CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT:
Annual Conference Policy Process

A PAPER FROM THE PPTA WAIKATO, WELLINGTON AND WAITAHA-CANTERBURY REGIONS



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RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the report be received.

2. That a draft paper submission, distribution, and feedback process for papers that amend the constitution be established for 2027 onwards to allow democratic feedback in the constitutional change process, as follows:

    a. Executive shall, each year, set and circulate an appropriate date in Term 2 for submission of draft Constitutional papers.

    b. Draft papers will be distributed to branches at least 13 weeks prior to annual conference

    c. Any feedback from the members collated by regions will be submitted to the General Secretary (or nominee) at least seven weeks prior to Annual Conference.

    d. The General Secretary (or nominee) will pass on the feedback to the paper's writer(s) within 2 working days of receipt.

    e. The final version of papers will be re-submitted to the National Office at least five weeks prior to the annual conference for re-distribution.

3. That rule 89(i) of the Constitution be changed

    FROM:
    These Rules or any of them may be added to deleted from repealed rescinded amended or altered (hereinafter collectively referred to as an alteration) by resolution of any Annual Conference or Special Conference of the Association PROVIDED that at least one calendar month's notice in writing of intention to propose such alteration shall have been given to each Branch before the meeting at which the proposal is made.

    TO:
    These Rules or any of them may be added to deleted from repealed rescinded amended or altered (hereinafter collectively referred to as an alteration) by resolution of any Annual Conference or Special Conference of the Association PROVIDED that at least four weeks' notice in writing of intention to propose such alteration shall have been given to each Branch before the meeting at which the proposal is made.

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper moves to address an issue which has gone under the radar.

1.2. Our constitution has a timeframe for when alterations must be distributed to members, but that doesn't encourage a democratic process of feedback and refinement.[1]

1.3. It is important that members are made aware of changes to the constitution of their union. The current rule 89(i) of the constitution states that the constitution may only be changed by a paper that has been distributed in its final form at least one calendar month ahead of the Annual Conference or Special Conference where the alteration will take place. This is done to ensure proper notice is given of changes that may affect members' rights as members of the association.

1.4. However, in practice, this has meant that Branches have only had the opportunity to review the proposal, not to provide feedback, as the papers have been distributed too close to this one calendar month deadline. This creates an inability to propose changes to the amendments.

1.5. The recommendations of this paper would enshrine a process in the policy of the Association that would not only allow, but encourage member participation in the development of alterations to the constitution.

1.6. The change in rule 89(i) to the time by which an alteration to the constitution must be notified to Branches is to align more regularly with days in which schools operate.

2. Rationale for the timeline

2.1. At Annual Conference 2023, a paper was passed called *Amending the Code of Ethics*.[2] The purpose of this paper was to make it an ethical violation to refuse to participate in lawful industrial action. The wording of the alteration to the constitution was hotly debated. Though many regions agreed in principle, there was significant concern about how the rule may be applied based on the terminology used.

2.2. At Annual Conference 2024, a paper was passed called *Constitutional Changes - Membership Changes*.[3] The purpose of this paper was to alter our membership rules to allow members from charter schools in light of the possibility of forced conversion of current Branches. This was another contested paper with many worried about how this may be applied. Some members felt concerned that

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[1] PPTA Te Wehengarua Constitution (October 2025), r 89(i).

[2] PPTA Te Wehengarua *Constitutional Paper 2023: Amending the Code of Ethics* (2023). https://www.ppta.org.nz/events/past-annual-conference-papers/annual-conference-2023/document/2315.

[3] PPTA Te Wehengarua *Constitutional Change - Membership Clauses* (2024). https://members.ppta.org.nz/media/181/181.pdf.

allowing membership from charter schools would weaken our "implacable opposition" to them, though there was a desire to support comrades in forced conversions. Again, there was robust debate which could have in large part been thrashed out earlier or avoided all together with a more iterative paper development process.

2.3. At Annual Conference 2025, a paper was passed called *Constitutional Changes to Meet Legal Requirements*.[4] Despite the necessity of this paper, some bristled at its 'fait accompli' nature, given that we had to pass it in order to re-register as an incorporated society under the 2022 Act. Some regions had actively sought information about the proposed new constitution throughout the process of its development and felt they had been stonewalled and prevented from providing feedback.

2.4. Together, this amounts to three Annual Conferences in a row where the core issues around major changes to our constitution have been timing and member-participation.

2.5. This paper aims to rectify the situation by developing a policy mechanism by which all members will have an opportunity to meaningfully contribute to the development and advancement of the rules of the Association.

2.6. The timing proposed has been done so with consideration to the typical calendar of the Association and school term breaks.

2.7. Fourteen weeks before the Annual Conference is roughly Week 8 of Term 2, which allows the Executive two weeks of school term time to meet via teleconference to send the paper out to Branches.

2.8. Executive can meet via Zoom conferencing easily, meaning Annual Conference papers do not have to go to the scheduled July/August Executive meeting. Instead, there could be a scheduled Zoom meeting for Executive to approve Annual Conference papers which fall under this policy, whilst other annual conference papers go to the July/August Executive meeting

2.9. Twelve weeks before Annual Conference is the start of the school holidays, and 7 weeks before Annual Conference is therefore roughly Week 3 of Term 3. This gives members and Branches three weeks of term time to review and feedback on the proposed alteration to the constitution.

2.10. From here on, the movers of the paper can review the feedback and make changes as necessary before the paper goes to the Branches in its final form as per the current system.

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[4] PPTA Te Wehengarua *Constitutional changes to meet legal requirements* (2025). https://www.ppta.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Constitutional-changes-to-meet-legal-requirements.pdf.

3. Amending Rule 89(i)

3.1. The present rule 89(i) reads:

> These Rules or any of them may be added to deleted from repealed rescinded amended or altered (hereinafter collectively referred to as an alteration) by resolution of any Annual Conference or Special Conference of the Association PROVIDED that **at least one calendar month's** notice in writing of intention to propose such alteration shall have been given to each Branch before the meeting at which the proposal is made.

3.2. Annual Conference falls during the first week of the Term 3 holidays. One calendar month before this is frequently a weekend. The purpose of changing rule 89(i) to require papers be provided to Branches *four weeks* before is that this will ensure that this deadline falls on a weekday.