

Home What is Freemasonry Freemasonry in NZ Charity Deposit Scheme Articles/Publications Contact Us /More

Articles/Publications Discussion Papers Special Communications: Further Explanation and FAQs

Special Communications: Further Explanation and FAQs



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The way the Grand Master intends to deal with the remits, is to treat each remit in the chronology separately, and where possible, each remit in parts so for example, in remit 1.1, there are three separate parts:-



1. That with the approval of the Divisional Grand Master, each
2. District Grand Master appoints their own district team.
That team will consist of the District Grand Director of Ceremonies and up to two Grand Stewards.
3. At the end of their term of office, these brethren will revert to their previous rank.

In this way, brethren can address each part and then at the end of the discussion, the amendments if any, can be taken and the motion put.

It maybe for example that from the discussion, it becomes obvious that the brethren think that only one Grand Steward should be stipulated as opposed to the "up to two", and at the end of their term, they should retain their past Grand Rank. If that is the situation, the Grand Master intends to ask for the amended motion to be moved and seconded and then put the motion. If the motion is lost, then the original 1.1 can be put.

Remit 1.2 can be discussed and moved as a complete motion.

Remit 1.3 has two issues and as such can be discussed separately.

1. (a) That with the exception of the Executive Officers, Grand Superintendents of Ceremonies and Divisional Almoners, term of appointment of all Grand Officer's to be three years; and
2. (b) Executive Officers, Grand Superintendent of Ceremonies and Divisional Almoners continue to be appointed annually up to a maximum of six year.

Both applying from the next Grand Installation.

Remit 1.4 of course decides when that next Grand Installation shall be. Over the last few years, many changes have taken place and most notable being the restructuring of the Board of General Purposes and the role it now has in our structure and the role expected to be undertaken by the Divisional and District Grand Masters of the future.

The postponement whilst not necessary, does allow the District Grand Master elect, to prepare for his role and more importantly carefully select his team over the following twelve months so that future strong leadership can be assured.

Also importantly by postponing the Communication, it will give time to consider other flow on effects that follow on through a 3 year term as opposed to a 2 year term and what role Divisional Conference should have because of this. For example, if at a Divisional Conference, a remit is passed that affects the Book of Constitution, then should it be submitted to the Board of General Purposes for circulation and comment to the 3 Divisional Conferences the following year and if passed at 3 Divisional Conferences, it becomes immediately enacted.

Likewise, any remit from the Board could be submitted to all 3 Divisional Conference and if passed by all 3, then it also comes into effect.

Other areas to consider would include the expulsion provision; setting capitation fees, etc.

These matters would be submitted to the 2011 Communication for full consideration.

FAQ's on the Special Communication

The three Divisional Conferences have been held and the Grand Secretary has received many letters and emails. Brethren thank you for your feedback. From the correspondence received, there are a number of frequently asked questions as follows:-

Whose idea was all this?

At the Biennial Communication in Christchurch, November 2008, a call was made to review the appointment of Grand Lodge officers in the present environment of falling membership. A Committee was subsequently set up under the auspices of MW Bro Mace PGM, which reported back to the Board of General Purposes in March 2010.

The Board adopted the recommendations and called for a Special Communication so the ideas could be discussed and determined by brethren.

What is the hurry?

True, unfortunately we have come to expect that freemasonry usually moves slowly. The committee considering these suggestions has

True - unfortunately, we have come to expect that Freemasonry usually moves slowly. The committee considering these suggestions has spent 17 months deliberating, and has now made these recommendations. The first major recommendation is to extend the term in office from a base of two years, to one of three years. If this is adopted by the brethren, the sooner it is implemented, the sooner the benefits will arise.

If the changes are not implemented now, it could well be another 2 years before the next opportunity would arise to make the changes.

Will the remit be discussed piece by piece?

The Grand Master has indicated that, where possible, the remit will be broken down into its constituent parts and debated piece by piece. Following debate, any appropriate amendments can then be made. There is no intention to railroad the process, but in accordance with the proper rules of debate, each aspect of the proposed changes will be open to discussion.

Why delay the 2010 Grand Installation?

If all or part of the recommendations are adopted, then some consequential aspects will need consideration. The extension of the existing officers terms by one year will provide the opportunity to consider those aspects, and to make recommendations to address those issues.

The postponement whilst not necessary, does allow the District Grand Master elect, to prepare for his role and more importantly carefully prepare his team over the following twelve months so that strong leadership at District level can be assured.

Also importantly by postponing the Communication, it will give time to consider other side effects that follow on through a 3 year term as opposed to a 2 year term and what role Divisional Conference should have because of this. For example, if at a Divisional Conference, a remit is passed that affects the Book of Constitution, then should it be submitted to the Board of General Purposes for circulation and comment to the 3 Divisional Conferences the following year and if passed at 3 Divisional Conferences, it becomes immediately enacted.

Likewise, possibly any remit from the Board could be submitted to all 3 Divisional Conferences and if passed by all 3, then it might come into effect. We need to consider these

Will the 2011 Grand Installation be in Auckland?

There is no guarantee the 2011 might be in Auckland. It will depend upon accommodation and availability of space etc, particularly in light of the Rugby World Cup which is having a huge impact on the timing of functions.

Will the new regime save money?

It is likely there will be savings in costs flowing from the extension of the term of office of a Grand Lodge officer. The Grand Installations would move to a three yearly basis representing a saving, and greater emphasis will be placed on the Divisional Conferences. However, the recommendations are being proposed to deal with an over supply of Grand Lodge Officers, rather than aimed at a saving of costs.

Aren't you just culling out 'middle management'?

There is a lot of emotion generated by the recommendations, including applying theories of economic process to a member organization of volunteers. The thought there is a 'culling' arises from the proposal of certain officers to revert back to their former rank.

This concept is followed in some Australian states and other Masonic jurisdictions, so is not alien to our fraternity. It is novel in New Zealand, and hence perhaps unsurprisingly has generated much response.

Why don't you force Districts to merge?

There could well be merit in Districts merging, however it is up to the Districts to reach that conclusion, not for any merger to be forced upon them.

If the term of an existing Grand Officer is extended by an extra year, can he decline to serve the extra year?

If the Communication is postponed any existing Grand Officer will need to elect whether he wishes to continue for that further year. If he elects not to continue then his office can be filled until the 2011 Communication. It will be solely up to the individuals themselves. Hopefully whatever decision is made, that Brother will be available to assist his successor prepare for the role.

Who gets a vote?

Voting is by duly appointed lodge delegate - one vote per lodge.

What if you can't attend the Special Communication?

Lodges can appoint a proxy to represent them and to cast their vote. The Chair of the meeting could also be appointed.



[Back to Top](#)