

RAHU Bylaws



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1. Safer Spaces

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Section 1: Safer Spaces Policy

Section 2: RAHU is a union committed to upholding the rights and dignity of renters and people in precarious housing. We recognise our membership is diverse and as a union we recognise that oppression is layered, and is used as an instrument of power. As such, we strive to keep our common places free from oppressive action, behaviour, and language.

Section 3: These oppressive actions include but are not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and any expression of disrespect and/or intolerance of size, gender identity, sexual identity/expression, (dis)ability, age, educational level, and cultural background.

Section 4: We will not tolerate acts of disrespect, violence or oppression to our fellow members, and understand our shared responsibilities to address these wrongdoings if they occur to our fellow members.

Section 5: Because we want to learn from and educate each other, we will each be responsible for addressing these issues in ourselves and others.

Section 6: If a member feels the Union constitution and or this policy is being / has been violated, to themselves or another member, the following steps should be taken:

- a. Reference the policy to the whole group: for example, “In RAHU, we have a ‘Safer Space Policy’ that all members are mutually responsible to uphold. I feel this policy has been violated by talk of ‘[comments made].’ Please keep the Safer Space Policy in mind.”
- b. If the policy is still being violated, the issue should be brought up to the person in violation directly and/or the chair, an officer, a delegate, or a member whom you would like to act as an advocate on your behalf so that an effective plan of action can be instituted.

c. If the issue has not been addressed successfully within the Union, a member or advocate can engage an outside organisation or group to help facilitate a further plan of action on behalf of the affected member and in accordance with the principles of the union.

d. If a member feels like this policy is being violated and is uncomfortable bringing this up personally, they are encouraged to seek an ally of their choosing to advocate for them. In a meeting, a person can ask for a point of personal privilege to take a break and discuss this with the necessary parties. Meeting chairs, officers, delegates, and members should be conscious of this policy and address issues as they arise.

Section 7: Further, space shall be defined as any office, meeting, event (including trainings, social gatherings, etc.), internet platform (including email communications and social media, etc.) that is in use by the Union, which includes any body formally recognized by the Union, such as the Delegate Committee, local Branches, other committees, and any accountable sub-formation of the aforementioned bodies.

Section 8:

a. If a satisfactory resolution is not able to be achieved, or attempts to address misconduct have not been made by the perpetrating member, the complainant, or any other member may apply for the perpetrating member to be removed from the Union.

b. The elected advocate and officers will submit a report and timeline of the actions of the perpetrating member with the anonymity of the complainant if requested. This report will then be submitted to the membership at a Governing Committee Meeting whereby the Union will vote on the expulsion of the perpetrating member. During the period from application of expulsion up to the vote of expulsion, the perpetrating member may have their membership suspended, including exclusion from Union spaces, and all privileges of membership will be renounced.

Section 9:

a. An expelled member has the opportunity to appeal the decision of the Union within 30 days of their expulsion. An expelled member may submit their appeal to the Secretary. Measurable and evidenced actions of addressing their behaviour will be required in order for their expulsion to be overturned.

b. There may be a requirement for the member to demonstrate longer term actions in addressing and improving their behaviour.

2. Meeting procedure

These are procedural suggestions on top of constitutional obligations for a meeting:

<https://rahu.org.au/constitution>

Agenda

1. The Acknowledgement of Country is to be read out by the facilitator as the first agenda item of every RAHU meeting.
2. Every union member has a right to add agenda items.
3. Time limits should be included for items on the agenda.
4. An opportunity must be given to contest or propose alterations to the agenda at the start of the meeting.
5. If contested, the final agenda should be voted on at the beginning of the meeting.
6. Before any items are voted on, a delegate or officer should check all attendees dues standing and membership category (i.e. not a homeowner)

Facilitator, Minute Taker and Timekeeper Roles

7. It is the role of the facilitator to take a speaking list, take motions and put them to the vote, and to ensure the general smooth running of the meeting.
8. It is the role of the minute taker to record the proceedings of the meeting in a minutes document.
9. The minute taker needs to record who attended the meeting and who gave apologies.
10. The minute taker needs to record any motions that are put to a vote, and the number of people who voted for, against and abstained from a motion.
11. It is the role of the timekeeper to keep an eye on the time, and to alert the meeting when an agenda item is going over its allocated time or likely to.
12. An opportunity must be given at the start of the meeting to contest these three roles.
13. If contested, these three roles need to be elected at the beginning of the meeting.
14. These roles may also be elected at the end of a meeting for the next meeting.
15. If necessary, the meeting may elect more than one person to a role. Two people could co-facilitate a meeting, for example.

Motions and Voting

16. For a vote to be binding under our constitution, the meeting has to reach quorum (see the constitution for rules about quorum).
17. Votes should be performed anonymised
18. Motions must be made in writing for the facilitator to put to a vote.
19. Each motion needs a mover and a seconder.
20. Decisions are made by simple majority. If 50%+1 of people who vote, vote for a motion, it passes.
21. Abstentions are not counted in the vote tally, only yes or no votes.
22. All motions must be put to the vote unless the mover withdraws the motion, or the seconder withdraws support.

Amendments

23. The mover may be asked to amend the motion.

24. If the mover accepts the amendment, it is the amended motion in writing that should be put to the vote.
25. If the mover does not accept the amendment, the motion and the amendment will need to be voted on separately.
26. The motion should be voted on before the amendment.

Procedural Motions

27. Motions may be made from the floor to influence the proceedings of the meeting.
28. These procedural motions should be put to the vote immediately with at most 5 minutes discussion to prevent meeting trolling.
29. Common procedural motions include:
 - a. The motion to put the motion to the vote.
 - b. The motion to extend time on an agenda item.
 - c. The motion to cut a speaking list short.
 - d. The motion to take a break
 - e. The motion for formal debate
 - f. The motion of no-confidence in the facilitator
 - g. Censure motions to condemn bad behaviour.

Formal Debate

30. If the meeting votes to move to formal debate on a motion, the facilitator should accept two speakers for the motion and two against, with each taking turns to present their cases. After that, the motion should go to the vote immediately.