



Frequently Asked Questions

MAY 2025 UPDATE

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1. Understanding the Transition Project

Q: What is the AVA Transition Project?

A: The AVA Transition Project is a strategic initiative based on member feedback to modernise and strengthen the AVA. It includes changes in governance, membership structures, services, and technology to provide increased member value, better support the profession and ensure sustainability.

Q: Why is the AVA implementing this Transition Project?

A: Feedback in 2024 from over 2,500 members and non-members, and consultation with key stakeholders highlighted the need for a more inclusive, affordable and supportive AVA. Our Transition Project reflects these needs and is shaped by your feedback through this extensive member consultation.

Q: What are the key components of the Transition Project?

A: The plan includes:

- An all-inclusive, more affordable membership model
- Technology upgrades for a better user experience
- Governance reforms for transparency and agility
- Better support for students and early-career vets

Q: What is the timeline for the Transition Project?

A: The transition to the proposed all-inclusive membership model is anticipated to be delivered over structured phases with implementation for membership renewals in 2026. Consultation, transparency and member engagement is included at every step.

You can [watch the briefing video here](#) for more details on what's proposed. Throughout the process we'll continue to communicate openly and work closely with members to ensure the model reflects the needs of our diverse community.

Q: Will consultation be ongoing throughout the Transition Project?

A: Yes. AVA is committed to genuine consultation throughout the Transition Project. So far, over 35 focus group sessions are scheduled with Special Interest Groups (SIGs), Divisions, and members from other categories and this feedback will inform the final recommendations. Focus groups, direct emails and online feedback are all part of the process.

- To participate in a focus group, [visit our webpage](#) and register for a virtual focus group that best reflects you.
- To share feedback or ask a question about the All-Inclusive Membership Model, email us at transitionproject@ava.com.au.
- To share your thoughts on the Governance Reforms, email us at constitutionfeedback@ava.com.au

Q: How do I keep in touch with the process?

A: Our dedicated [Transition Project](#) web page contains up to date information on the changes, the project process and how you can stay involved. We will also include regular updates in our weekly Member National Newsletter as well as our social channels.

Q: If I am unable to attend a scheduled focus group, how do I provide feedback to ensure my voice is heard?

A: We want this transition to be shaped by members, by *you*, the people who drive the profession every day. Whether it's a big idea, a practical tweak, or a concern you want to discuss, we want to hear from you.

- To share feedback or ask a question about the All-Inclusive Membership Model, email us at transitionproject@ava.com.au.
- To share your thoughts on the Governance Reforms, email us at constitutionfeedback@ava.com.au.

2. About the All-inclusive Membership model

Q: What is the all-inclusive membership model and why is it an important change?

A: The proposed all-inclusive membership model means AVA members would pay one flat annual fee that provides access to *all* SIGs. It makes it easier to join, explore new areas of interest and get more out of your membership through collaboration with more members

Q: What does the all-inclusive fee cover?

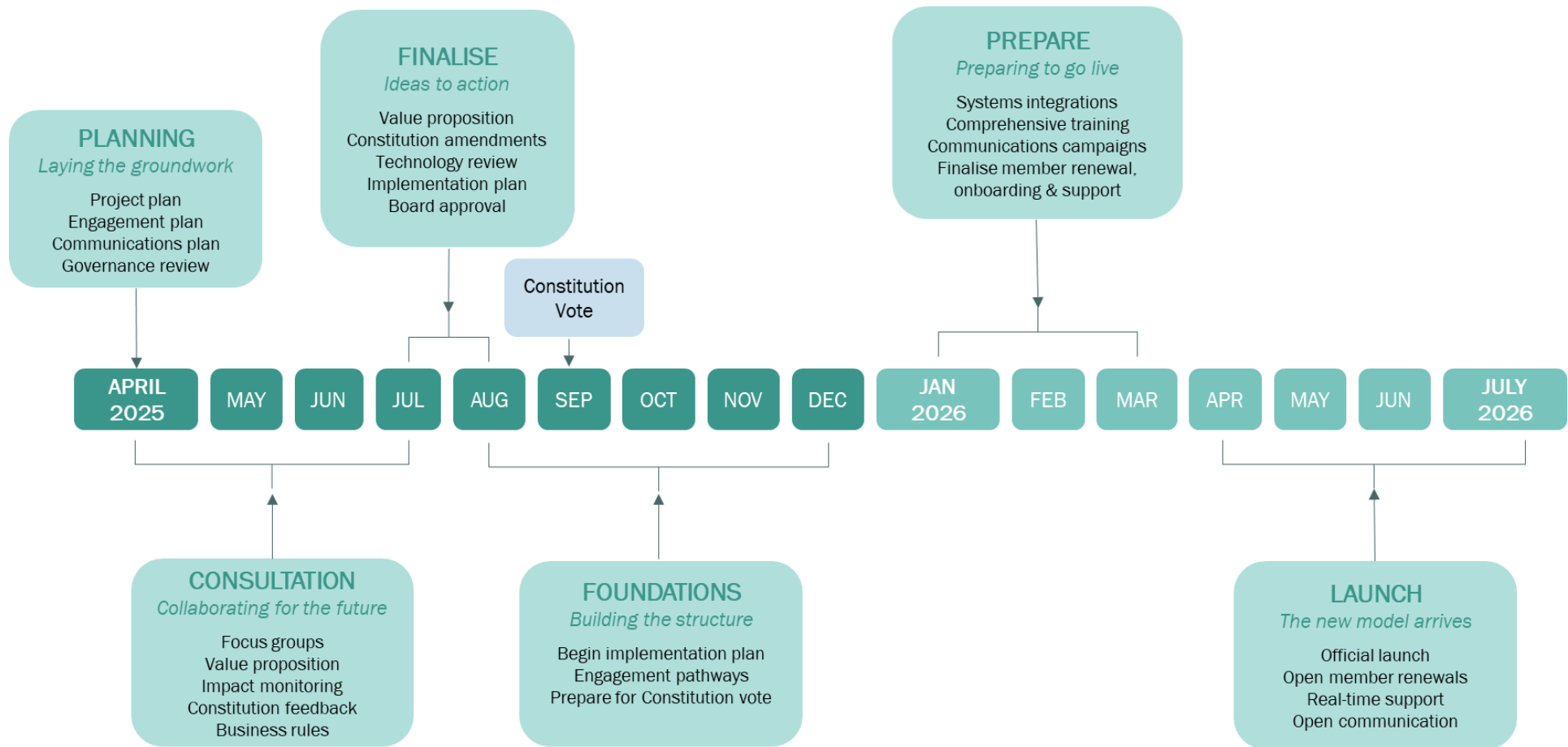
A: It means you would have access to *all* SIGs without needing to pay an extra fee. This simplifies your experience and broadens your opportunities for engagement. Special offerings of SIGs may not be included in the all-inclusive fee. Examples of "SIG Special Offerings" may include: Drug and PPE Forms App (EVA); PREGCHECK™ (ACV); Journal of Veterinary Behaviour: Clinical Applications and Research (AVBM).

Q: What is the process and timeline for implementing the new all-inclusive membership model?

A: The transition to the proposed all-inclusive membership model is anticipated to be delivered over structured phases with implementation for membership renewals in 2026. Consultation, transparency and member engagement is included at every step.

You can [watch the briefing video here](#) for more details on what is proposed. Throughout the process, we'll continue to communicate openly and work closely with members to ensure the model reflects the needs of our diverse community.

Indicative Timeline



Q: What is a value proposition and why does it matter?

A: A value proposition clearly explains the core benefits of AVA membership for each member category. It helps ensure that every SIG, Group, Division and Branch can clearly express their unique role and the value they offer. This clarity helps members understand what AVA does and how it can support them. These value propositions will be used to personalise all aspects of the membership experience.

Q: How is AVA developing a value proposition for each membership category?

A: We're working closely with each SIG, Group, Division and Branch to co-create tailored value propositions for each membership category that reflect their unique needs, contributions and cultures. A draft version for each group based on extensive member and non-member feedback has been developed by [membership expert, Belinda Moore](#). These will be shared with each group as a starting point and refined through focused discussions to ensure the all-inclusive membership model delivers relevant, practical value to every segment of our diverse community.

The outcomes of these sessions will inform the next version of the membership model, which will then be shared with members for further feedback and refinement before anything is finalised.

Q: How will the AVA support SIGs/Divisions if fees are reduced?

A: We are committed to continue the same level of funding for activities currently undertaken by each SIG, Group, Division and Branch. Currently, Membership Fees represent approximately one third of AVA's overall income.

In the past, SIG membership fees have not covered all direct and indirect costs of running a SIG. Therefore, alternate revenue streams are required to help fund SIGs as well as other AVA activities including Policy, Advocacy and Strategic initiatives.

AVA generates income from a range of alternate revenue streams including conferencing and education, sponsorship, advertising and affinity income, as well as through investments. This income enables activities such as SIG and Division projects, advocacy and policy and the costs of running an association.

Q: How will SIGs know members' interests without separate fees?

A: Members will continue to select SIGs of their interest during annual sign-up/renewals, enabling targeted communication and continued community building within each SIG. Members can also add (a) SIG(s) to their membership at any other time during the annual membership cycle.

Q: What is the impact of these changes on the financial sustainability of the AVA? Are you doing financial modelling?

A: Preliminary financial modelling was a key part of shaping the proposed all-inclusive membership model. During the planning stage, the Board considered several different structures and assessed their financial impact, including how they might influence member engagement, retention and growth.

More detailed modelling is continuing alongside the consultation process to refine the approach and ensure any changes are both financially sustainable and aligned with member feedback. As part of the AVA's investment in this transition, membership fees have been frozen for 2025. Final pricing for the new membership categories will be determined after more extensive financial modelling has been undertaken to ensure the new fees are sustainable and reflect member feedback.

Q. Will members vote on the membership model?

A: Members will vote on the constitutional components of the model. Specifically, the updates to the membership categories. The finer details such as how the all-inclusive fee works, what's included, and how SIG access is managed, do not require changes to the Constitution and therefore won't go to a member vote.

However, your feedback is critical in shaping how these features are designed. If you'd like to contribute, we encourage you to join a focus group or share your views by emailing transitionproject@ava.com.au.

Q: Are the changes to the membership model linked to the Constitution reform?

A: A refreshed Constitution ensures that our governing documents reflect the way members engage with the AVA, with simplicity, fairness and a focus on growth. It's about setting the AVA up for smoother operations today and a stronger future tomorrow. Although the finer details of the proposed membership model are not included in the current or proposed Constitution, these two projects are linked which is why we have incorporated them into one project, the Transition Project.

3. About the governance reforms

We are continuing to progress updates to the [AVA Constitution \(Stage 3\)](#) to ensure it reflects modern governance best practice and aligns with the proposed membership model. This includes clarifying member rights, streamlining decision-making and ensuring all components, (SIGs, Groups, Divisions, and Branches), are supported within a consistent and contemporary framework. A draft of the proposed Constitution changes can be found in the link below for your consultation and feedback before anything is finalised.

Q: How can I find out more about Stage 3 of the proposed changes to the AVA Constitution?

A: You can [read the consultation paper](#) outlining the proposed Stage 3 changes on the AVA website. We encourage all members to review the draft and share their feedback by emailing constitutionfeedback@ava.com.au.

Q: What governance improvements are planned?

A: Stage 3 of the Constitution reform is designed to strengthen AVA's governance while respecting the vital role that SIGs and other groups continue to play in shaping the profession. The proposed changes aim to modernise how the AVA is governed making it fairer, clearer and more future-focused.

These proposed changes include:

- A fully member-elected Board, with representation from key sectors like Small Animal, Equine, and Cattle.
- A clearer focus on Board skills and experience, supported by a new skills matrix and an independent Nominations Committee.
- Simplified membership categories with no loss of member rights or voting entitlements.
- A shorter, clearer Constitution focused on governance, with operational details moved into policy for more flexibility.
- Updated roles for SIGs, Groups, Divisions and Branches to strengthen their influence while modernising how they operate.
- Ongoing commitment to ethical standards, diversity and succession planning.

Q: Are member rights changing?

A: No. The proposed changes are not intended to remove any member rights like voting and participation. What is changing is how member categories are defined. The goal is to make the structure simpler, clearer, and more inclusive. This will make it easier for all veterinary professionals, across all sectors and career stages, to understand how they fit in and get involved. This is about improving access, encouraging engagement and making it easier for more people to be part of the AVA community.

Q: If operational matters are moved out of the Constitution, will I lose any rights?

A: No. Moving procedural detail to policy is standard practice in modern governance and is not about limiting rights. Policies remain transparent and can be updated more responsively, with appropriate consultation.

Q: Will these governance changes affect my membership fees?

A: While any governance changes do not directly impact membership fees, the AVA Board has provided in-principle approval of a new all-inclusive membership model. This means members will no longer pay additional fees to join Special Interest Groups (SIGs). The single membership fee will cover access to all SIGs, reducing financial barriers, promoting collaboration and cross-pollination, and simplifying the member experience.

3.1. Membership Categories

Q: What's changing about membership categories in the Constitution and why?

A: The proposed changes update and simplify AVA's membership categories to better reflect how people contribute to the profession today. The current Constitution includes a mix of historical and role-based categories including Full Member, Life Member, Overseas Member, Associate and Honorary.

Under the proposed model, these will be streamlined to make it easier for individuals and organisations to join, engage and understand their benefits. The proposed categories have been shaped by member feedback and importantly, no member rights will be lost. This update is about clarity, accessibility and aligning the Constitution with a more modern, inclusive membership model which is reflective of the veterinary teams in our profession today.

Q: What are the proposed categories?

Category	Example	Eligibility – Proposed definitions to be provided using existing Constitution	Proposed change to Constitution
Individual Membership options			
Student	Student	Veterinary students enrolled full time in accredited programs in Australia.	No Change
Veterinarian	Early Career (Yr1-3) Early Career (Yr4-5) Full-Time Part-Time Career Break Overseas Member Retired Life member Fellow	Veterinarians with different career stages and circumstances, including early career, part-time, and retirees. This also includes those taking a career break (whether for study or other purposes).	Name change from Full Member to Veterinarian Incorporates existing categories of Fellow and Overseas member Definition of Veterinarian is retained - Veterinarian means a person who holds a qualification in Veterinary Science which meets the conditions for registration as a Veterinary Surgeon/Veterinary Practitioner/Veterinarian in Australia (as those terms are defined in the Australian jurisdiction applicable to that person)
Allied Veterinary Professionals	Allied Professional Honorary	Veterinary staff including vets not eligible for registration in Australia, nurses, technologists, and support staff working in the veterinary field or those who have been provided Honorary status.	Name change from Associate Member to Allied Veterinary Professional Includes Honorary member in this category
<p>AVA is reviewing its organisational memberships to better reflect Stakeholder Survey feedback. This is unlikely to require constitutional change however, further advice is being sought.</p>			
Organisational Membership options			
Veterinary Practice	Veterinary clinic/business with: 1-5 Staff 6-10 Staff 11-20 Staff 21-50 Staff 51-100 Staff Over 100 Staff	Veterinary practices who employ individuals seeking membership for multiple staff members. This proposal will enable veterinary teams to join with a single membership and gain the benefits relevant to their business.	Value proposition being developed with Veterinary Practice representatives
Government	Government Entity	Government department or entity which employs veterinarians/allied veterinarian professionals seeking membership for multiple individuals. Their team can join via a single membership and gain the relevant benefits for their entity.	Value proposition being developed with Government representatives
Academic	Academic Institution	Academic institutions who employ veterinarians/allied veterinarian professionals seeking membership for multiple individuals. Their team can join via a single membership and gain the relevant benefits for their institution.	Value proposition being developed with Academic representatives
Industry Supplier	Vendor	Companies selling products or services to the veterinary industry, seeking membership for multiple employed individuals.	Value proposition being developed with Industry supplier representatives

Q: How are the new membership categories different to the existing categories in the current AVA Constitution?

A: The proposed categories have been designed based on your feedback and represent a shift to a simpler, role-based and sector-aligned structure, which is consistent with modern governance and best practice in association membership design. Rather than focusing on status, the new model reflects what members do or where they work. It is clearer, easier to navigate and more relevant to how members engage with the AVA today.

Q: What happens to retired, part-time or unemployed vets?

A: They are included in the "Veterinarian" category, with options and pricing reflecting part-time, retired and career-break professionals.

Q: How will practice membership work?

A: Veterinary Practice Membership is designed to support entire veterinary practices and is distinct from individual membership. It offers a flexible structure tailored to the size of the practice, allowing multiple staff to be included under one membership package.

Q: Who are "Industry Supplier" members?

A: Industry Supply members may be Veterinarians or Allied Veterinary Professionals working in veterinary supply/support organisations (pharmaceutical businesses, nutrition, equipment, wholesaler, etc.).

Q: Does allowing non-vets to be members pose a risk?

A: Non-veterinarian members have long been part of the AVA community. The proposed changes to the Constitution do not involve any changes to the voting rights of full members. That is, only veterinarians who are registrable in Australia can vote. The existing parameters around voting rights remain in place.

Q: What rights or restrictions will apply to industry and paraprofessional members?

A: AVA currently offers associate membership, and this framework will continue. These members have clearly defined rights and access. Their contributions are valued as part of a broader, more inclusive veterinary team. As they are not registered or eligible to be registered as veterinarians in Australia, they will not have voting rights.

3.2. Board Structure and Director Elections

Q: What are the proposed changes to the Board structure?

A: The proposal maintains nine Director positions on the AVA Board. However, the proposed composition of the Board guarantees at least one Director each from Cattle, Equine and Small Animal sectors (three in total); four AVA members with voting rights (currently known as Full Members; proposed name change to Veterinarian); and two independent Directors. All Directors will be elected by members eligible to vote.

Q: Who will be represented on the AVA Board?

A: The current proposal includes nine Director positions comprising at least one each from Cattle, Equine, and Small Animal sectors; four AVA members with voting rights (currently known as Full Members); and two independent Directors. All members are encouraged to nominate if they can demonstrate meeting the requirements of the role (skills matrix and Position Descriptions).

Q: What is the envisioned role of the Board under the proposed changes?

A: The Board would remain responsible for strategic direction, governance leadership, financial stewardship and oversight of organisational risk, while operational matters would continue to be managed by the CEO and executive team of the AVA.

Q: How will the criteria for Board representation be decided under the new system?

A: The proposed changes include more formalised selection criteria to nominate for an AVA Board Director. These include clear Director position descriptions, a Board-approved skills matrix and the oversight of an independent Nominations Committee. A position description for the Director role currently exists and sector-specific position descriptions are being developed in collaboration with the relevant SIGs, Board and subject matter experts.

Q: How will sector-specific Board positions (e.g. Equine, Cattle, Small Animal) be filled under the new model?

A: The proposed model introduces a more transparent and structured process for filling sector-specific Board positions. The intention is that representation of each sector will now be guaranteed and no longer be tied solely to the size of the SIG. It is proposed that all elected positions will be supported by clear governance mechanisms. One recommendation being explored is for SIGs to nominate a shortlist of suitably experienced members, such as those who have held office-bearing roles within the SIG or demonstrated significant sector leadership to the independent Nominations Committee for review.

The final process will be developed through consultation with formalised position descriptions (PDs) and a Board-approved skills matrix. These tools will help ensure that sector representation (Cattle, Equine and Small Animal) is guaranteed on the AVA Board, that all nominees meet consistent governance standards, and that the process is fair, open and aligned with best practice.

Q: Will members still vote on Board positions?

A: Yes. Under the proposed Constitutional changes, all members with voting rights would vote for all Director positions. This is intended to strengthen member democracy and inclusivity.

Q: Will there still be opportunities to serve on committees or advisory bodies?

A: Yes. One of the goals of this process is to broaden member participation. Committees, working groups and advisory councils will remain vital to AVA's strategic and policy development. We welcome ideas for how these can be further strengthened.

Q: How would the proposed independent Nominations Committee be formed, and who could serve on it?

A: The draft proposal suggests a mix of AVA members and independent voices, appointed through clear criteria to support balance and fairness. Council of Presidents, SIGs and other member groups would be encouraged to put forward nominations. We want to hear your views on how this might work best. See the proposed [Terms of Reference](#) on our [website](#).

Q: How will diversity and representation of different veterinary sectors be ensured?

A: A key focus of the proposal is developing a skills and experience matrix that reflects practice area, geography, gender, cultural background and career stage. We are seeking input to ensure this approach meets the expectations of the profession.

3.3. SIGs and Representation on the Board

Q: Will the largest 3 SIGs retain an appointed seat, or will there be a general board representative for those specialisations?

A: Under the current system, the 3 largest SIGs by membership number have a nominee to the Board, which means representation can shift over time. The new proposal aims to provide more certainty by securing dedicated representation for key sectors – including Equine, Cattle and Small Animal. Position descriptions for these Board roles will be developed in direct consultation with the relevant SIGs, to ensure they reflect the knowledge, experience and relationships needed for meaningful sector representation. While Board members will be elected by the broader AVA membership, the intent is to maintain strong, sector-informed voices within AVA's governance and Board structure.

Q: Why is the AVA considering changes to how SIG-appointed Directors are selected?

A: This is to support a more transparent and equitable process. We recognise that while SIGs play a vital role and make a valuable contribution to the profession, proposed governance changes explore whether all Board Directors should be elected by members who are eligible to vote, rather than appointed by specific groups.

The current Constitution stipulates that there is Board representation by SIG-Nominee directors from the three largest SIGs. It does not specify what these SIGs are. In a changing veterinary landscape, SIG membership could change considerably in the future. The proposed changes guarantee representation of Equine, Cattle and Small Animal veterinarians on the AVA Board, regardless of the SIG size or proportion of the membership. This is essential to ensure a diverse and representative Board in the future. This may impact some SIGs differently and we invite feedback on how best to maintain strong SIG engagement under any revised model.

Q: Will SIGs or other member groups lose representation?

A: No. Groups such as SIGs, Divisions, and Branches will continue to play an essential role in shaping AVA policy, advocacy and professional development. The proposals aim to ensure that governance roles are filled in a way that is fair, transparent and open to all members. We welcome input on how to ensure ongoing, meaningful representation for these groups.

Q: Will this proposed change negatively impact the 3 SIGs who currently appoint Directors?

A: We understand this change may feel like a shift in influence. These SIGs have made a significant contribution to the AVA Board, and we are committed to ensuring that their perspectives remain central. Therefore, rather than tying Board representation to SIG size, the proposed model guarantees seats for Equine, Cattle and Small Animal sectors, ensuring these voices remain at the Board table regardless of group membership numbers. This consultation invites your feedback on whether a representative mix can be better achieved through an open, skills-based election model, with continued opportunities for SIGs to nominate candidates.

Q: Are SIG nominees valued?

A: Yes. The SIG nominee provides valuable insight into the issues affecting their sectors, and their contribution to AVA governance is recognised and valued. That's exactly why the proposed model continues to ensure ongoing sector-specific representation (Equine, Cattle and Small Animal) on the Board. What is being proposed is a change to the *process* by which Directors are selected making it more equitable and in line with modern governance practices.

4. Consultation and Engagement Process

Q: How can members provide input on the membership model?

A: We need members to provide feedback via focus groups, email (transitionproject@ava.com.au), and the [Transition Project page on the AVA website](#). Your feedback will inform final outcomes.

Q: How can members provide input on Stage 3 of the constitution reform?

A: Members are invited to share their feedback by emailing constitutionfeedback@ava.com.au. All input will be reviewed by the Constitution Reform Working Group as part of the consultation process before any changes are recommended to the AVA Board for finalisation. We welcome your views and encourage open discussion to help shape a Constitution that reflects the needs of all our members.

Q: When will changes be finalised?

A: Changes will be finalised by the AVA Board after consultation concludes in August 2025. A member vote on Constitutional changes is planned for September 2025.

Q: Will the vote at the end of September 2025 be delayed if more consultation is needed?

A: If necessary, the timeline can be adjusted to ensure robust and thorough member engagement. However, the suggested timeframe provides multiple opportunities for all members who wish to provide feedback to do so.

Q: Will the Constitution changes be shared prior to coming to membership for a vote?

A: Yes. Final changes to the Constitution and key documents will be shared for feedback prior to member vote.

Q: Where do I find information about the Constitution and membership model changes?

A: Information on the Transition Project can be found on the [AVA Website](#) with links to join focus groups, recordings of briefings, FAQs and links to consultation papers and documents. This page will be regularly updated. Project information and progress will also be included in AVA's national newsletter.

Q: What if I have concerns or disagree with aspects of the proposal?

A: This is exactly why we are consulting. We encourage you to share any concerns, alternative suggestions, or questions. Your feedback will shape the final direction. Share your feedback or ask a question about the by attending a focus group or emailing us at transitionproject@ava.com.au or constitutionfeedback@ava.com.au.

5. Member Participation and Insights

Q: What proportion of members vote in AVA Board elections?

A: Voting is open to all Members with voting rights (currently known as Full Members) – over the last 5 years approx. 11–13% of members have voted in annual Director elections. Increasing engagement is a priority.

Q: How many people attended the 2025 AGM/Transition Project briefing?

A: Approximately 80 members attended the AGM and Transition Project Briefing (held on 8th May 2025). Improving participation in AGM's and voting is important and we encourage you to participate.

We transitioned to an online AGM to provide greater access to the breadth of our voting membership around the country and welcome your feedback on this approach.

6. Technology and Operational Evolution

Q: Are technology and process improvements part of the Transition Project?

A: Yes. We value the feedback from our members, and we are acting on it. Your feedback was clear that the website is frustrating, communication tools are limited, and processes can be slow or unclear. As part of the Transition Project, we are reviewing and updating our technology, business rules and ways of working to address these issues and deliver a better member experience.

Q: What is changing and when?

A: As part of the transition to the proposed all-inclusive membership model, we're making important improvements to the way our systems and processes work. The process and technology improvement will roll out in phases, allowing time for collaboration, testing while setting the foundation for long-term improvements.

- **Mid-late 2025:** Review of technology, systems and business processes based on member and stakeholder feedback.
- **Late 2025:** Co-design of improved tools and business rules, informed by insights from the membership model consultations and shaped in partnership with members, SIGs, Divisions, Branches and committees.
- **Commencing in late 2025:** Gradual rollout of improvements, including early enhancements such as better communication tools.
- **Throughout 2026 and beyond:** Major updates, including website improvements, will be implemented as part of the broader membership transition, followed by ongoing enhancements based on member feedback and evolving needs.

Q: What is the AVA prioritising?

A: We're focused on prioritising the areas members told us matter most:

- A better website and portal for events, CPD and resources.
- Smarter communication tools to reduce email fatigue.
- Clearer, more flexible business rules.
- Better onboarding, support and visibility for volunteer

Q: How can I get involved in the technology and process improvements?

A: Member feedback is central to how we are shaping improvements. From mid-2025, we'll be reviewing key technologies and processes, such as the website, event planning and SIG communication, with input from members, SIGs, Divisions and Branches.

There will be opportunities to get involved through workshops, pilots and testing groups, so you can help shape the solutions that best support your experience. We will also share regular updates so you can see what is changing and why. If you would like to be part of the process, please email us: transitionproject@ava.com.au.