MAINSTREET AUSTRALIA

CHARTER

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Endorsed by Committee 13th March 2024

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1. The Organisation

Mainstreet Australia is a membership based, not for profit entity, and an Incorporated Association registered in Victoria. It is managed and lead by a volunteer committee. Mainstreet Australia is governed by the Associations *Incorporation* Reform *Act* 2012 (the *Act*).

Australia's traditional high streets, main streets, town and city centres are essential for our economic, social and environmental wellbeing. Research undertaken by Mainstreet in 2020 revealed that there were 698 main street centres in Victoria alone, and they provided some 390,000 jobs and accounted for $24.8b wages and $50b of Gross Regional Product. (Source: "The Value of Victoria's Main Streets", Mainstreet Australia 2020). These centres provide the opportunity for people and communities to meet, play, eat and drink, access health and community services, shop, be entertained, be educated, access public transport and be employed in a public environment. They also provide opportunity for small, local businesses to establish, operate and invest and develop.

To ensure the ongoing success and survival of these centres, Mainstreet Australia, a membership-based organisation, provides a forum for education, networking, advocacy and professional development for the businesses, business associations and communities in Australia's traditional main streets and town centres. It does this through:

- understanding the challenges and issues that these main streets face and providing appropriate guidance, leadership and opportunity. This ensures its members have the confidence and ability to fulfil their role and positively contribute to the success of their main street.
- recognising that to thrive, the businesses and property owners in these centres need to collaborate with one other, and partner with their communities and government, in regards to the management, governance, marketing and development of the centres.
- providing a collective voice for main street businesses and their business associations through which to advocate to other stakeholders and government, addressing issues of concern, capitalising on innovations and opportunities and promoting what is special and unique about main streets and town centres. At all times, Mainstreet Australia remains an independent non-partisan organisation that will remain unbiased and impartial in its relationships with authorities, in particular Local, State and Federal government.

Whilst currently a predominantly Victorian based organisation, Mainstreet Australia aspires to support and advocate for all main streets across Australia.

History and beginnings

Mainstreet Australia is the successor organisation to Community Business Centres Victoria (CBCV). Community Business Centres Victoria was formed in Melbourne in 1996 by a group of Victorian participants of the first Mainstreet Conference held in Maryborough Queensland. CBCV ran regular conferences and events for people associated with Victoria's main streets on an annual basis. It collaborated with interstate organisations to organise a bi annual Australian Mainstreet Conferences.

CBCV changed its name to Mainstreet Australia in 2007 in order to promote a more national approach to the management and promotion of Australia's main streets. Since that time, it has sought to partner with interstate interests to create state-based affiliations. Mainstreet SA is an example of such an organisation.

2. Key Roles and Activities

Mainstreet Australia organises and facilitates

- Conferences
- Mainstreet Australia Awards
- Professional development workshops
- Networking events
- Regular industry newsletters and email communications
- Research into the main streets and the issues they face
- Advocacy to Local, State and Federal Governments and the private sector on the needs, aspirations and opportunities of main street communities and businesses
- Information, advice and support to main street businesses, associations and Councils regarding best practice management and marketing, planning, design and development of main streets
- Responses to issues and opportunities that can promote, profile and support the main street industry and build capacity of the individuals and organisations in it
- Seeks opportunities to partner with other like-minded associations and peak body groups in order to promote and advocate for Australia's main streets

3. Membership

Membership of Mainstreet is open to individuals, chambers of commerce, businesses, consultants, government organisations and incorporated business associations that have a connection with main streets.

The membership year runs on an annual basis with membership renewals due in the anniversary month of each year.

Membership rates are set in advance by the Committee at the AGM for the next financial year.

3.1 Membership categories

Associate Member

An associate member of Mainstreet Australia is an individual who shows interest in the organisation by signing up to the email database and receives newsletters and Mainstreet Australia information.

An associate member does not have voting rights, cannot become a committee member and does not receive any discounts to Mainstreet Australia events that apply to other categories of membership.

Individual and small business member

An individual or small business member of Mainstreet Australia is an individual, or small business with less than 20 employees that formally joins the organisation and pays a membership fee.

Individual and small business members have 1 vote, are listed on the Membership Register, receive all regular information from Mainstreet Australia, have access to all areas of the Mainstreet Australia website, can become a member of the Committee and receive discounts to attend or participate in Mainstreet events, activities and programs. Additionally, the individual or small business will be recognised as a Mainstreet Australia member and acknowledged on the website.

Business Association or Chamber of Commerce membership

A Business Association or Chamber of Commerce related to a main street can join Mainstreet Australia as an entity. Each such association or chamber can nominate 2 people associated with the organisation as Mainstreet Australia members. These two representatives are listed on the Membership Register, receive all regular information from Mainstreet Australia, have access to all areas of the Mainstreet Australia website, can become a member of the Committee and receive discounts to attend or participate in Mainstreet events, activities and programs, on behalf of their organisation. Additionally, the organisation will be recognised as a Mainstreet Australia member organisation and acknowledged on the website.

Government and Corporate membership

A Government Organisation or business corporation, with more than 20 employees, can join Mainstreet Australia as an entity. Each such organisation has 3 votes and can nominate up to 3 people associated with the organisation as Mainstreet Australia members. These representatives are listed on the Membership Register, receive all regular information from Mainstreet Australia, have access to all areas of the Mainstreet Australia website, can become a member of the Committee and receive discounts to attend or participate in Mainstreet events, activities and programs, on behalf of their organisation. Additionally, the organisation will be recognised as a Mainstreet Australia member organisation and will be acknowledged on the website.

Partner Membership

A partner organisation that has a supportive relationship with main streets and shares Mainstreet Australia's values and principles can apply to partner with Mainstreet Australia. Each such organisation can nominate up to 3 people associated with the organisation as Mainstreet Australia

members. These representatives are listed on the Membership Register, receive all regular information from Mainstreet Australia, have access to all areas of the Mainstreet Australia website, can become a member of the Committee and receive discounts to attend or participate in Mainstreet events, activities and programs, on behalf of their organisation. Additionally, the organisation will be recognised as a Mainstreet Australia member organisation and will be acknowledged on the website and have the opportunity, for additional fees to sponsor specific Mainstreet Australia events and activities.

Life Member

Life membership of Mainstreet Australia can be awarded to an individual who has provided an outstanding contribution to the Mainstreet organisation over a minimum of 10 years and who has occupied an executive position with the organisation for a minimum of 5 years.

A nomination for a Life membership for a person who meets the above criteria can be proposed by any Mainstreet Australia member for consideration by the Committee. Life Memberships will be awarded at the AGM each year.

A Life Member receives all the benefits of an individual membership on an ongoing basis with no membership fee payable. Life Members will be recorded on the Life Membership Register and acknowledged on the website.

Life Members are also awarded the Claude Ullin Award for Outstanding Contribution to Mainstreet Australia.

3.2 Membership Register and processes

The constitution on Mainstreet Australia requires that an up-to-date register of financial members be maintained and that new members be approved by the committee. This will be achieved by:

1. New memberships and renewals are processed via the website, Xero, and payments into the Mainstreet Australia bank account.
2. The register of financial members will be updated on a monthly basis.
3. The Membership Register will identify life members, individual members, council members, business association members and corporate members. In the case of Council, Business Association and corporate members the register will identify both the organisation and the individuals nominated by the organisation.
4. Where an organisation has more than one member, Mainstreet Australia will communicate with one contact person, nominated by the organisation as the “contact point” regarding membership issues, renewals and governance issues.
5. All new membership applications, once fees have been paid, will be reported and approved at the first opportunity to an Executive meeting or a committee meeting
6. New members will be advised that their membership application has been approved and they will enjoy the benefits of membership, the ability to vote and stand for the committee, from the approval date (date of the exec or committee meeting).

7. Members that fail to renew their annual membership will be removed from the Membership Register 30 days after the membership fell due. Membership rights, ability to vote or be a member of the Committee will cease from this date.

8. Membership rights of individual members will be extended to individuals nominated by Councils, Business Associations or Corporate organisations regarding membership benefits, voting rights and the ability to stand for the Committee.

4. Governance

Mainstreet Australia is lead and directed by a volunteer committee elected from its members.

The Mainstreet Australia Committee will aim to serve member interests at all times.

Mainstreet Australia will at all times set the highest standards of governance. It will serve as an example to the members it represents.

Mainstreet Australia will meet all requirements of the Associations Incorporation Reform Act Victoria including the submission of annual returns.

Mainstreet Australia will promote good governance and transparency.

5. The Committee

5.1 Composition of the Mainstreet Australia Committee

The Mainstreet Australia committee is elected annually at the AGM. It is comprised of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer (Public Officer) and General Committee members. The President, Vice President, Treasurer and Secretary comprise the Executive of the Committee, along with any nominated Future Leaders. The constitution provides for a committee comprised of 9 members, elected at the AGM in accordance with the constitution. Ideally the Committee should be representative of the Mainstreet Australia's key stakeholder groups, namely Business Associations, Centre Managers, Government organisations and Consultants.

5.2 Committee support

Mainstreet Australia engages the services of a part time Administrative Support Officer to support the work of the committee including administration, meeting preparation, membership, member support, event organisation and communications. The Administrative support officer is engaged as a consultant in accordance with a contract and position description.

Mainstreet Australia engages the services of a part time consultant bookkeeper to work with the Treasurer and assist with preparation of financial reports and returns.

5.3 Role of the Committee

The Committee's role is to provide leadership and direction for Mainstreet Australia and to develop and implement actions, events, activities and advocacy that will benefit its members and Australian

main streets. It achieves this by directing the expenditure of Mainstreet funds; organising conferences, awards, networking events and professional development sessions; facilitating the Centre Manager Network and the Business Association Executives' Network; pursuing advocacy; commissioning research; managing the website and social media and communicating with the Mainstreet Australia Membership.

5.4 General Committee members are expected to:

- Attend and participate at Committee meetings. (a minimum of 6 per year)
- Engage in discussions and contribute ideas, information and knowledge to assist the committee to pursue Mainstreet Australia objectives.
- Undertake at least one specific role (e.g., membership, communications, social media, marketing, promotional events, advocacy) to help the Committee operate more effectively.
- Lead specific initiatives and represent Mainstreet Australia at relevant meetings and events.
- Use networks and contacts to pursue Mainstreet Australia's objectives.
- Pursue the objectives of Mainstreet Australia, be impartial and broadly represent the interest of its members.

5.5 Benefits of being a Mainstreet Australia Committee member:

- Contributing to the development and enhancement of the main street movement.
- Gaining additional skills in advocacy, event organisation, leadership, governance and communications.
- Sharing skills, knowledge and wisdom with other passionate main street advocates.
- Exploring and learning from best practice examples of main streets around Australia and across the world.

5.6 Time commitment

The time commitment for a general committee member is estimated at 8 hours per month, allocated as reading agendas, minutes and papers (1 hour per month), attend monthly committee meeting (2 hours per month) and follow up actions from meetings (5 hours per month).

The Committee, elected on an annual basis will comprise members made up of, but not limited to:

- Main street managers or coordinators.
- Government organisation representatives.
- Business Association and Chamber of Commerce representatives.
- Professional Consultants and Service Provider/s.

Where these positions are vacant, they can remain vacant until a suitable candidate is nominated.

In the event of Committee vacancies, committee members can seek out and approach appropriate candidates, having regard to the overall makeup of the committee and encourage them to complete a Nomination Form which will be considered at the next available Committee meeting.

5.7 Committee Members Code of Conduct

1. Act honestly, in good faith and always in the best interests of the organisation as a whole.
2. Declare all interests that could result in a conflict between personal and organisational priorities.
3. Exercise diligence and care in fulfilling the functions of office.
4. Make reasonable enquiries to ensure that Mainstreet Australia is operating efficiently, effectively, legally and ethically in the pursuit of its planned outcomes and strategies.
5. Maintain sufficient knowledge of Mainstreet Australia business and performance to make informed decisions.
6. Not agree to Mainstreet Australia incurring obligations unless he or she believes that such obligations can be met, as and when they fall due.
7. Attend Committee meetings and devote sufficient time to preparation for Committee meetings to allow for full and appropriate participation in the Committee decision making.
8. Ensure scrupulous avoidance of deception, unethical practice or any other behaviour that is, or might be construed as, less than honourable in the pursuit of Mainstreet Australia's objectives.
9. Not disclose to any other person confidential information other than as agreed by the Committee.
10. Act in accordance with their fiduciary duties, complying with the spirit as well as the letter of the law, recognising both the legal and moral duties of the role.
11. Abide by Committee's decisions, once reached, notwithstanding a committee member's right to pursue a review or reversal of a committee decision.
12. Not to make, comment, issue, authorise, offer or endorse any public criticism or statement having or designed to have an effect prejudicial to the best interests of Mainstreet Australia.
13. Demonstrate respectful behaviour towards both colleagues, staff and those they come into contact within the course of enacting Mainstreet Australia activities.
14. Do not steal, damage or destroy property belonging to Mainstreet Australia.
15. Do not accept benefits or gifts, which give rise to a real or apparent conflict of interest.
16. Make every reasonable effort to ensure that Mainstreet Australia does not raise community, supplier or stakeholder expectations that cannot be fulfilled.
17. Meet the responsibility to ensure that any staff employed, or contractors engaged by, Mainstreet Australia are treated with due respect.
18. Carry out meetings in such a manner as to ensure fair and full participation of all committee members.

5.8 Inappropriate behaviour

Bullying, harassment or discrimination against any other member or member of the public in line with their role is deemed unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

For the sake of clarity bullying is defined as:

A person, or group of people, repeatedly acting unreasonably towards an individual or group of workers. Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. Whether a behaviour is unreasonable can depend on whether a reasonable person might see the behaviour as unreasonable in the circumstances.

Examples of bullying include:

- behaving aggressively;
- teasing or practical jokes;
- pressuring someone to behave inappropriately;
- excluding someone from work-related events;
- unreasonable work demands;
- when the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.

The Mainstreet Australia Constitution addresses how Conflict Resolution will be managed. If any member feels that harassment or bullying is occurring, they should contact the President, or another remember of the Executive Committee.

5.9 Key roles for Committee members

It is an expectation that members of the Mainstreet Committee will commit to leading or assisting in the pursuit of particular Mainstreet Australia objectives.

ROLE	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
President The President is elected on an annual basis at the first committee meeting following the AGM, by the committee. The President is also a member of the Mainstreet Australia Executive.	To lead the organisation. To lead delegations. To chair meetings. To be the spokesperson for the organisation. To sign off on major funding and grant proposals. To direct and manage the Admin Support person.
Vice President The Vice President is elected on an annual basis at the first committee meeting following the AGM, by the committee. It is generally assumed that the Vice President will take on the role as President in future	To support the President. To deputise for the Presidents role when the President is absent. To assume one of the coordinator roles if appropriate.

years. The Vice President is a member of the Mainstreet Australia Executive.

Future Leaders
In order to promote orderly succession of leadership positions within Mainstreet Australia, the Committee can identify one or more future leader positions on an annual basis. Future Leaders are Committee members nominated by the committee. Future leaders become members of the Mainstreet Executive and will be given the opportunity to lead specific projects or initiatives on behalf of Mainstreet Australia.

To contribute to the discussions of the Executive.
To lead specific Mainstreet Australia activities or events.

Secretary
The Secretary is elected on an annual basis at the first committee meeting following the AGM, by the committee. The Secretary is a member of the Mainstreet Australia Executive. At the first committee meeting following the AGM, by the committee.

To attend to the governance of the organisation.
To provide timely agendas and minutes.
To oversee the AGM and its compliance with the Constitution.
To deal with correspondence and reporting.
To maintain the Membership Register.
To maintain the Register of Interest

Treasurer
The Treasurer is elected on an annual basis at the first committee meeting following the AGM, by the committee. The Treasurer is a member of the Mainstreet Australia Executive.

To attend to the financial arrangements of the organisation.
To provide financial reports to monthly meetings.
To oversee the work of the bookkeeper.
To manage the income and expenditure of the organisation.
To produce an annual financial report and comply with State Government reporting requirements of an incorporated association.
Ensure Public Liability Insurance (minimum of $20M) is current.
Ensure Public Officers Insurance is current.

Membership Coordinator
A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.

To manage the membership databases.
To lead member recruitment campaigns.
To report on membership numbers.
To recommend membership fees.
To develop and update the Membership Register and provide the register to the secretary each month.

Centre Manager Network Coordinator A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.	To maintain contact with, and be the primary contact for, Centre Manager members of Mainstreet Australia. To arrange regular networking functions and events for Centre Manager members. To arrange distribution of relevant information to assist Centre Manager members. To provide information to and recruit new members of the network.
Business Association Network Coordinator A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.	To maintain contact with, and be the primary contact for, Business Association members of Mainstreet Australia. To arrange regular networking functions and events for Business Association members. To provide information to and recruit new members of the network.
Communications and Media Coordinator A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.	To oversee the development and maintenance of the website. To develop and maintain and collate material for social media platforms. To prepare media releases. To develop and manage the Mainstreet Brand and design guidelines. To oversee the preparation on newsletters and email updates.
Activities and Events Coordinator A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.	To oversee the preparation of an annual calendar of key events and activities. To oversee the preparation of networking sessions, conferences and awards events.
Research and Information Coordinator A committee member is appointed to this position by the Committee on an annual basis at the first Committee meeting following the AGM.	To oversee the preparation of Mainstreet Australia research projects. To maintain a library of information, documents, articles and opinion pieces on the website for the benefit of members.

5.10 Term of Committee Members

Committee members are elected in accordance with the constitution which provides for one and two year terms to ensure a continuity of committee members. Committee members can re nominate at successive AGMs.

5.11 Term of Executive Members

Executive members can serve a maximum of 5 continuous annual terms as President, Treasurer, Vice President or Secretary.

5.12 Honorariums

The Mainstreet Committee has the capacity to offer honorariums to its committee members where a committee member has undertaken specific work, approved by the committee, that was clearly over and above the expectations of his or her role on the committee. An honorarium will be a one-off payment in compensation for work done to directly support the activities of Mainstreet Australia. It should not be seen as a fee for service, a consultancy or be based on an hourly rate. It will be a requirement that the committee member receiving the honorarium not be involved with any approvals or decisions relating to the project that they are receiving the honorarium for.

Honorariums are to be considered and approved by the Executive Committee and then recommended to the Committee for endorsement.

5.13 Committee Members Representing Mainstreet Australia

From time-to-time Mainstreet Australia committee members may be asked to represent Mainstreet Australia at a meeting, conference or event. In such instances the opportunity shall be approved by the Executive prior to the invitation being accepted. The Executive has the ability to identify the most appropriate member to represent Mainstreet Australia at the event and can consider a financial contribution towards the registration and associated costs where appropriate.

It important that a clear separation exist between the role of the committee member representing Mainstreet Australia and any professional or business roles that the committee member may have outside Mainstreet Australia. The attendance at such activities, meetings or events should not be taken as an opportunity to promote individual or business interests. At such meetings or events, the representative can provide general information, examples of best practice, promote the services of Mainstreet Australia and the benefits of membership. The representative should not provide specific advice, propose solutions to particular problems or endorse particular consultant services or make public comment on matters where Mainstreet Australia does not have a public position, rather, they should reference examples of best practice or organisations that might be able to assist.

5.14 Mainstreet Australia acting as a consultancy

Mainstreet Australia is not a consultancy and does not provide consultant services to other organisations, either paid or un paid, either members or non-members. If Mainstreet Australia is asked to provide assistance or support for a particular organisation or project the proposer will be referred to Mainstreet Australia's list of consultants.

5.15 Mainstreet Australia endorsing projects by member organisations

Mainstreet Australia can recognise and support an activity or program being developed by a member organisation but it will not provide specific endorsement for a specific project being proposed for a grant, award or sponsorship where Mainstreet Australia has any involvement, or where multiple Mainstreet members may be involved.

6. Committee Meeting Processes and Procedures

6.1 Committee Meetings

The full Mainstreet Committee will meet a minimum of 6 times per year. Meetings will be held at venues and times that suits the majority of committee members. Wherever possible, physical committee meetings will be held and all committee members are required to make every attempt to attend in person. Opportunity for committee members to attend meetings virtually will be provided wherever possible.

The agenda for committee meetings will be prepared by the Secretary, approved by the President and distributed to the committee a minimum of 5 days prior to the meeting. Wherever possible, reports to be presented to a meeting should be prepared and distributed with the agenda.

The minutes of a committee meeting will be prepared by the Secretary, approved by the President and distributed to the committee within 7 days of the meeting. Minutes should provide a brief summary of the issues raised at the meeting and a clear record of decisions and actions.

6.2 Finance protocols and procedures

Financial management of the organisation will be carried out in accordance with the Constitution and **point 11 of this Charter.**

7. Election of Committee Members

The Committee will be elected at the AGM in accordance with the Constitution. The Committee will comprise of 9 members in accordance with the constitution.

8. Communications

All communications and use of the Mainstreet brand, including written and electronic, are to be authorised by the President of Mainstreet Australia. Where this is not possible, authorisation is to be provided by the Vice President.

9. Confidential Information

All Committee members acknowledge that any written or oral communication may include confidential information and all Committee members, in acceptance of the invitation to join Mainstreet Australia Committee, will maintain confidentiality.

10. Conflict of Interest

1. Any business or personal matter which could lead to a conflict of interest of a material nature involving a committee member, and his/her role and relationship Mainstreet Australia, must be declared and registered in the Register of Interest

2. All such entries in the Register shall be presented to the Committee and minuted at the first Committee meeting following entry in the records.

3. All conflicts of interest must be declared by the committee member concerned at the earliest time after the conflict is identified. There will be the opportunity at the commencement of each committee meeting for conflicts of interest to be declared as a standing item on the agenda.

4. The committee shall determine whether the conflict is of a material nature and advise the individual accordingly.

5. Where a conflict of interest is identified and/or registered, and the committee has declared that it is of material benefit to the individual or material significance to the organisation, the committee member concerned shall not vote on any resolution relating to that conflict or issue.

6. The Committee member shall only remain in the room during any related discussion with Committee approval.

7. The committee will determine what records and other documentation relating to the matter will be available to the committee members.

8. All such occurrences will be minuted.

9. Individual committee members, aware of a real or potential conflict of interest of another committee member, have a responsibility to bring this to the notice of the committee, which can be done confidentially through the President or an Executive Committee member.

11. Financial protocols

11.1 Management of funds

1. The Association must open an account with a financial institution from which all expenditure of the Association is made and into which all the Association's revenue is deposited.

2. Subject to any restrictions imposed by a general meeting of the Association, the Committee or the Executive may approve expenditure on behalf of the Association.
3. The Committee may authorise the Treasurer to expend funds on behalf of the Association (including by electronic funds transfer) up to a specified limit. This limit must be declared at the first meeting after the AGM and approved by the committee.
4. All payments must be approved by 2 Executive Committee members.
5. All funds of the Association must be deposited into the financial account of the Association no later than 5 working days after receipt.
6. With the approval of the Committee, the Treasurer may maintain a cash float provided that all money paid from or paid into the float is accurately recorded at the time of the transaction.
7. Members of the Executive Committee may make use of a Mainstreet Australia Debit Card for incidental and pre-approved expenses.
8. Debit Card statements will be presented to the Committee as part of the regular financial report

11.2 Financial Reporting

The Treasurer will provide a financial report to each committee meeting reflecting the financial situation and transactions over the previous period.

Financial Reports to include:

- Profit and Loss
- Balance Sheet
- Bank Reconciliation
- And any supporting documentation.
- Account transactions.
- Debit card reconciliations

12 Date of introduction of the charter

This charter takes effect from the date it is endorsed by the Committee

1. Endorsed by Mainstreet Australia on 13th March 2024.

Documents that should be read in conjunction with this document.

- Register of Interest
- Position Descriptions
- Mainstreet Australia Constitution
- Life Membership Registry
- Membership Register