

FENCING NEW ZEALAND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023
PROPOSED RESOLUTION

Proposed amendment to the Fencing New Zealand Incorporated Constitution – Junior Members

That rule 4.5 of Fencing New Zealand’s Constitution be amended to read:

“Junior Members: Any person under the age of 16 years but such Junior Members shall have no voting rights nor be entitled to hold any office.”

Moved: Grant Twedde

Seconded: Hanna Choi

Background

Under the current constitution junior members are any persons under the age of 18 years. Junior members – unlike ‘individual members’ – do not have voting rights and are unable to be officeholders of the Association.

The passage of the proposed amendment would mean persons under 16 years of age would still be eligible to be junior members, while those 16 years of age or older would become ‘individual members’ of the Association. As a consequence, 16 and 17 year old members would gain voting rights and be eligible to become officeholders.

Rationale

A significant proportion of Fencing New Zealand’s membership is under 18 years of age. We consider extending voting rights and the opportunity to be FeNZ officeholders to our 16 and 17 year members will better enable them to actively participate in the Association’s governance and management should they wish to do so. As members with a real stake in Fencing New Zealand, it better enables their voices to be heard and counted.

We are confident that our 16 and 17 year old members are able to exercise the responsibilities associated with full membership of the Association alongside the many other important life decisions they are able to make from the age of 16.

More broadly, we note a number of countries, including Austria, Argentina, Brazil, Scotland, Wales, Guernsey, Isle of Man have lowered their voting age for national and local body elections to 16 year olds. Canada currently has a bill to lower the voting age going through Parliament and Germany’s three-party coalition members have committed to lowering the voting age to 16.

In sum, we consider the proposed constitutional amendment to be a small but significant change that recognises and empowers our 16 and 17 year old members, encourages them to take an active interest in the governance and management of FeNZ, and better enables them to make a positive contribution to the achievement of our shared goals and objectives.