

Charter



Updated June 2019

Systems Leadership Development Association

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1. Context

Systems Leadership (SL) is a coherent and integrated theory of organisational behaviour developed over several decades by Dr Ian Macdonald, Dr Catie Burke, Karl Stewart and others building on work with Elliott Jaques.

The SL models have been developed and refined through research and practical application in a great diversity of industries, sectors and cultural settings.

The book 'Systems Leadership, Creating Positive Organisations' by Macdonald, Burke and Stewart first published in 2006 and now in its 2nd edition (2018) provides a comprehensive outline of SL. Numerous other papers have also been written or published on the subject.

A number of consultancies and individuals around the world have successfully built businesses applying to some extent the SL concepts with client organisations. Many of these people and others who have developed a deep interest in SL have now come together to establish a formal interest group as a vehicle for further development of SL, its application and their understanding of both.

This group has become the Systems Leadership Development Association (SLDA) and at a conference in Sydney in August 2014 decided it worthwhile to develop a clear description of the Association, its purpose, scope, guiding principles and how it works.

2. SLDA Purpose

The purpose of the SLDA is to encourage the understanding of the sustainable application of Systems Leadership in diverse work environments.

3. Desired Outcomes

In its operation, the following are indicative of the Association achieving its purpose:

- Members increase their knowledge of SL and its application in organisations.
- Application of SL remains integrated, coherent and relevant to organisations – including organisations of the future.
- Young people are identified, encouraged to become members, mentored and supported so SL knowledge and its effective application are sustained longer term.
- A significant and / or growing membership base.
- Members writing or contributing papers or case studies which are consistent with the purpose of the SLDA.

4. Scope of Activities

The scope of activities of the SLDA encompasses:

- a) The study and understanding of Systems Leadership and related models,
- b) their application in improving the lives of people at work and their effectiveness for the organisations in which they work,
- c) the free and open sharing of experience, ideas and insights of its members about SL, and

- d) upholding the integrity of use of the models through monitoring and control of what it does and is seen to endorse.

Commercial issues related to the use of SL e.g. marketing to clients or potential clients is *outside* the scope of SLDA activities and intent.

5. Guiding Principles

The following principles are intended to guide decision making, activities and behaviour of the SLDA and its members:

- Consistency and integrity in application of SL in the form and operations of the Association and behaviour of its members as part of the Association.
- The SLDA provides a forum for the discussion of SL and its application. Free and open sharing of experience, ideas and insights is fundamental to the Association’s purpose, as is fair challenge and debate.
- Minimal complexity in form, structure and systems that shape and sustain the Association.
- Recognition that most benefit is achieved and contributed by members through active participation.
- Diversity of membership is a function of relevance to SLDA activities and the interests of members and potential members.
- Growth of membership is only constrained by the Association’s ability to achieve its purpose.
- Membership requires payment by members of an annual membership fee which is determined by the minimum sufficient costs to run the SLDA in a manner consistent with its purpose and desired outcomes.
- A Secretariat is employed to undertake specific transactional administrative tasks required for effective operation of the Association. All other tasks associated with its operation are voluntary.
- The SLDA is ‘an organization deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests, which the members of it share’¹. While termed an association, the SLDA has no legal or commercial status
- Commercial issues related to the use of systems leadership are outside the scope of SLDA activities and intent.

6. The SLDA in Operation

While the SLDA seeks to minimise complexity in form, structure and systems that shape and sustain it, some rules or guidelines are essential for its effective operation and the achievement of its purpose.

Element	Guidelines
6.1 Structure	<p>The SLDA is an association as defined by Robert Maclver, i.e. ‘an organization deliberately formed for the collective pursuit of some interest or set of interests, which the members of it share’.</p> <p>There is no hierarchy of membership, all members are equal and have equal rights (notwithstanding the role of the Operating Committee).</p>

¹ Association definition by Robert Morrison Maclver (sociologist, political theorist, philosopher and humanist).

Element	Guidelines
6.2 Management	<p>Management of the association is based on the content of this Charter, an Operating Committee and related Guidelines.</p> <p>The Operating Committee consists of 7 to 10 volunteers. This committee is renewed every 2 years and while there is no limit on how long an individual may serve on this committee, it is desirable that at least half change every two years.</p> <p>Current committee members are listed in the Operating Committee Guidelines. Renewal of the committee takes place at every second Annual Conference.</p> <p>Association decision making is led by the Operating Committee and authorised through members' consensus or absence of objection.</p> <p>The Operating Committee is an enabler of the purpose rather than a service provider to members.</p>
6.3 Membership	<p>a) Membership is voluntary.</p> <p>b) Membership is limited to individuals.</p> <p>c) Founding members include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People who attended or paid to attend the Systems Leadership Conference in 2013 (Brisbane) or 2014 (Sydney) • People who have played a significant and ongoing role in the development or application of SL and have unanimous support as founding members from the current Operating Committee. <p>d) New members are admitted on the following basis:</p> <p>Nominated by a SLDA member sponsor who will vouch for the nominee's suitability on the basis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A well-developed understanding of or an interest in SL • Their commitment to the purpose of the SLDA, and • Their preparedness to contribute actively to the successful operation of the SLDA. <p>Their nomination will be circulated to the current Operating Committee for consideration.</p> <p>Admission will be granted unless a legitimate and material objection is raised. In this case, the whole Operating Committee will review the objection (including discussion with both sponsor and objector) and then decide to admit or not.</p> <p>e) A list of current members and their contact details is kept and maintained by the Secretariat.</p>
6.4 Membership Fee	<p>Membership of the SLDA requires payment of an annual fee. This fee is set by the Operating Committee, reviewed every two years and determined by the minimum sufficient costs of running the SLDA according to this Charter.</p> <p>Membership fees are intended to cover the costs of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat (including bank account and book keeping, accounts payable / receivable, membership and conference fees collection, management and governance, and conference admin and logistics). • Domain name and hosting of the library (www.sldassociation.com)

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other initiatives consistent with this Charter and approved by the OC. <p>Members are expected to pay this fee within a month of being confirmed as SLDA members and annually thereafter.</p>
6.5 Members' Obligations	<p>With membership of the SLDA comes the obligations to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respect the material and rights of the Authors of SL, Respect other material that is shared, and Pay membership dues in a timely manner. <p>Members are also expected to contribute ideas, papers, case studies and their energy to support successful operation of the Association.</p>
6.6 Size	<p>Growth of membership is only constrained by the Association's ability to achieve its purpose and members' ability to know each other.</p> <p>On this basis and given the constraints inherent in the Association's form and management model, the Operating Committee will report on the suitability of this approach at each annual conference.</p>
6.7 Location	<p>There are no constraints on membership by location. SLDA is a global entity.</p>
6.8 Activities	<p>A primary activity of the Association is an Annual Conference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Held annually around August at a location that allows maximum participation of members and guests. <p>Organising this conference is a primary task of the Operating Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional Conferences may be organised and held for the benefit of members unable to get to the Annual Conference due to onerous travel costs or time commitments. Timing for this is recommended to be about 6 months before / after the Annual Conference. <p>Organising this conference is undertaken on a volunteer basis, with manageable support from the Operating Committee.</p> <p>The following are possible other events or activities considered consistent with the purpose and principles of the SLDA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SL Master Classes. Local forums or functions. Writing, sharing and dialogue on SL related papers. <p>Organising these activities is undertaken on a volunteer basis.</p>
6.9 Information Sharing System	<p>A SLDA library (a password protected website) has been established as the primary means for members to share information, communicate, store and access papers and other resources. Access to the library comes with SLDA membership.</p> <p>Management of the library will be undertaken on a volunteer basis with manageable support from the Operating Committee. The costs of administration and maintenance of the library (which are minimal) are covered by SLDA membership fees.</p>

Element	Guidelines
6.10 Operating Costs	<p>Costs outside those covered by the membership fee and related to the operation of the SLDA will be on a 'user pays' basis. That is, members (and possibly guests) will pay costs or fees up front for e.g. the Annual Conference, Local Forums.</p> <p>Any excess of funds collected on this basis and not used for the intended purpose will be held by the Secretariat and used for legitimate SLDA operating purposes, as approved by the Operating Committee.</p> <p>Excess funds will be kept to a minimum.</p>
6.11 Administration	<p>Administration tasks as identified by the Operating Committee or others (and outside the scope of work of the Secretariat) are undertaken on a volunteer basis, i.e. members volunteer to complete them.</p> <p>Key administration related tasks include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining the membership database, names and current contact details. • Maintaining the SLDA library. • Custodianship of this Charter. • Custodianship of other key systems such as the Operating Committee Guidelines. <p>Members are discouraged from volunteering to complete tasks if they are unsure of their ability to do so.</p>

7. Control

The primary control on the SLDA as defined in this Charter is through the obligations members have to each other for its successful and positive operation.

In the absence of members exercising these obligations, the SLDA will cease to exist.

8. Audit

This Charter and its operation will be audited at approximately three year intervals. The purpose of this audit is to assess if the SLDA in operation is actually delivering its intended purpose, i.e. encourage the understanding of the sustainable application of Systems Leadership in diverse work environments.

This audit will be commissioned by the Operating Committee of the day and undertaken by a small team of members and possibly one or two non-members for peer review. A brief audit report including findings and recommendations will be produced for the Operating Committee who will distribute it to all members.