

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING POLICY

Policy number	N/A	Version	5
Drafted by	Struan Ferguson & Nick Reid	Approved by Board on	10 June 2026
Responsible person	Karen Zirkler	Scheduled review date	June 2028

1. Introduction

Making decisions in a meeting setting can become time consuming and controversial if effective techniques are not put in place. Southern New England Landcare Ltd has struggled with decision making at times, and with assistance from Julian Prior, we adopted and learned to use consensus decision making.

Noe that nothing in this policy removes the legal and fiduciary responsibilities of directors or Responsible Persons.

2. Policy

The members, board and staff of Southern New England Landcare Ltd use consensus decision making whenever possible or appropriate in settings where groups of people need to make a decision, whether it be for strategic, governance, operational or procedural matters. In most situations, consensus emerges from a healthy discussion. Where an issue is controversial or formal situations, we use the following process.

2.1 A consensus ladder

The following five points are 'steps' on a ladder. Members of a group who are required to make a decision can identify where they sit on the ladder with regard to the particular issue.

1. Enthusiastic support
2. Not perfect but acceptable
3. Concerns, but can live with it
4. Strong reservations, but won't block
5. Must oppose - What would it take for you to move from 5 to 4?

2.2 How to use the ladder

1. Decide where you sit on the above 'ladder'. If everyone falls within the range from 1 to 4, then the decision can go ahead.
2. However, if ANYONE is at level 5, the decision must be discussed further, and the person(s) sitting at 5 must be asked the question: 'What would it take for you to move from 5 to 4?'

3. Participants are expected to engage respectfully, listen actively and work constructively toward shared outcomes.
4. If some compromise can be reached so that the person moves into a 4, 3, 2 or 1, congratulations – you have reached a CONSENSUS!
5. Note that a level 5 position should be based on significant concerns relating to legal obligations, safety, financial risk, strategic impact, organisational values or serious operational consequences. This keeps blocking legitimate, serious and accountable, without undermining culture.
6. Note also that consensus does not require unanimous enthusiasm; it simply requires that participants can support or live with the decision.

2.3 If consensus cannot be reached

Where reasonable efforts to achieve consensus have been exhausted and a decision is required for governance, legal, operational or timing reasons, the chair may determine that the matter proceed to a vote, in accordance with the Constitution.

However, note that simply recording oppositions in the minutes and taking a decision without first using the consensus ladder as part of the decision-making process is NOT consensus decision making.

3. Authorisation



Em Prof Nick Reid
Chair
Southern New England Landcare Ltd
10 June 2026