorder or Grand Secretary is to ensure that each Meeting Report is complete and correct, that it is accompanied by correct and properly completed application forms (e.g. for candidates, joining and re-joining members and for affiliates) and where a fee is payable, that the correct fee is attached (cheque payable to 'Supreme Council) or electronic banking advice.
- Copies of all Meeting Reports from all Chapter and Council meetings must be sent to the District Recorder no later than seven (7) days after the meeting date.
- The forwarding of application papers to the District Recorder after a perfection or elevation, and for joining, re-joining or affiliating brethren (where requested by the brother), triggers the production of a Supreme Council certificate.

### 4. *Communication*

- All Chapters and Councils are required to communicate with the Supreme Council, Region and District through their District Recorder.
- A (generally) convenient form of communication for general messages is via email, and the use of this medium is encouraged by Supreme Council and within the District. However, all of the following are required to be sent to the District Recorder via traditional post:
  - a. proposed changes to Chapter or Council By-Laws, only after regular adoption by the Chapter or Council (with three copies of the By-laws signed by Sovereign or Grand Commander, in original)
  - b. papers for candidates, joining or re-joining members and affiliates (in original);
  - c. Annual Dues (with cheque for annual capitation and any other noted fees).

### 5. *Supporting District Chapters and Councils*

- The Chapter and Council administrations are requested to support the Supreme Council and District when and as required. The Chapter Recorders and Council Grand Secretaries are therefore requested to communicate all correspondence to their membership, preferably via email where possible, including distribution of:
  - a. Supreme Council, Regional or District advice on regulations, procedures, protocols or standards affecting the membership;
  - b. newsletters from Supreme Council, the Region or District, or Chapters and Councils within the District;
  - c. any educational material suitable for the general edification of the membership (e.g. approved lectures) ;
  - d. promotional material for the Rite (e.g. brochures)
  - e. The Chapter and Council administrations are also requested to assist in creating and strengthening a District *esprit de corps* wherever possible (e.g.: fostering inter-visitation, attendance at District or Regional meetings such as the Higher Degrees and meetings of the Chapter of Improvement) by circularising advice (e.g. summonses) for these meetings to all members, preferably via email, where possible.

## 6. Membership Database

- The Chapter Recorders and Council Grand Secretaries are to regularly maintain a database of membership within their Chapter or Council. This database may be a register of members or an electronic database.  
Note: The Grand East will allocate a Supreme Council database number for each member, this number **must** be used in all communications with the Grand East.
- The database will record details of all current (and possibly past) members within the Chapter or Council, their membership history within the Chapter or Council, current contact information, offices held and other roles or duties undertaken for the Rite, as known.
- An up-to-date copy of the database may be requested to be provided to the District Recorder to update records at the District or Regional levels.

## 7. Annual Report

- The Chapter Recorders and Council Grand Secretaries will also be requested to assist the District Recorder by providing data for the annual District Report, which must be completed for the year ended **31<sup>st</sup> December**, annually.
- The report is a summary of all activities within the Chapter or Council over the year, including:
  - a. membership movements (candidates, joining and re-joining members, affiliations, deaths, resignations, exclusions, honorary or emeritus memberships conferred) and details of current dual memberships within the Chapter and Council (taken from an annual survey, where done);
  - b. attendance levels at meetings;
  - c. details of papers/lecture or talks presented within Chapters or Councils;
  - d. charitable donations or benevolent activities undertaken by the Chapters or Councils;
  - e. honours accorded brethren; and
  - f. any other significant events.
- The Chapter Recorders and Council Grand Secretaries will usually be requested to provide the District Recorder this information before **15<sup>th</sup> December**, annually.

## 8. Annual Accounts

- The Treasurer will be responsible for administering Chapter or Council finances during his tenure and for ensuring all records are kept current and in an appropriate manner to ensure ready audit, annually.
- A Dues Book, recording the raising and payment of all dues and fees of the membership must be kept up-to-date.
- All receipts and payments must be recorded in an annual ledger and also kept up-to-date.
- The Treasurer is required to maintain, in stewardship, a suitable bank account and other investments, as applicable, for the Chapter or Council. To this end, it is recommended that those brethren authorised under the by-laws as empowered to operate that bank account for and on behalf of the Chapter or Council be updated as soon as these authorities change.
- The Treasurer is required to prepare an annual statement of Chapter or Council accounts for each financial year ending 30 June, annually.
- Each annual statement of accounts must be duly audited by an auditor elected or appointed by the membership, annually, and then countersigned by the auditor and Sovereign or Grand Commander before being copied for distribution to the membership for reception and adoption at the first meeting after the end of the financial year, annually.
- A copy of the adopted statement of annual accounts must be sent to the District Recorder before **15<sup>th</sup> December**, annually.

## 9. Annual Budget

- The Treasurer is also required to prepare an annual budget to assist the Chapter or Council (or committee) membership in setting dues and fees for the coming year.
- The budget must be sufficiently detailed so as to be able to guide financial decisions for the coming year and might include recommendations for amounts of dues and fees for that period.  
IMPORTANT: Treasurers must ensure that budgets include summaries of current/previous year's expenditure and incorporate the next year's Supreme Council fees and any other applicable Regional, District or Chapter of Improvement levy.
- The budget must be prepared in due time so that it can be distributed to the Chapter or Council membership before the meeting when dues and fees are determined each year.

## 10. Annual Returns (Dues)

- The Recorders and Grand Secretaries are required to check the preliminary annual returns sent from the District Recorder (or Grand East), ensure all current membership details are correct and report any changes to the District Recorder as soon as possible.
- Once the final returns are delivered to Chapters and Councils, a copy of each must be kept in Chapter or Council records. The Recorder or Secretary is then to follow-up with the Chapter or Council Treasurer to ensure the returns are paid by the due date (currently **31<sup>st</sup> January**, annually).

## 11. Candidates for Perfection (18°)

- The Recorder may issue every suitable and qualified brother a letter of invitation, with a copy of the current application form. A letter of invitation should include details of all costs (Degree fee, dues and presentations items: regulations, ritual, rose, lapel pin, etc.), proposed date for perfection and a suitable RSVP date with a note about the need for the candidate to procure his regalia, if applicable.
- Once an application is received, the Recorder is to ensure that all relevant details on the application are complete, and that the requisite fee is attached, before confirming the proposed date of perfection with the Sovereign.
- The Recorder will then write again to the candidate, finalising details for the meeting, advising the dress requirements and reminding him of the need to have his 18° regalia available at the meeting. If applicable – suggest with sticky labels attached (so that it does not become confused with that of any other candidate during the investiture).
- The Recorder will ensure all requisites are available for each candidate, including:
  - a. Supreme Council Regulations;
  - b. Chapter by-laws;
  - c. 18° ritual;
  - d. 18° Australian Constitution regalia (collar, jewel, lapel rose);
  - e. a lapel pin; and
- In addition, the following items might also be made available for the candidate to purchase, if desired:
  - a. Intermediate Degree (4-17°) rituals (SC Aust);
  - b. a copy of a translation of the 1786 Grand Constitutions;
  - c. any other item required by the Supreme Council, Regional Commander or District Commander.

## 12. Candidates for Elevation (30°)

- When a suitable and qualified brother is identified a letter of invitation may be issued, with a copy of the current application form. The letter of invitation should include details of all recommended Councils and costs (Degree fee, relevant Council dues and ritual, etc.) and a suitable RSVP date with a note about the need for the candidate to procure his new 30° regalia, if applicable. The letter will require the prospective candidate to return the application form to the District Recorder, who will obtain the signature of the District Commander (where the applicant's Chapter belongs) before it is forwarded to the relevant Council for processing.
- Once an application is received, the Grand Secretary is to ensure that all relevant details on the application are complete, before confirming the proposed date of elevation with the Grand Commander.
- The Grand Secretary will contact the candidate, finalising details for the meeting and reminding him of the need to acquire 30° regalia (Australian Constitution) for the meeting. if applicable – suggest with sticky labels attached (so that it does not become confused with that of any other candidate during the investiture).
- IMPORTANT: If an application is rejected by the District Commander, he will advise the brother personally of the reasons and indicate how this deficit might be overcome in order that his application might progress at a later date. To obviate the awkward situation of a District Commander rejecting or delaying an application, and any ensuing

embarrassment, only the District Recorder will invite every prospective candidate to apply for elevation. It is therefore recommended that no potential candidate be informed of a possible invitation before the letter of invitation is sent.

- NOTE: If there is an agreed calculus or set of criteria, within the Rite, for considering brethren for elevation, and it is the responsibility of the District Commander to ensure the minimum standard is reached before any brother is approved for issuance of an invitation.
- The Grand Secretary will ensure all requisites are available for each candidate, including:
  - a. Council by-laws;
  - b. 30° ritual;
  - c. 30° Australian Constitution regalia;
- In addition, the following items may also be made available for the candidate to purchase, if desired:
  - d. Intermediate Degree (19-29°) rituals (SC Aust);
  - e. any other item required by the Supreme Council, Regional Commander or District Commander.

### 13. Summonses

- As soon as the date is confirmed for a perfection or elevation, the Recorder or Grand Secretary should request the Grand Master of Ceremonies, or Director of Ceremonies, to begin to assemble the team for degree work (e.g. intermediate degrees, accolade, investiture, secrets, etc.). Once details of the team are in hand, the Recorder or Grand Secretary will prepare a summons for the meeting.
- The format of the summonses is at the discretion of the Recorder, but, several items are required to be included and need to be checked for completeness and currency, prior to distribution:
  - a. The details of the Sovereign Grand Commander, Regional Commander, District Commander and Most Wise Sovereign (titles, full names and honours, as appropriate), are to be noted on every summons:
    - i. Sovereign Grand Commander: M.: P.: Bro. ...
    - ii. Regional Commander: M.: Ill.: Bro. ... (or V.: P.: Bro. ..., as appropriate)
    - iii. District Commander: V.: Ill.: Bro. ...
  - b. Details of the date, place and timing of the meeting, with details of required dress.
  - c. Details of any dining fee to be paid by brethren attending an associated meal, the contact person and RSVP date.
  - d. The agenda to be included on the summons is, in general, as follows:
    - i. to open the meeting at (time)
    - ii. to receive visitors, District Commander or member of Supreme Council
    - iii. minutes, correspondence and accounts
    - iv. to ballot for a candidate for perfection or elevation, joining/re-joining or affiliation, appropriate (with the following details for each candidate. NOTE: a separate agenda item must be included for each type of ballot):
      - Full name (with Craft or AASR title and rank, and any relevant civil or military titles or honours, as appropriate) and birthdate;
      - Residential address / Business address – profession or occupation (present or past)
      - Craft Lodge name (for a perfection) or Rose Croix Chapter name (for an elevation), number and constitution (with 3° date for a perfection, or with 18° date for an elevation)
      - Sponsor names
      - The date certified as eligible by the District Commander (30°)
    - v. For the degree, as appropriate:
      - to perfect as a Sovereign Prince Rose Croix (with the following details for each candidate):
        - i. Full name (with Craft title and rank, and any relevant civil or military titles or honours) and birthdate;
        - ii. Date of approval at ballot, if not that meeting. (NOTE: it is recommended that ballots be conducted at a meeting prior to the planned 18° ceremony, as a matter of prudence.)
      - to elevate as a Grand Elect Knight Kadosh (with the following details for each candidate):
        - iii. Full name (with AASR title and rank, and any relevant civil or military titles or honours) and birthdate;
        - iv. Date of approval at ballot, if not that meeting. (NOTE: it is recommended that ballots be conducted at a meeting prior to the planned 30° ceremony, as a matter of prudence.)
    - vi. a list of Officers and brethren assisting in the ceremony
    - vii. Notice of Motion(s)
    - viii. Alms
    - ix. Memorial Ceremony for (departed brother's name and date of demise), as appropriate
    - x. Customary Risings (for a Chapter) or General Business (for a Council)

- xi. Third Point (for a Chapter)
- e. A list of all current members (name, degree and honours, as appropriate)
- f. A list of all current officers
- g. A toast list must also be included on each summons, including:
  - i. The Queen (mandatory)
  - ii. Supreme Council (mandatory)
  - iii. The District Commander (mandatory)

*Below toasts are discretionary*

  - iv. Our Newly Perfected Prince(s)
  - v. Our Absent Princes.
  - vi. Visitors

#### **14. Higher Degree Candidature and Communication 31° and 32°**

- The District Recorder will send a letter of invitation to any brethren approved by both the District Commander and Regional Commander for advancement each year. This letter should normally be received by any invited brother before the year's end. Solicitation for advancement may serve to delay a brother's eventual progress in the Rite.
- It is to be noted that all communication with a candidate will be through the District Recorder, firstly to avoid confusion over facts or requirements, and secondly to ensure that the District Recorder controls the process of completing an application.
- NOTE: There is an agreed calculus or set of criteria, within the Rite, for considering brethren for advancement to the Higher Degrees, and it is the responsibility of the District Commander to ensure the minimum standard is reached before any brother is approved for issuance of an invitation. Refer to the Regulations.

#### **15. Chapter and Council By-Laws**

- All Chapter and Council By-laws are based on a uniform set prescribed by Supreme Council. A copy of these Model By-laws is available from the Grand East. No proposed amendment to any by-law can abrogate Supreme Council regulations; nor should by-laws include matters already covered by the Regulations.
- The proposition to amend any by-law must be received as a notice of motion and appear on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved as per the Regulations.
- All proposed changes to the By-Laws must be approved by the District Commander and then by Supreme Council before they are in force.
- Three (3) copies of the complete amended by-laws, signed by the Sovereign or Grand Commander, are to be sent to the District Recorder for him to confirm the competence of the proposed changes before forwarding all copies to the District Commander for his approval (signature and date) and then on to the Supreme Council for their consideration.
- Once approval is received from Supreme Council, one (1) copy must be retained in the Chapter or Council records and the copies distributed to all current members and to all future candidates.

#### **16. Honorary Membership**

- Honorary membership may be conferred by a Chapter or Council, sparingly, only on those brethren who make considerable contributions to the Chapter or Council over a long period of membership.
- Chapters and Councils will continue to pay capitation fees to Supreme Council and any levy to the District for all honorary members
- The proposition to confer honorary membership must be received as a notice of motion and appears on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved/rejected by simple majority.
- Proposals for honorary membership do not need to be approved by the District or Regional Commanders or by Supreme Council, but the District Recorder should be informed by the Recorder or Secretary as soon as practical after the conferral. NOTE: A change of membership status will appear on the Meeting Report of the Chapter or Council.
- A copy of any advice of award of honorary membership is to be kept in Chapter or Council records.

#### **17. Emeritus Membership**

- Emeritus membership may be conferred by a Chapter or Council, sparingly, only on those brethren who make considerable contributions to the Chapter or Council over a long period of membership and who are no longer able to attend meetings (e.g. due to age, ill health or infirmity).
- Chapters and Councils will not pay capitation fees to Supreme Council or any levy to the District for any emeritus members after the current year's fees are paid.

- The proposition to confer emeritus membership must be received as a notice of motion and appear on the agenda of the subsequent Chapter or Council summons. The summons will detail the proposition and include the name of the proposer. The motion is approved/rejected by simple majority.
- Proposals for emeritus membership do not need to be approved by the District or Regional Commanders or by Supreme Council, but the District Recorder should be informed by the Recorder or Secretary as soon as practical after the conferral. NOTE: A change of membership status will appear on the Meeting Report of the Chapter or Council.
- A copy of any advice of award of emeritus membership is to be kept in Chapter or Council records.

#### **18. Affiliating Brethren**

- Any member of the Rite affiliating from a sister Supreme Council is required to provide a clearance certificate or letter and affirm in writing that he maintains no affiliation with any other Supreme Council at the time of application.

#### **19. District Stock (optional)**

- Stock items may be procured from some District Recorders who may maintain a minimum stock of items regularly required within the District Chapters and Councils:
  - a. Supreme Council Regulations;
  - b. Copies of Rituals (including the Intermediate Degrees 4-17° and 19-29°);
  - c. Lapel Pins; and
  - d. Lapel Roses.
- All stock procured from the District Recorder, must be paid for with every order – including any postal charge.
- All stock is available from the Grand East and must be paid for with every order – including any postal charge.

#### **20. Change of Status Reporting**

- When required, the Recorder or Secretary will write to the District Recorder to request a change of status report be raised for Supreme Council, and it must be accompanied by any requisite paperwork (e.g. proposed amended By-laws).
- A Change of Status Form must be raised by the District Recorder, recording all relevant details of the proposed change for a District Chapter or Council, or for a new Warrant. Rationale for a requested Change of Status include:
  - a. Reception from another Supreme Council
  - b. Change of Name
  - c. Change of Meeting place
  - d. Change of meeting pattern
  - e. Amalgamation
  - f. Recess
  - g. Surrender
  - h. Centenary/Rededication
- A copy of the form is to be kept in Chapter or Council records.

#### **21. Dispensations**

- Any Chapter or Council proposing a change to a meeting (e.g. date or place) is required to have received the approval of the Regional Commander and be provided with a signed Dispensation before the changed meeting details may be promulgated.
- The Recorder or Grand Secretary is required to communicate the request from a Chapter or Council for dispensation to the District Recorder for recommendation by the District Commander and approval by the Regional Commander. The District Recorder will then provide their reply to the Chapter or Council, with the dispensation, as appropriate.
- A copy of the dispensation is to be read at the meeting and a copy of the Dispensation is to be pasted into Chapter or Council minutes.
- The Regional Commander may require payment of a dispensation fee and the District Recorder may request that fee be paid before the dispensation is provided. Payment should be made out to “The Supreme Council.”