



Fact sheet

Conducting meetings

Meetings are an essential part of running a registered organisation. They are the coming together of members or groups of members for the purposes of discussion, to share ideas, to set direction, to deal with matters and to reach agreement. A well-managed meeting can encourage social interaction and consensus among members.

Many key decisions of registered organisations must be made at meetings. For example, financial reports must be presented to a meeting (either a general meeting of members or a meeting of the committee of management) and most organisations require rule alterations to be made at a meeting. In order to ensure the validity of decisions made at a meeting, the meeting must be run in accordance with your rules and with the law.

Your organisation's rules (s. 141(1)(b))

The primary source of information about conducting meetings is your rules. Subsection 141(1)(b) of the Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 (the RO Act) requires the rules of organisations to:

- provide for the manner of summoning meetings of members and its branches
- provide for the manner of summoning meetings of the committee of the organisation and its branches
- require the keeping of minute books. The minute books must record the proceedings and resolutions of meetings of committees of management of the organisation and its branches.

Most rulebooks prescribe procedures about:

- giving notice of meetings
- whether the meeting must be face-to-face or conducted via electronic means
- who presides over the meeting
- what quorum is required
- whether proxies can be used
- what type of majority is required for carrying motions
- voting rights of the chair

The Registered Organisations Commission (the ROC) has published an 'activity' in our Officer Induction Kit to help officers understand the meeting procedures in their organisation. This Kit is available on our website.

The RO Act

The RO Act does not prescribe any specific meeting procedures, however it does require certain things to be presented to meetings. For example:

- **Disclosure:** Material personal interests that are disclosed by officers must be recorded in the minutes of the committee of management meeting (s.293C).
- **Financial reports:** The full financial report must be reported to a general meeting of members of the reporting unit or, in certain circumstances, to a meeting of the committee of management of the reporting unit, within 6 months of the end of the financial year (s.266). The committee of management or a general meeting of members of a reporting unit may authorise a member to inspect financial records of the reporting unit (s.277).

Common law

Common law also sets out some important principles (note: rules override these principles):

Notice:

- notice must be given to everyone who is entitled to attend the meeting and should be given in such a manner as can reasonably be expected
- the notice should set out the date, time and place of the meeting
- there should be adequate description of the business to be transacted
- the day of giving notice and the day of the meeting are not counted for the purpose of counting the number of days' notice
- the length of notice must be reasonable

Quorum:

- business cannot be conducted at a meeting, or any resolutions passed, if there is no quorum
- if your rules do not provide for a quorum, then all members entitled to be at the meeting must be at the meeting
- if your rules prescribe a quorum then the quorum must be present at the commencement and continue throughout the meeting
- if your rules provide for proxies, then they are counted in the quorum
- there must be at least two people in attendance for there to be a meeting (one person holding numerous proxies is not a meeting)
- attendees may be present or participate by way of technology, as long as the technology enables social interaction and a 'meeting of the minds' (a video-conference is likely to meet this criteria, whereas a series of emails may not)

Role of the chair:

- runs the meeting
- manages the conduct of debate
- preserves order
- deals with points of order

- puts motions and amendments to the vote
- controls the voting process
- has an original vote which means that they can vote like anyone else, but not a casting vote. A casting vote is the ability to vote again if there is a tie.
- declares the meeting closed
- signs the minutes

Scope of the meeting:

- a meeting cannot travel outside the scope of the notice

Resource guides

These publications may assist you as guides for when conducting meetings:

- Joske's Law and Procedure at Meetings in Australia, 11th edition. Ellis S Magner
- Horsley's Meetings: Procedure, Law and Practice. 7th edition. A D Lang
- Guide for Meetings and Organisations, 8th edition, volume 2. Nicholas Renton

Further information

For further information please see your rules which are available from www.fwc.gov.au or contact the Registered Organisations Commission at regorgs@roc.gov.au.

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This fact sheet is not intended to be comprehensive. It is designed to assist in gaining an understanding of the Registered Organisations Commission and its work. The Registered Organisations Commission does not provide legal advice.