**Developing a Constitution**

## **What is a Constitution?**

A constitution is a basic set of rules for the daily running of your organisation. It details your organisation name, objectives, methods of management, and other conditions under which yourorganistion operates, and states the reasons for its existence.

## **Why Do You Need a Constitution?**

**Constitutions set out:**

1. The purposes and rules by which the organisation will operate

2. Details for the day to day management of the organisation

3. Procedures by which the purposes are to be implemented through bylaws

4. The information required by law for organisations to become incorporated

Constitutions can help in seeking resources from other organisations, such as a funding agency.

## **What Level of Detail Should You Include?**

A constitution can be extremely simple, containing only the basic outline explaining who you are, what you are set up for, and detailing fundamental management procedures. The extent to what detail you include in the rules depends on the needs or formality at the time of your organisation’s formation and on your thoughts about the projected needs of the organisation as it grows. Many details relating to minor management matters are best included within bylaws or regulations thus keeping your constitution flexible and easy to operate within.

## **What to Avoid**

A constitution can be made up of two parts: the rules, which include the basic principles of the organisation and can be changed only by a General Meeting; and the regulations or by-laws, which can be changed by the committee or Board. You can place almost anything within a constitution; however, many aspects of your organisation’s operation are more easily handled outside the formality of the rules. For instance, you would not include the membership charges or organistion colours in the rules. The rules in your constitution should relate to the administration of the organisation.

If you choose to use templates as the basis for your constitution, it is important to make sure it will meet all of your needs. For more examples or if provisions are unclear, seek advice from other groups, consultants or lawyers as to appropriate wording or look to other constitutions for examples.

**For examples and templates:**

[Incorporated Societies Act 2022 and Regulations | Sport New Zealand - Ihi Aotearoa (sportnz.org.nz)](https://sportnz.org.nz/resources/incorporated-societies-act-2022-and-regulations/)