

Proposed changes to membership

August 2020

Dear members,

Recent times have seen our club go through enormous change, with the completion of the clubhouse rebuild project, the introduction of a wide variety of new club activities, welcoming 1800 new members and now the COVID-19 pandemic.

Throughout these events, the Committee has been working extremely hard to make sure the Club is able to navigate its changing environment as smoothly as possible. One of the most important elements of managing the club is keeping membership policies relevant and up to date. As part of its annual review of membership policies, the Committee is recommending several changes to better reflect the current environment.

In summary, the proposed changes are:

1. Introduce age limits for children within Family memberships
2. Remove the requirement for all family members to live at the same permanent address
3. Offer discounted membership for volunteers
4. Update annual subscription fees
5. Introduce a Building Services Fee
6. Introduce a Joining Fee
7. Introduce a cap on membership numbers
8. Introduce a provision for handling hardship applications.

This note explains the recommended changes in preparation for their presentation at the Club's Annual General Meeting in September. Given a number of these changes require support at the AGM, we have delayed issuing membership subscriptions until such a time that they can be presented. Normally this would have happened in July.

This proposal has been in development for some time, and certainly pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic. We are conscious that the impact of the pandemic on our Club is yet to be fully realised. So, on the one hand, we completely recognise that any move to impose new or increased charges may be seen as insensitive. On the other, we need to balance this against the need to maintain and care for our clubhouse, and to manage the increased responsibilities of operating a much larger, more complex club.

We are sensitive to the fact that some members have had their lives greatly impacted by the events of the past six months already. Among the changes we are recommending is a discounted membership available to those who choose to volunteer, and a provision for handling hardship applications. Hopefully these are seen as positive, relevant changes to our membership structure.

There remain a large number of unknowns before us, particularly in terms of how we might be able to operate over the peak season. Both in our ability to fundraise through our swims and our education programs, as well as in the member amenity we are able to offer. Rest assured, the Committee will continue to manage the finances of the Club in a responsible and disciplined manner to deliver on our objectives.

Please click on the link below to review the entire document. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact the Club Secretary, Rob Mellor or myself.

Matthew Mahon
President
Portsea SLSC

1. Introduce age limits for children within Family memberships

The club's Family membership category was designed to cover two generations of a family living at the same permanent address. The Committee is recommending introducing an age limit for children within a family membership to make it easier to manage compliance with this policy.

Features of this change are:

- Child members in a family membership who are over 25 on 1st September (being the first day of the membership year) will be invited to take out an individual membership separate from their family membership. There will be no joining fee applied to this change in membership.
- Most life saving clubs limit the age of children within a family membership to 18 years, but at Portsea we want to provide every encouragement for our members from 18-25 to remain active with the club, so the Committee is recommending the age be set at 25.
- Family members under 5 years of age will not be recorded as Club members. This is to bring the Club database into line with the Life Saving Victoria membership system.

2. Remove the requirement for all family members to live at the same permanent address

With the introduction of age limits within family memberships, the Committee is recommending that the requirement for all family members to reside at the same permanent address is removed. This policy was unfeasibly difficult to administer and its removal is designed to encourage young members to continue their involvement with the club as part of their family

membership for as long as possible. The requirement for all members covered by a single family membership to belong to the same immediate family will remain.

3. Offer discounted membership for volunteers

In order for the Club to deliver the expanded level of services and programs it currently offers to members, it relies heavily on the contribution of member volunteers. “Active Individual” (i.e. patrolling) members enjoy a lower annual subscription fee in recognition of their efforts, but there is currently no parallel mechanism for the Club to recognise members who fall in categories other than the Active Individual membership category.

The Committee proposes to address this by:

- Offering a discounted annual subscription fee for Associate Individual members who contribute more than 16 volunteer hours in a season. The discount for Associate Individual members would bring the fee for volunteer members into line with the fee for Active individual members. For the 2020-2021 season this discount would amount to \$100.
- Separating family membership group into “Active Family” and “Associate Family” groups and applying different annual subscription fees to each category:
 - **Active Family** membership would cover all families with at least one member who actively volunteers for more than 16 hours in club activities, i.e. one or more of:
 - Patrolling the beach;
 - Participating in Nippers, or;
 - Volunteering to support club activities.
 - **Associate Family** membership would cover families whose interests are more social and who choose not to volunteer in the delivery of club services.

Active Families with members who are either patrolling or were involved in Nippers last year will be automatically grouped in the Active Family category for the coming season. The club currently does not have adequate volunteering records to identify other volunteering families, so inclusion in the Family category for those families will be made by application to the Committee. In future years the Club will investigate means by which volunteer efforts can be tracked more effectively.

Each family’s membership category will be reviewed each year and will be changed in accordance with their family’s involvement with the club, based on records of patrolling, Nippers registration and volunteering.

4. Update Annual Subscription Fees

The Committee has received substantial feedback from members that annual subscription fees should be raised significantly, in recognition of the benefits the club provides. The Committee has considered this in light of a range of factors including the COVID-19 pandemic and the introduction of a Building Services Fee and at this time is recommending holding increases in annual subscription fees to a minimum.

Proposed annual subscription fees are outlined in the table below:

| Membership Category | Annual Subscription Fee |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Active Individual | \$100 |
| Associate Individual* | \$200* |
| Active Family | \$300 |
| Associate Family | \$400 |
| Life | \$0 |
| Foundation | \$0 |

*Associate Individual members who contribute more than 16 hours of volunteer time in a season will be eligible to apply for a \$100 membership discount.

5. Introduce a Building Services Fee

The Committee is recommending the introduction of a mandatory Building Service Fee to help fund the remaining funding gap for the Rebuild project, to contribute to ongoing building maintenance and to establish a sinking fund for the benefit of future capital works.

Features include:

- Proceeds from the fee would be accounted for separately in the Club's accounts.
- Proposed fee levels are outlined below:

| Membership Category | Building Services Fee | Mandatory / Optional |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Active Individual | \$50 | Mandatory |
| Associate Individual | \$50 | Mandatory |
| Active Family | \$100 | Mandatory |
| Associate Family | \$100 | Mandatory |
| Life | \$50 | Optional |
| Foundation | \$100 | Optional |

6. Introduce a Joining Fee

The Committee proposes to introduce a nominal Joining Fee to encourage continuity of membership for all members. The Joining Fee would apply to new membership applications as well as returning or lapsed members.

- The Joining Fee would not be applied to active patrolling members, as the Committee wishes to encourage the continued expansion of our patrolling member numbers.
- In the event that members were to change their membership category, there would be no Joining Fee applied.

| Membership Category | Proposed Joining Fee |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Active Individual | \$0 |
| Associate Individual | \$100 |
| Active Family | \$200 |
| Associate Family | \$400 |
| Life | N/A |
| Foundation | N/A |

7. Introduce a cap on membership numbers

While the substantial influx of new members in the 2019-2020 season was an exciting development for our Club, managing the expanded member numbers stretched our volunteers to their limits. Current club membership numbers sit at approximately 4,200 and the Committee is recommending that a cap on numbers is introduced when numbers reach 5,000. The intent of this change is to allow the club to let its membership services catch up to handle that number of members.

Features of the membership cap include:

- Membership applications in excess of 5,000 members would be managed according to a waitlist.
- Active Individual members and Active Family memberships would be granted priority on the waitlist.
- Members changing category, such as child members taking individual memberships at the age of 25 would be exempted from the waitlist.
- The Committee would retain discretion to increase or decrease the membership cap.

8. Introduce a provision for handling hardship applications

Any members for whom continuing their membership with the Club becomes problematic are encouraged to contact the Club President or Secretary in confidence to request relief. Relief may be granted in the form of reduced fees or other mechanisms.

Appendix A: Summary of Recommended Fees

| Membership Category | Proposed Joining Fee for New Members | Annual Subscription Fee | Building Services Fee | Fees in First Year | Total Annual Fees |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Active Individual | \$0 | \$100 | \$50 | \$150 | \$150 |
| Associate Individual | \$100 | \$200 ⁽¹⁾ | \$50 | \$350 | \$250 |
| Active Family | \$200 | \$300 | \$100 | \$600 | \$400 |
| Associate Family | \$400 | \$400 | \$100 | \$900 | \$500 |
| Life Member | N/A | \$0 | \$50 ⁽²⁾ | N/A | \$50 ⁽²⁾ |
| Foundation Member | N/A | \$0 | \$100 ⁽²⁾ | N/A | \$100 ⁽²⁾ |

Note (1) Associate Individual members volunteering more than 16 hours in a season will be eligible to apply for a \$100 discount on their annual subscription fee.

Note (2) Optional, in keeping with the terms of these honorary membership categories