



Australian Women's Coalition

Constitution

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Australian Women's Coalition

Constitution

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AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S COALITION

OBJECTS

Preamble:

The Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) is an entity comprising a number of national women's non-government organisations.

AWC is a coalition whose ethos is non party political, non-sectarian, and non-racist. It was formed to further develop networking between women's organisations, to develop policies of benefit to women and to enable a stronger voice for women in the community.

The Mission Statement of the Coalition is:

We the undersigned members of the Australian Women's Coalition will work collaboratively to advance the status of women.

The Key Objectives of the Australian Women's Coalition are to:

- increase communication within the women's sector;
- clearly identify the needs of women represented by the coalition partners; and
- initiate policies, programs and partnerships to address these needs.

This will be achieved by:

- working collaboratively to provide informed and representative advice to government on issues affecting women;
- representing the diverse views of women through consultation with the women's sector, their own constituencies and other groups and organisations relevant to women's concerns;
- acting as a conduit for the exchange of information between government and the women's sector;
- undertaking specific policy analysis on individual areas of organisational expertise and concern; and
- developing and maintaining effective governance structures to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of national secretariats.

All members have equal rights in formulating the key objectives of the Coalition.

RULES

Part 1.1

Preliminary

1. Definitions

In these rules:

financial year means the year ending on 30 June.

member means a member organisation of the Coalition.

a nominated representative of a member is a person representing a member

ordinary Executive member means a member of the Executive who is not an office-bearer of the Coalition as referred to in Rule 11 (1) (b).

secretary means the person holding office under these rules as secretary of the Coalition..

secretariat means the provider of secretarial services to the Coalition

the *Act* means the *Associations Incorporation Act 1991*.

the *regulations* means the *Associations Incorporation Regulations 1991*.

meetings are attended by the nominated representatives of Coalition members and include face to face meetings, teleconferences and video conferences

1A Application of Legislation Act 2001

The *Legislation Act 2001* applies to these rules in the same way as it would if they were an instrument made under the Act.

Part 1.2 Membership

2. Membership qualifications

- (1) The Australian Women's Coalition (AWC) is an entity comprising a number of national women's non-government organisations. The names of members at the time of incorporation are:
 - Australian Church Women
 - Australian Federation of Medical Women Incorporated
 - Catholic Women's League Australia Incorporated
 - COTA National Seniors Partnership Limited
 - Guides Australia Incorporated
 - National Council of Women Australia Incorporated Limited
 - Pan Pacific and Southeast Asia Women's Association of Australia Incorporated
 - Soroptimist International of Australia
 - UNIFEM AUSTRALIA INCORPORATED
 - Zonta International - District 24
- (2) An organisation is qualified to be a member if—
 - (a) the organisation has not ceased to be a member of the Coalition at any time after incorporation of the Coalition under the Act; or
 - (b) the organisation—
 - (i) has been nominated for membership in accordance with rule 3 (1); and
 - (ii) has been approved for membership in accordance with rule 3 (2).
- (3) No fees by way of annual subscription shall be charged to the members unless otherwise decided by the membership at an annual general meeting.

3. Nomination for membership

- (1) A nomination of an organisation for membership of the Coalition__
 - (a) shall be made by a member of the Coalition in writing in the form set out in appendix 1; and
 - (b) shall be lodged with the secretariat to the Coalition.
- (2) As soon as is practicable after receiving a nomination for membership, the secretariat shall refer the nomination to the members of the Coalition who shall determine whether to approve or to reject the nomination.
- (3) Where the members of the Coalition determine to approve a nomination for membership, the secretariat shall as soon as practicable after that determination notify the nominee of that approval.
- (4) The secretariat shall, on acceptance by the nominee, enter the nominee's name in the register of members and, on the name being so entered, the nominee shall become a member of the Coalition.

4. Membership entitlements not transferable

A right, privilege or obligation which an organisation has by reason of being a member of the Coalition—

- (a) is not capable of being transferred or transmitted to another organisation; and
- (b) terminates on cessation of the organisation's membership.

5. Cessation of membership

An organisation ceases to be a member of the Coalition if the organisation —

- (a) is wound up; or
- (b) resigns from membership of the Coalition; or
- (c) is expelled from the Coalition in accordance with Rule 8.

6. Resignation of membership

- (1) An organisation is not entitled to resign from membership of the Coalition except in accordance with this rule.
- (2) An organisation may resign from membership of the Coalition by first giving notice (being not less than 1 month or, if the Executive has determined a shorter period, that shorter period) in writing to the secretariat of the member's intention to resign and, on the expiration of the period of notice, the member ceases to be a member.
- (3) Where an organisation ceases to be a member, the secretariat shall make an appropriate entry in the register of members recording the date on which the member ceased to be a member.

7. Members' liabilities

The liability of a member to contribute towards the payment of the debts and liabilities of the Coalition or the costs, charges and expenses of the winding up of the Coalition is limited to \$10 per member.

8. Disciplining of members

- (1) Where the Executive is of the opinion that a member—
 - (a) has persistently refused or neglected to comply with a provision of these rules; or
 - (b) has persistently and wilfully acted in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Coalition;
the Executive may, by resolution—
 - (c) expel the member from the Coalition; or
 - (d) suspend the member from such rights and privileges of

membership of the Coalition as the Executive may determine for a specified period.

- (2) A resolution of the Executive under subrule (1) is of no effect unless the Executive, at a meeting held not earlier than 14 days and not later than 28 days after service on the member of a notice under subrule (3), confirms the resolution in accordance with this rule.
- (3) Where the Executive passes a resolution under subrule (1), the secretary shall, as soon as practicable, cause a notice in writing to be served on the member—
 - (a) setting out the resolution of the Executive and the grounds on which it is based; and
 - (b) stating that a representative of the member organisation may address the Executive at a meeting to be held not earlier than 14 days and not later than 28 days after service of the notice; and
 - (c) stating the date, place and time of that meeting; and
 - (d) informing the member that a representative of the member may do either or both of the following:
 - (i) attend and speak at that meeting;
 - (ii) submit to the Executive at or prior to the date of that meeting written representations relating to the resolution.
- (4) Subject to the Act, section 50, at a meeting of the Executive mentioned in subrule (2), the Executive shall—
 - (a) give to the member mentioned in subrule (1) an opportunity to make oral representations; and
 - (b) give due consideration to any written representations submitted to the Executive by that member at or prior to the meeting; and
 - (c) by resolution determine whether to confirm or to revoke the resolution of the Executive made under subrule (1).
- (5) Where the Executive confirms a resolution under subrule (4), the secretariat shall, within 7 days after that confirmation, by notice in writing inform the member of that confirmation and of the member's right of appeal under rule 9.
- (6) A resolution confirmed by the Executive under subrule (4) does not take effect—
 - (a) until the expiration of the period within which the member is entitled to appeal against the resolution where the member does not exercise the right of appeal within that period; or
 - (b) where within that period the member exercises the right of appeal, unless and until the Coalition confirms the resolution in accordance with rule 9 (4).

9. Right of appeal of disciplined member

- (1) A member may appeal to the Coalition in general meeting against a resolution of the Executive which is confirmed under rule 8(4), within 7 days after notice of the resolution is served on the member, by lodging with the secretary a notice to that effect.

- (2) On receipt of a notice under subrule (1), the secretariat shall notify the Executive which shall convene a general meeting of the Coalition to be held within 21 days after the date on which the secretary received the notice or as soon as possible after that date.
- (3) Subject to the Act, section 50, at a general meeting of the Coalition convened under subrule (2)—
 - (a) no business other than the question of the appeal shall be transacted; and
 - (b) the Executive and the member shall be given the opportunity to make representations in relation to the appeal orally or in writing, or both; and
 - (c) the members present shall vote by secret ballot on the question of whether the resolution made under rule 8 (4) should be confirmed or revoked.
- (4) If the meeting passes a special resolution in favour of the confirmation of the resolution made under rule 8 (4), that resolution is confirmed.

Part 1.3 Executive

10. Powers of Executive

The Executive subject to the Act, the regulations, these rules, and to any resolution passed by the Coalition in a general meeting—

- (a) shall control and manage the affairs of the Coalition; and
- (b) may exercise all such functions as may be exercised by the Coalition other than those functions that are required by these rules to be exercised by the Coalition in a general meeting; and
- (c) has power to perform all such acts and do all such things as appear to the Executive to be necessary or desirable for the proper management of the affairs of the Coalition.

11. Constitution and membership

- (1) The Executive shall consist of:
 - (a) the following office-bearers, namely:
 - the president;
 - two vice-presidents;
 - the treasurer;
 - the secretary; and
 - (b) may appoint members of the Coalition as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee up to and including the Annual General Meeting next ,following the date of appointment.
 - (c) and the Immediate Past President as an ex-officio (non-voting) position until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

(2) Each member of the Executive shall, subject to these rules, hold office until the conclusion of the annual general meeting following the date of the member's election, but is eligible for re-election.

(3) In the event of a vacancy in the membership of the Executive, the Executive may appoint a person eligible for nomination under rule 12 (1) to fill the vacancy and the person so appointed shall hold office, subject to these rules, until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Coalition.

12. Election of Executive members

(1) Nominated representatives of any member of the Coalition are eligible for nomination to the Executive.

(2) Nominations of candidates for election to the Executive
(a) shall be made in writing, signed by the nominated representatives of two members of the Coalition and accompanied by the written consent of the candidate (which may be endorsed on the nomination form); and

(b) shall be delivered to the secretariat of the Coalition not less than 7 days before the date fixed for the annual general meeting at which the election is to take place.

(3) If insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies on the Executive, the candidates nominated shall be deemed to be elected and further nominations shall be received at the annual general meeting.

(4) If insufficient further nominations are received, any vacant positions remaining on the Executive shall be deemed to be vacancies.

(5) If the number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, the persons nominated shall be taken to be elected.

(6) If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot shall be held.

(7) The ballot for the election of the Executive shall be conducted at the annual general meeting in such manner as the Executive may direct.

(8) A person is not eligible to simultaneously hold more than one position on the Executive.

(9) The Executive office-bearers of the Coalition shall hold office for a one year term and be eligible for re-election in the following year. The Executive office-bearers will not hold the same office for more than two consecutive terms with the exception of the Treasurer who may hold office for four consecutive terms.

13. Secretary

- (1) The secretary of the Coalition shall, as soon as practicable after being appointed as secretary, notify the secretariat of his or her address
- (2) The secretary shall ensure that the secretariat keeps minutes of—
 - (a) all elections and appointments of office-bearers and ordinary Executive members; and
 - (b) the names of members of the Executive present at a Executive meeting or a general meeting; and
 - (c) all proceedings at Executive meetings and general meetings.
- (3) Minutes of proceedings at a meeting shall be signed by the person presiding at the meeting or by the person presiding at the next succeeding meeting.

14. Treasurer

- (1) The treasurer of the Coalition shall ensure that
 - (a) all moneys due to the Coalition are collected and received and that all payments authorised by the Coalition are paid; and
 - (b) the correct accounts and books are kept showing the financial affairs of the Coalition with full details of all receipts and expenditure connected with the activities of the Coalition.

15. Vacancies

- (1) For these rules, a vacancy in the office of a member of the Executive occurs if the person—
 - (a) dies; or
 - (b) her or his organisation ceases to be a member of the Coalition; or
 - (c) resigns the office; or
 - (d) is removed from office under rule 16; or
 - (e) becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Act; or
 - (f) suffers from mental or physical incapacity; or
 - (g) is disqualified from office under the Act, section 63 (1); or
 - (h) is absent without reasonable excuse from all meetings of the

Executive held during a period of 6 months.

16. Removal of Executive members

The Coalition in general meeting may by resolution, subject to the Act, section 50, remove any member of the Executive from the office of member of the Executive before the expiration of the member's term of office.

17. Executive meetings and quorum

- (1) The Executive shall meet at least 3 times in each calendar year at such place and time as the Executive may determine.
- (2) Additional meetings of the Executive may be convened by any member of the Executive.
- (3) Oral or written notice of a meeting of the Executive shall be given by the secretariat to each member of the Executive at least 48 hours (or such other period as may be unanimously agreed on by the members of the Executive) before the time appointed for the holding of the meeting.
- (4) Notice of a meeting given under subrule (3) shall specify the general nature of the business to be transacted at the meeting and no business other than that business shall be transacted at the meeting, except business which the Executive members present at the meeting unanimously agree to treat as urgent business.
- (5) Any 3 members of the Executive constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a meeting of the Executive.
- (6) No business shall be transacted by the Executive unless a quorum is present and, if within half an hour after the time appointed for the meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting stands 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 after the time appointed for the meeting, the meeting shall be dissolved.
- (8) At meetings of the Executive —
 - (a) the chairperson shall be the president or one of the vice-presidents; or
 - (b) if the president and vice-presidents are absent— one of the remaining members of the Executive may be chosen by the members present to preside.

18. Delegation by Executive to sub committee

- (1) The Executive may appoint one or more subcommittees from among current members of the organisations forming membership of the Coalition and, by instrument in writing, delegate to such subcommittees such of the functions of the Executive as are specified in the instrument, other than—
 - (a) this power of delegation; and
 - (b) a function which is a function imposed on the Executive by the Act, by any other Territory law, or by resolution of the Coalition in general meeting.
- (2) A function, the exercise of which has been delegated to a sub committee under this rule may, while the delegation remains unrevoked, be exercised from time to time by the sub committee in accordance with the terms of the delegation.

- (3) A delegation under this rule may be made subject to such conditions or limitations as to the exercise of any function, or as to time or circumstances, as may be specified in the instrument of delegation.
- (4) Notwithstanding any delegation under this rule, the Executive may continue to exercise any function delegated.
- (5) Any act or thing done or suffered by a sub committee acting in the exercise of a delegation under this rule has the same force and effect as it would have if it had been done or suffered by the Executive.
- (6) The Executive may, by instrument in writing, revoke wholly or in part any delegation under this rule.
- (7) A sub committee may meet and adjourn as it thinks proper.

19. Voting and decisions

- (1) Questions arising at a meeting of the Executive or of any sub committee appointed by the Executive shall be determined by a majority of the votes of members of the Executive or sub committee present at the meeting.
- (2) Each member present at a meeting of the Executive or of any sub committee appointed by the Executive (including the person presiding at the meeting) is entitled to 1 vote but, in the event of an equality of votes on any question, the person presiding may exercise a second or casting vote.
- (3) Subject to rule 17 (5), the Executive may act notwithstanding any vacancy on the Executive .
- (4) Any act or thing done or suffered, or purporting to have been done or suffered, by the Executive or by a sub committee appointed by the Executive, is valid and effectual notwithstanding any defect that may afterwards be discovered in the appointment or qualification of any member of the Executive or sub committee.

Part 1.4 General meetings

20. Annual general meetings—holding of

- (1) With the exception of the first annual general meeting of the Coalition, the Coalition shall, at least once in each calendar year and within the period of 5 months after the expiration of each financial year of the Coalition, convene an annual general meeting of nominated representatives of the member organisations.
- (2) The Coalition shall hold its first annual general meeting—
 - (a) within the period of 18 months after its incorporation under the Act; and
 - (b) within the period of 5 months after the expiration of the first financial year of the Coalition.
- (3) Sub-rules (1) and (2) have effect subject to the powers of the registrar-general under the Act, section 120 in relation to extensions of time.

21. Annual general meetings—calling of and business at

- (1) The annual general meeting of the nominated representatives of the member organisations shall, subject to the Act, be convened on such date and at such place and time as the Executive 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 shall be—

- (a) to confirm the minutes of the last preceding annual general meeting ; and
 - (b) to receive from the Executive reports on the activities of the Coalition during the last preceding financial year; and
 - (c) to elect members of the Executive, including office-bearers; and
 - (d) to receive and consider the statement of accounts and the reports that are required to be submitted to members under the Act, section 73 (1).
 - (e) to confirm the appointment of the Auditor for the following year and
 - (f) to confirm the appointment of the Public Officer.
- (3) An annual general meeting shall be specified as such in the notice convening it in accordance with rule 23.
- (4) An annual general meeting shall be conducted in accordance with the provisions of this part.

22. General meetings—calling of

- (1) The Executive may, whenever it thinks fit, convene a general meeting of the Coalition.
- (2) The Executive shall, on the requisition in writing of not less than three nominated representatives of the member organisations, convene a general meeting of the Coalition.
- (3) A requisition of members for a general meeting—
 - (a) shall state the purpose or purposes of the meeting; and
 - (b) shall be signed by the nominated representatives of the member organisations making the requisition; and
 - (c) shall be lodged with the secretariat; and
 - (d) may consist of several documents in a similar form, each signed by two or more of the nominated representatives of the member organisations making the requisition.
- (4) If the Executive fails to convene a general meeting within one month after the date on which a requisition of nominated representatives of the member organisations for the meeting is lodged with the secretariat, any two or more of the nominated representatives of the member organisations who made the requisition may convene a general meeting to be held not later than 3 months after that date.
- (5) A general meeting convened by nominated representatives of the member organisations referred to in subrule (4) shall be convened as nearly as is practicable in the same manner as general meetings are convened by the Executive and any nominated representative of the member organisations who thereby incurs expense is entitled to be reimbursed by the Coalition for any reasonable expense so incurred.

23. Notice

- (1) Except where the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the Coalition, the secretariat shall, at least 14 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, cause to be sent to each member at the member's address or email address appearing in the register of members, a notice specifying the place, date and time of the meeting and the nature of the business proposed to be transacted at the meeting.
- (2) Where the nature of the business proposed to be dealt with at a general meeting requires a special resolution of the Coalition, the secretariat shall, at least 21 days before the date fixed for the holding of the general meeting, cause notice to be sent to each member in the manner provided in subrule (1) specifying,

in addition to the matter required under that subrule, the intention to propose the resolution as a special resolution.

- (3) A member desiring to bring any business before a general meeting may give notice in writing of that business to the secretariat who shall include that business in the next notice calling a general meeting given after receipt of the notice from the member.

24. General meetings—procedure and quorum

- (1) No item of business shall be transacted at a general meeting unless a quorum of nominated representatives of member organisations entitled under these rules to vote is present during the time the meeting is considering that item.
- (2) Fifty percent of nominated representatives of member organisations present in person (being members entitled under these rules to vote at a general meeting) constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of a general meeting.
- (3) If within 30 minutes after the appointed time for the commencement of a general meeting a quorum is not present, the meeting if convened on the requisition of members shall be dissolved and in any other case shall stand adjourned to the same day in the following week at the same time and (unless another place is specified at the time of 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.
- (4) If at the adjourned meeting a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the time appointed for the commencement of the meeting, the nominated representatives of member organisations present (being not less than 5) shall constitute a quorum.

25. Presiding member

- (1) The president or one of the vice-presidents shall preside at each general meeting of the Coalition.
- (2) If the president and both vice-presidents are absent from a general meeting, the members present shall elect one of their number to preside at the meeting.

26. Adjournment

- (1) The person presiding at 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 shall be transacted at an adjourned meeting other than the business left unfinished at the meeting at which the adjournment took place.
- (2) Where a general meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, the secretariat shall give written or oral notice of the adjourned meeting to each member of the Coalition 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 subrules (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.

27. Making of decisions

- (1) A question arising at a general meeting of the Coalition shall be determined on a show of hands and, unless before or on the declaration of the show of hands a poll is demanded, a declaration by the person presiding 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 Coalition, is evidence of the fact without proof of the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of or against that resolution.

- (2) At a general meeting of the Coalition, a poll may be demanded by the person presiding or by not less than 3 nominated representatives of the member organisations present.
- (3) Where the poll is demanded at a general meeting, the poll shall be taken—
 - (a) immediately in the case of a poll which relates to the election of the person to preside at the meeting or to the question of an adjournment; or
 - (b) in any other case, in such manner and at such time before the close of the meeting as the person presiding directs, and the resolution of the poll on the matter shall be deemed to be the resolution of the meeting on that matter.
- (4) The nominated representative of a member organisation may with the approval of the meeting be granted a reasonable request for a vote on a particular matter to be deferred to allow her to consult with her member organisation.

28. Voting

- (1) Subject to subrule (3), on any question arising at a general meeting of the Coalition a member has 1 vote only.
- (2) All votes shall be given personally.
- (3) In the case of an equality of votes on a question at a general meeting, the person presiding is entitled to exercise a second or casting vote.

Part 1.5 Miscellaneous

29. Funds—source

- (1) The funds of the Coalition shall be derived from any such entrance or annual subscription of members, grants, donations and, subject to any resolution passed by the Coalition in general meeting and subject to the Act, section 114, such other sources as the Executive determines.
- (2) All money received by the Coalition shall be deposited as soon as practicable and without deduction to the credit of the Coalition's bank account.
- (3) The Coalition shall, as soon as practicable after receiving any money, issue an appropriate receipt.

30. Funds—management

- (1) Subject to any resolution passed by the Coalition in general meeting, the funds of the Coalition shall be used for the objects of the Coalition in such manner as the Executive determines.
- (2) All cheques, drafts, bills of exchange, promissory notes and other negotiable instruments shall be signed by any 2 members of the Executive, or one Executive member and one employee so authorised by the Coalition.

31. Alteration of objects and rules

The aims and objects of the Coalition and these rules may be altered only by special resolution in accordance with the ACT Associations Incorporation Act.1991.

32. Common seal

- (1) The common seal of the Coalition shall be kept in the custody of the Secretariat.
- (2) The common seal shall not be affixed to any instrument except by the authority of the Executive and the affixing of the common seal shall be attested by the signatures of two members of the Executive.

33. Custody of books

Subject to the Act, the regulations and these rules, the secretary shall cause to be kept in the custody of the Secretariat all records, books, and other documents relating to the Coalition

34. Inspection of books

The records, books and other documents of the Coalition shall be open to inspection by a member of the Coalition at the secretariat in the Australian Capital Territory, free of charge, at any reasonable hour.

35. Service of notice

- (1) For these rules, a notice may be served by or on behalf of the Coalition on any member either personally or by sending it by email, electronic means or by post to the address of the nominated representative of the member organisation shown in the register of members.
- (2) Where a document is sent to a member by properly addressing, prepaying and posting or emailing it to the member, the document shall, unless the contrary is proved, be deemed for these rules to have been served on the person at the time at which the document would have been delivered in the ordinary course of post.

36. Surplus property

- (1) At the first general meeting of the Coalition, the Coalition shall pass a special resolution nominating—
 - (a) another association for the Act, section 92 (1) (a); or
 - (b) a fund, authority or institution for the Act, section 92 (1) (b);in which it is to vest its surplus property in the event of the dissolution or winding up of the Coalition.
- (2) An association nominated under subrule (1) (a) must fulfil the requirements specified in the Act, section 92 (2).

37 Proxy

- (1) Voting by proxy will not be allowed.

Appendix 1 (see rule 3 (1))

Application for membership of Australian Women’s Coalition Inc.

.....
(name of organisation)

whose postal address is

hereby applies to become a member of Australian Women’s Coalition Inc and in the event of admission as a member, agrees to be bound by the Constitution of the Australian Women’s Coalition Inc.

Dated:

Signed:.....

(President)

Dated:

Signed:.....

(Secretary)

Nomination of applicant

.....
(name of nominating organisation)

being a member of the Australian Women’s Coalition Inc, hereby nominates

for
(name of organisation)

membership of the Coalition.

Dated:

Signed:.....

(President)