

Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship Constitutional Changes & Re-Registration - A summary & explanation

March 2026

Background: TSCF is an incorporated society. What does this mean? Why does it matter?

Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship was founded in 1936. TSCF is a registered charity, and in 2009, we also registered as an Incorporated Society, known as 'Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship NZ Incorporated' under the 1908 Incorporated Societies Act.

*"An incorporated society is a not-for-profit legal entity. If you have a group with a common purpose or vision, your group can choose to formalise its structure by becoming an incorporated society. This would give your group its own legal identity, separate to that of its members. This means that while the membership may change, the society's identity does not."*¹

There are many benefits to being registered as an incorporated society. For TSCF, this helps us by:

1. Maintaining our vision to see students reached for Christ, and transformed for life, by keeping students at the centre: As an incorporated society, TSCF can extend membership to representatives of all affiliated student groups around the country. Because student groups have a cycle of 3-4 years, during which their membership will change, being an incorporated society helps us to maintain the student voice as part of our identity, even though the actual membership itself changes year by year.
2. Providing TSCF with a legal identity: registration in 2009 removed prior personal and collective liability for the movement from our governance Board.

So why are we updating our constitution?

Effectively, because we have to!

In October 2023, the new Incorporated Societies Act 2022 came into law. The 2022 Act modernised the laws and the way societies need to operate.

To maintain status as an incorporated society, all incorporated societies must update their rules (in our case, our 'constitution') in line with the new Act, and re-register with a new constitution by 5 April 2026.

Consequently, the TSCF Board and management have been working hard, with legal support, to refresh the constitution to be compliant with the Incorporated Societies Act 2022. The changes being proposed are in keeping with who we are as TSCF. They are a result of the legal support received and ensure all the necessary requirements of the Act are included. Despite the proposed constitution being quite different to the previous iteration, we have sought to ensure its essence remains. We are confident there will be no substantive change to how we operate as TSCF, other than this will ensure we remain compliant with our legal obligations and requirements.

¹ You can read more about incorporated societies here: <https://is-register.companiesoffice.govt.nz/help-centre/getting-started/about-incorporated-societies/>

What happens next?

In preparation for our AGM, we ask that stakeholders read, review, consider and accept the proposed changes.

There will be two motions proposed to the AGM:

1. To agree to re-register as an incorporated society under the Incorporated Societies Act 2022
2. To receive and adopt the 2026 revised TSCF Constitution.

What are the key changes?

Operative Provisions – Definitions & Interpretations

- Several definitions and interpretations (eg: ‘Christian Fellowships’ or ‘Officers’) are provided in greater detail or clarified.
- The importance of ‘Christian character’ has been added to the reasons for electing a President/Vice-President.
- ‘Aims’ (True Witness, Deep Thought, Undivided Life & Global Reach) are now included in the ‘purposes’ of the Society.
- Terminology has changed from ‘Kiwi and international student coordinators’ to ‘NZ and international student representatives’.
- ‘Wānanga’ have been added to the listed Tertiary institutions.
- A description regarding what voting members are has been added

Commitment to Work with New Zealand and International Students

A new comment has been added, which builds on the intent of our previous constitution. The comment references the embodiment of our bicultural heritage in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and states that *“The Society will ensure our mission and activities affirm this unique relationship and covenant between tangata whenua (Māori) and tangata Tiriti (other people groups of New Zealand).”*

Purposes Paramount, Charitable Status & Powers

These are new sections and contain new clarifications to comply with the Act.

Membership

The new constitution has had to adjust the description of members. While the terminology is different, in practice, there is no material change to how TSCF will operate its membership. The description of our membership has been clarified to ensure compliance and to ensure any avoidance of doubt.

National Board

- A new Board term of 3 years has been introduced alongside details of the length for any further terms.
- Clarification about details of meeting online has been included.

President and Vice-Presidents

The term for a President has changed from 2 to 3 years.

Voting

- The option for electronic voting has been detailed and clarified.
- Clarification has been given that the Chairs of General Meetings will not have a casting vote.

Dispute Resolution Procedures

These have been added to the Schedule of the new Constitution.

Bylaws, Finances, Indemnity and Insurance

These have been added to ensure compliance with the Act.

Basis of Belief

- This remains exactly the same and now appears as a Schedule.
- There is a clarification regarding the Agreement with the Basis of Belief for all Officers.

Student Forum and National Board Role

These have been maintained but included as a Schedule.

You can view the proposed Constitution in its entirety [here](#)