

Frequently Asked Questions

1

Why might Masonic Entities be included in the Book of Constitution's Disciplinary provisions?

The overarching ethos and reputation of Freemasonry is a matter of collective pride. It's paramount that all facets of our organisation uphold this stature, ensuring no Lodge or Masonic Entity inadvertently diminishes it. Current frameworks provide a safety net, offering checks and rectifications for any Lodges that might inadvertently drift from our brand's essence. Yet, a glaring void exists when it comes to Masonic Entities, which could include trusts, charitable organisations, or even commercial entities. The new remits are poised to address this oversight. The end game isn't to arbitrarily subject Masonic Entities to disciplinary processes. Rather, it's to hold associated Lodges accountable, encouraging them to rectify any anomalies that might reflect negatively on Freemasonry. These proposed changes aren't merely disciplinary; they're protective, ensuring the longstanding reputation and integrity of Freemasonry in New Zealand remains unblemished.

2

Will including Masonic Entities under Rule 2 allow the Board to intervene in the property matters of the Masonic Entity

No - the provisions within the remits as they relate to Masonic Entities only cover any potential disciplinary matters which have the potential to adversely impact on the Freemasons "brand" and thus potentially embarrass Freemasons New Zealand and its member Lodges and Brethren.

The only references to Masonic Entities within the Book of Constitution are to be in Rule 2 (Definitions) and in Part VII – Differences and Disciplinary Proceedings section of the Book of Constitution; there is no intention to become involved with property matters presently being administered by masonic entities.



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Under Remit 16 (Rule 238.c), does the Grand Master solely decide on Masonic Differences? Should decisions be made by a committee including the Grand Master and Past Grand Masters?

Under Remit 16, Rule 238 is being revised to replace the Board of General Purposes with the Grand Master for handling Masonic Differences. When a Difference can't be settled initially by the Divisional Grand Master, the Grand Master decides on one of five resolution options:

- (a) Return it to the Lodge
- (b) Refer it to the Divisional Grand Master
- (c) Send it to a Grand Master's nominee
- (d) Delegate to a committee
- (e) Assign to a Commission.

Once resolved, the decision is reported to the Grand Master, who ensures all parties are informed and any penalties are overseen by the Board of General Purposes. While the Grand Master ensures the correct process is used, he doesn't partake in the decision-making. There's no need for a committee with Past Grand Masters for decision-making.

Due to the Grand Master's "healing power" under Rule 15, he cannot be on a decision-making committee that he might need to address later under Rule 15. A "Complaints and Disputes Panel" will consist of qualified Brethren, expected to form committees or Commissions as required. They'll receive training in mediation and dispute resolution.



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Can the Disciplinary Panel remove directors from companies or trustees from trusts if a masonic entity has been found guilty of a Masonic Offence?

Any penalty imposed following a Masonic Offence involving a masonic entity can only be applied against the Freemason directors and shareholding Lodges of a Masonic company or against the Freemason trustees and the appointing Lodges of a Masonic charity.

At the end of the day, the concern is dealing with an entity (Brother, Lodge, Masonic Entity) which has brought the good name of Freemasonry into disrepute – as companies are subject to the Companies Act and Trusts to the Trusts Act, the disciplinary tribunal cannot impose sanctions on the company nor the trust but it can look to the Brethren and Lodges which are involved with those entities.

The inclusion of Masonic Entities under Rule 2 and Part VII of the Book of Constitution is only to protect the Freemason brand against actions or decisions taken by such entities. Where a Masonic Entity is complying with its rules ("constitution", "trust deed"), is complying with the laws of the land, and is complying with the underlying Masonic principles incorporated within the Book of Constitution, then the Masonic Entity nor Lodges nor Brethren will have no cause for concern about Remit 15.

5

Doesn't Remit 15 mean that Grand Lodge will be able to take over or control the assets of masonic entities?

Remit 15 simply means that masonic entities will be subject to the disciplinary provisions of Part VII of the Book of Constitution – nothing more, nothing less.

If it was the intention to allow "Grand Lodge" or "the Board" to "take control" of the assets and property of masonic entities, then (for example) Rules 117-119 inter alia of the Book of Constitution would need to specifically include masonic entities within those Rules. If that was the intention, then a suitably worded Remit making such provision would need to be first considered at and adopted by the Grand Lodge of New Zealand in Communication – every qualifying Lodge would have an opportunity to discuss such a remit before it was dealt with at a Communication or at an Annual Communication or at a Special Communication.

As pointed out above, the current Remit 15 is only looking to bring masonic entities within the disciplinary provisions of the Book of Constitution so that, if necessary, a masonic entity is in no different position to a Lodge nor a Brother who has brought Freemasonry into disrepute and adversely impacted on the good name of Freemasons throughout New Zealand.



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