

# Constitution of the Workers Party of New Zealand

First adopted April 2008

Amended June 2008

(from the Workers Party website: <http://workersparty.org.nz>)

## 1. Aims

(i) Opposition to all NZ and Western imperialist intervention in the Third World and all Western imperialist alliances.

(ii) Secure jobs for all, with a living wage and a shorter working week.

(iii) For the unrestricted right of workers to organise and take industrial action and no limits on freedom of speech and activity.

(iv) For working class unity and solidarity - equality for women, Maori and other ethnic minorities and people of all sexual orientations and identities; open borders and full rights for migrant workers.

(v) For a working peoples' republic

## 2. Interpretation

"party" refers to the Workers Party of New Zealand

"publicly express" means to communicate either verbally in a forum such

as a public meeting, in writing or via a form of electronic media such as

a blog, website or public email list

“member” means someone who has fulfilled the requirements of section (3)(i) in the constitution

“member-at-large” refers to a financial member residing in a town or locality where there is no Workers Party branch

“majority” means any number greater than 50%

### **3. Membership**

(i) Membership is open to all those in agreement with the Workers Party 5-point platform as set out in section (1) who have also paid the minimum membership fee of \$1, renewable every 3 years.

(ii) All members have the right to attend branch meetings and annual conference and to vote on all resolutions.

(iii) Members are free to publicly express any political view, so long as it is not in contradiction with the aims set out in section (1).

(iv) Members are also free to publicly express dissent on majority decisions of branches and national conference, so long as they do not try to obstruct the implementation of those decisions and do not contradict the party’s aims set out in section (1).

(v) Membership will lapse when a member either

a. fails to renew their financial membership at the end of the prescribed three year period

b. advises the national secretary in writing that they wish to cancel their membership

c. their membership is terminated by the decision of national conference following the procedure outlined in section (4)

#### **4. Disciplinary Procedures**

(i) Disagreements and debate are part of a normal, healthy political culture and all party members are guaranteed total freedom of expression so long as they do not:

a. publicly express a political view in direct opposition to the aims of the party set out in section (1)

b. engage in conduct bring the party into disrepute in the eyes of the working class

(ii) Where a party member is found to have breached either section (4)(i)(a) or (4)(i)(b) they may be expelled by a majority vote of the local branch of which they are a member. The national secretary must also be notified of the decision.

Where a member is expelled by their local party branch, the member shall still have the right to appeal their expulsion at the next annual party conference. However their expulsion shall still remain in effect in the intervening period before the next annual party conference, unless the branch reverses its decision (which it shall have the right to do at any time).

(iii) Members-at-large can only be expelled by a majority decision of national conference and for the reasons set out in section (4)(i)a and (4)(i)b

(iv) A motion to expel a party member requires the support of at least 3 financial members, and must be submitted in writing to the branch secretary or national secretary (whichever is

appropriate) setting out the specific allegations against the member

(v) The party member concerned must be given at least 2 weeks notice of any vote on their suspension or expulsion from the party, and be allowed to make a statement in their own defence to the branch and/or national conference.

## **5. Organisational Structure**

(i) The basic organisational division of the party is the branch

a. a branch may be formed wherever there are 3 or more financial members residing in a single town or geographical locality and where branch meetings are held at least once a month

b. members who are not members of a party branch are deemed to be "members-at-large"

(ii) The highest decision making body of the party is the annual national conference, the timing and venue for which is to be determined by the decision of the majority of party branches no later than 6 months in advance.

(iii) All members shall be notified of the date and venue of national conference no later than 2 months in advance, and have the right to attend and vote on all resolutions, nominations and remits.

## **6. Election of National Officers**

(i) At the annual conference the following officers shall be elected

a. A National Secretary who is responsible for carrying on all official party correspondence as well as maintaining a database of all current financial members.

b. A National Organiser who is responsible for prioritising and leading the party's political campaign work in consultation with the local branch organisers.

c. A National Treasurer who is responsible for collecting money owing from sale of party publications as well as donations and providing an annual financial report at national conference.

d. A National Industrial Organiser who is responsible for prioritising and leading the party's trade union work in consultation with the local branches.

e. A National Educational Organiser who is responsible for prioritising and leading the party's educational work in consultation with the local branches, including the production of pamphlets and other literature.

f. A Party Publications Editor and Editorial Board who are responsible for overseeing the production of the party's newspaper and the content of the party's website.

(ii) A minimum period of 6 months membership is required for those wishing to stand for election to national officer positions. Nominations must be received by the national secretary no later than 1 month in advance of the date of national conference. Members may nominate themselves.

(iii) The purpose of the elected officers is to play a co-ordinating (not executive) role. Any decisions made by the elected officers can be challenged and overturned by the decision of the majority of party branches.

(iv) All officers are subject to the right of recall by the decision of the majority of party branches at any time.

(v) Where a position falls vacant due to resignation, recall or any other eventuality during the intervening period between

national conferences an interim replacement may be elected by the decision of the majority of party branches.

## **7. Election of Branch Officers**

(i) Each branch must hold an Annual General Meeting, written notice of which must be given to all members no later than 2 weeks in advance.

(ii) Each branch Annual General Meeting shall elect the following officers

a. A Branch Secretary who is responsible for handling all new membership applications and recording the minutes of each branch meeting.

b. A Branch Organiser who is responsible for prioritising and leading the branch's political campaign work in consultation with the national organiser.

c. A Branch Treasurer who is responsible for collecting membership dues and donations and for providing a finance report at each branch meeting.

d. Any other officers as the branch may deem necessary to elect.

(iii) A minimum period of 3 months membership is required for those wishing to stand for election to branch officer positions.

## **8. Selection of Local Body and Parliamentary Candidates**

(i) Candidates for local body positions and for parliamentary electorate seats shall be decided by the majority decision of the local party branch.

(ii) Members-at-large wishing to contest local body positions or parliamentary electorate seats in their area on behalf of the party must be endorsed by the majority of all party branches.

(iii) Party list candidates shall be selected by a majority vote at national

conference, or in the case of a snap election by the decision of the majority of party branches. The method of electing a party list shall be that of proposing a single slate (of list candidates and their rankings). Any party member present at national conference (or in the case of a snap election at their local branch meeting) may propose a slate.

## **9. Powers to Amend the Constitution**

(i) Amendments to this constitution may be proposed by any party member via remits to the party's annual conference.

(ii) All constitutional remits must be received by the national secretary no later than 1 month in advance of the annual party conference.

(iii) Amendments to the constitution require only the support of a majority of votes at annual conference.