



TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP TO SUNSHINE COAST DIVISION LTD

Frequently asked questions

What is the difference between the current Division legal entity and the new Company?

At the moment the Division is incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act. This means that there are no shareholders, no liabilities incurred by members and if the Division is dissolved, all assets must be given to an organisation with similar objects.

Under the limited liability Company structure full members will be liable for a contribution of \$10 towards any debts the Division incurs but only in the unlikely event that the Division is unable to continue to trade. In that instance, the Company constitution also includes the fact that all assets must be distributed to an organisation with similar objects.

Both structures are Not for Profit which means that all retained earnings of the Division must be spent in pursuit of the objects of the Company not on distribution to members or Directors.

The Association sat under the Associations Incorporated Act and the Company sits under the Corporations Act 2001. The Corporations Act 2001 is an area of legislation that is more current and better maintained, has higher levels of accountability from its Board to its members and allows us to trade beyond our State borders if we so choose.

What benefits will I derive from membership of the new company?

You will still receive all the Commonwealth funded services from the Division that you have always enjoyed. However, under the new Company structure, you will only be able to vote or stand for election to the Board if you elect to take up a Full Member status with the Company. It is intended that as we develop a more diversified funding base that we will be able to increase the level of services that will be available to full members in the future.

What will happen if I don't become either full or associate member of the new company?

You would not be able to vote or stand for election to the Board, and you would not be included in membership mail outs and communications or be eligible to attend any membership exclusive events.

If I am not currently a member of the Division, will I be able to join?

Certainly, just complete the application form.

Is there more than one kind of membership?

Yes, there is Full Membership which is open only to GPs working in general practice on the Sunshine Coast, and Associate Membership open to GPs, Practice Nurses and Practice Managers on the Sunshine Coast. The difference is that Full Members can vote and be elected to the Board

and Associate Members cannot. If you do not wish to take on the \$10 liability (in the unlikely event that we become insolvent) associated with Full Membership, you can become an Associate Member.

What happens if I do not currently work in general practice but intend to begin to or return sometime in the future?

If you are intending to begin work on the Sunshine Coast then make contact with us as soon as you start work in a Sunshine Coast practice and we will assist you to make a membership application.

If you take leave from a Sunshine Coast Practice for a period of time but intend to return then we will protect your membership for up to 12 months. If your time away from general practice is longer than that your membership will lapse and you will have to re-apply once you return to work.

Can my practice manager or practice nurse become members of the Division?

Yes. They may apply to become an Associate member of the Division as long as they are in a Practice on the Sunshine Coast as defined by our boundaries

Are there any membership categories for people other than GPs?

Yes. Associate membership but this is only eligible for people working within a General Practice on the Sunshine Coast and who meet the criteria set out in the Constitution.

How much will my membership cost?

Membership of the Division is free at this time. Under the Constitution the Board has the right to set membership fees in the future if they see fit.

Who can stand to be elected to the Board?

The constitution allows for a Board of a maximum of 9 people, 6 of whom must be full members of the Division – that is GPs working in general practice on the Sunshine Coast. 3 board positions may be filled by appointment from the Board and the people appointed to these positions do not need to be general practitioners or have any medical experience or qualifications.

Only full members of the Division will be eligible for election to the Board.

How long does my membership last?

Your membership will last until one of the following occurs:

- *A membership fee is levied and you fail to make this payment (NB* No membership fee is currently levied)*
- *You resign*
- *Your membership is terminated by the Board under circumstances outlined in the constitution*
- *You fail to meet the criteria that allows you to retain your membership.*

This is a summary and details of membership are contained in the Constitution

How do I find out about the rules associated with membership and the way the Company is run?

The rules are all contained in the Constitution which is available on the website or by making an enquiry to the Division office.

How do I become a member of the new company?

You will be required to sign a new membership form which is being mailed to you or if you do not receive one you can download a membership form from our website www.scdgp.org.au.

What happens if I don't sign the form?

You will cease to be a member of the Association from the date of its official winding up at the AGM this year. You will not have any membership rights under the new Company structure from that date unless you have satisfactorily completed a membership form. You will receive some services for which the Division receives funding, but not be eligible for the breadth of services available from the Division.

Can I decide to become a Member later?

As long as you meet the membership criteria, you may apply to become a member at any time. However, existing members are offered the chance to become members in the easiest way and do not require a proposer and a Board ratification. We are setting a date of 31 December 2008 after which all applications will have to have a current member propose them and then the Board will need to formally accept your application before your membership can take effect. With no fees to be paid at this stage it would seem much easier to apply at this time than subsequently and with the AGM in October, you would then be eligible to stand for the Board or to vote for your Directors.

Why did the Division decide to change the legal structure?

The Division is growing considerably and now undertakes a wide range of different projects providing a greater breadth of services than ever before. The Company structure allows us to be more credible to funders and business which will enable the Division to explore new options to raise revenue and increase services to general practice. It also allows us to do business beyond Queensland and is governed by legislation that more appropriately reflects the extent of business we are engaged in on your behalf.

Will activities such as LAGS, GP reference groups etc. continue?

Yes – these will not change. All GPs will still be eligible for a LAG payment (as long as LAGS remain a part of our business. You will continue to be remunerated for any work undertaken on behalf of the Division. In fact the Division welcomes GP input at all times. If there are aspects of services that you feel strongly about, then the best way to influence these business decisions to extend or cease particular initiatives, is to become a full member where you can stand for the Board or advise your elected Directors.