



# VICTORIAN NAGARATHAR SANGAM AUSTRALIA

## Articles of Association

### 1. Objective

Found Date: Dec 11, 2003

The Victorian Nagarathar Sangam Australia (VNSA) was established in 2003, by Melbourne Nagarathar members who felt there was a strong need to unite and promote the cultural identity of all Nattukkotai Nagarathars residing in Victoria state of Australia. The members also wanted to support regular program of learning, assistance, cultural, religious and recreational activities.

The objective of the Sangam as follows:

1. To be a support group for Nagarathar community residing in Victoria, Australia.
2. To provide support to new Nagarathar immigrants in Victorian, Australia.
3. To promote the traditional values of Nagarathars such as charity, spiritual life and righteousness among children.
4. To offer financial assistance to Nagarathars, specifically for education, marriage and any other welfare needs.
5. To hold events that promote the cultural identity and values of Nagarathar, maintain the rules and regulations of the society we live in.
6. To give back to the Australian community at large whenever the need arises.

### 2. Purpose of Document:

This document is a VNSA interpretation of the Model rules set by CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA.

### 3. Membership

#### *a. Eligibility*

All Victorian Nagarathars and their family members who normally live or intend to live in Victorian state of Australia for a period of at-least 3 months are eligible to become members of Victorian Nagarathar Sangam, Australia.

The prescribed membership form needs to be filled in, for becoming a member of the Sangam. The filled in membership form may be handed over or sent to any of the Executive Committee members, along with the Membership Fee.

The Executive Committee reserves the right to cancel the membership or reject the application for membership, without assigning any reasons, what so ever it may be. The member may as well at any time decide to withdraw his/ her membership from Nagarathar Sangam Australia by notifying the Executive Committee. The membership fee paid will not be refunded.

Membership ceases automatically when:

- The member does not have a valid visa to stay in Australia.
- If they fail to pay the membership fee and does not inform the Executive Committee within 3 months from the membership fee due date about their intent to continue as a member. The payment should be made within 6 months from the due date. (Membership fee is usually due on Pillayar Nonbu function date)

### ***b. Membership Fee***

The current annual membership fee is \$30.00 for family and \$15.00 for single membership. The membership fee might vary; the new fee structure requires approval from the members at the AGM (Annual General Meeting). All unmarried children can be included in the membership of the parents under the family membership category.

Those who have paid this membership fee only will be considered as the members of the VNSA.

Any member can withdraw his/ her membership at any time, through a letter addressed to the Secretary. However, the membership fee paid for the current and past years will not be refunded, in such cases.

*Exception:* If a new members joins VNSA by filling in the application form and pays the Membership Fees (Pulli Vari) in the third quarter of the VNSA annual Term then this Membership Fees will be carried forward for the next year's annual term. That is for example, if a new member joins VNSA during the months of (Q3) Oct to Dec of 2012, then this membership fees is valid for the full year of 2013.

### ***c. Active Member***

Victorian Nagarathar Sangam Australia members who attends one or more events in the calendar year (January-December) organized by Nagarathar Sangam Australia is termed as an Active member for that year.

#### ***d. Founder Member***

Nagarathar Sangam Australia, members for the first year (2003) are the founder members of Nagarathar Sangam Australia. Founder members shall discuss directly with the Executive committee in regards to Sangam matters. Every executive committee should have at least one founder member or a member from the previous Executive committee, who should also be a current member.

#### ***e. Member's Responsibility***

Members of VNNSA should adopt the following in order to remain as a member:

- Complete and Sign membership enrollment form prior to commencing membership.
- Pay the annual fee in full every year.

### **4. Organization**

The Sangam will be managed by an Executive Committee that comprises of:

1. President
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Management Committee member – Public Officer
5. Management Committee member

The executive committee can be formed through voluntary nomination by the group members. An election might be conducted if and when requested by the majority of group members.

The above stated positions are mutually agreed and self assigned by the Executive committee members.

One of the positions in the Executive Committee shall be reserved for a Founder Member or a member from the previous Executive committee. A Founder member for this purpose is one who was a member in the very first year of inception of the Sangam (2003) and also holds a membership currently.

The Executive committee will hold their office for a period of two years and a new committee will be elected at the General Body Meeting, normally held on the occasion of Pillaiyar Nonbu.

Only those members who hold current membership for a period of at least three months prior to the date of AGM will be eligible to vote or contest in the Elections. No member shall hold the office of an Executive Committee in any capacity for more than three consecutive terms unless agreed.

The executive committee can be reorganized at any time through a unanimous decision approved by majority of members.

## **5. Responsibilities**

The President will provide necessary guidelines to the Sangam for effective functioning and also preside over the Executive committee meetings.

The Secretary will be responsible for the general conduct of the Sangam in organizing various events, for the benefit of the members. The Secretary will send circulars to the members on any programs organized or any other matter of interest to the members.

Treasurer is responsible for maintaining the accounts and providing the necessary financial plans for the programs organized by the Sangam.

Management Committee member, can jointly assist and/or support on any of the above activities or roles.

It may be noted that all the executive committee postings are only voluntary and no remuneration will be paid, in any form.

## **6. Bank Accounts**

A Bank account will be operated in the name of the Sangam, that can be jointly operated by any two of the Treasurer, the Secretary and the President. The Bank Cards, the accounts and the money will be held by the Treasurer.

The Executive committee may, as and when necessary, decide to collect additional money if required for specific events from those participating in those events.

One of the members of the Sangam will/can be appointed as an Auditor to go through the accounts, offer suitable advice to the treasurer and also certify the accounts for the benefit of the members.

## **7. General Body Meeting / AGM (Annual General Meeting)**

Normally, there will be an annual General Body meeting on the occasion of Pillaiyar Nonbu. However, if the Executive Committee desires, a General Body Meeting may be called for, any time, as necessary.

In the event of any member considering the actions of the Executive Committee unsatisfactory, he may call for a General Body Meeting. However, such meetings will be treated as the official meeting of the Sangam only if attended by at-least majority of the members of the Sangam.

It may be noted that only expenses incurred for official meetings will be met by the Sangam.

## 8. Annual Term / Financial Year

For VNSA the Financial Year is from January to December.

Quarter 1: Jan to March

Quarter 2: April to June

Quarter 3: July to Sept

Quarter 4: Oct to Dec

## 9. Election & Voting

Under circumstances when the members cannot unanimously agree on choosing the executive committee members during the AGM, an election may be called.

The need for election may also arise when more than one eligible member is interested in holding the same post within the Executive committee. Every paid member for the current year and their spouse are eligible to vote in the election. Single paid member for the current year is eligible for voting.

Both husband and wife are eligible for one vote each, if they hold a valid 'family membership'. Members who hold valid 'single membership' is allowed for single vote during the election.

## 10. Events & Activities

Victorian Nagarathar Sangam Australia Executive Committee conducts a minimum of two events every calendar year (January-December). The regular events are:

Akshaya Tritiya – Picnic Lunch or dinner  
Pillaiyar Nonbu.

'Akshaya Tritiya' is a very holy day in the Hindu and Chettinad culture. The word "Akshaya" means '*the never diminishing*' in Sanskrit and the day is believed to bring good luck and success. The legend states that any venture initiated on the auspicious day of Akshaya Tritiya shall continue to grow and bring prosperity. A Pillayar Abishekam is organized at temple, on the weekend following the Akshaya Tritiya, each year.

Pillaiyar Nonbu is considered to be a special occasion for the Nagarathars worldwide. So it is considered to be a mandatory event to be organized by the Sangam every year.

It is customary to celebrate Pillaiyar Nonbu on the 'Shashti' day with 'Satayam' Star, in the month of Maarkazhi, every year. However, due to practical difficulties, it has been a practice to conduct this event, on the following week end. A common hall will be booked by the Executive Committee to organize the Puja and the celebrations.

Additional fee may be collected from the participating members, if necessary, for Pillaiyar Nonbu and other events.

## 11. Disclaimer

All event conducted by VNSA are generally of safe nature, however every member of VNSA who take part in the events are responsible for themselves.

## 12. Variance

This document can be amended or appended when need arises by the committee members. This will be done so with the unanimous agreement by the majority of group members.

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### Glossary:

Majority of Group Members	At least 3/4 <sup>th</sup> of the registered group members.
Nagarathar(s)	The <b>Nagarathars</b> are a <a href="#">Chettiar</a> Community that originated in <a href="#">Kaveripoompattinam</a> under the <a href="#">Chola</a> kingdom of <a href="#">India</a> . They are a prominent mercantile caste in Tamil Nadu, South India. Now spread around the globe.
Chettiar(s)	The <b>Chettiars</b> in this document refers to Naatukottai Chettiars another name for Nagarathars as defined above.
Chettinad	Native place of Nattukottai Chettiars or Nagarathars.
Term	Normally two years. Period during which the chosen executive committee mind the Victorian Nagarathar Sangam Australia office.
Deepavali	Hindu Festival

## Appendix A: Process.

### Addition/Invitation of a New Member to the Group:

- Committee Members or Group Members to forward contact details of new prospective Chettiar members, meeting the eligibility criteria, to Secretary and Treasurer.
- Secretary to send the application (Treasurer will be the fall back if Secretary unavailable).
- Treasurer and Secretary Receive and verify that Application and Pullivari collection.
- Secretary to update Membership Database list with the new applicant's details.
- Secretary to inform Yahoo Group administrators to update the yahoo group with member's information.

### Document Control:

VERSION	AUTHOR	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1.0	Arun Ayyappan	25 <sup>th</sup> May 2012	Initial Version.
1.1	Arun Ayyappan	7 <sup>th</sup> August 2012	Added New Member addition Process.
1.2	Arun Ayyappan	20 <sup>th</sup> Nov 2012	3.b Membership Fees addition of Exception. Addition of Section 8. Annual Term and Financial Year.
1.3	Prabhakaran Sathappan	18 March 2016	Section 3.0 b) - Annual Membership fees updated to reflect current fees.