

RAHU Bylaws

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Part 1) Safer Spaces

[Link to safer spaces resources](#)

1 Safer Spaces Policy

- a) 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.
- b) 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.
- c) 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.
- d) Because we want to learn from and educate each other, we will each be responsible for addressing these issues in ourselves and others.
- e) 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:
 - I) 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."
 - II) 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.
 - III) 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.
 - IV) 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.
- f) 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.

- g)
- I) 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.
 - II) 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.
- h)
- I) 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.
 - II) There may be a requirement for the member to demonstrate longer term actions in addressing and improving their behaviour.

Part 2) Meeting procedure

These are procedural suggestions on top of constitutional obligations for a meeting: <https://rahu.org.au/constitution>

2 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)

3 Facilitator, Minute Taker, Timekeeper Roles, and Online Delegate

- (1) 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.
- (2) It is the role of the minute taker to record the proceedings of the meeting in a minutes document.

- (3) The minute taker needs to record who attended the meeting and who gave apologies.
- (4) 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.
- (5) 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.
- (6) It is the role of the online delegate to monitor online messages, record them when appropriate, and ensure online participation is not missed.
- (7) An opportunity must be given at the start of the meeting to contest these three roles.
- (8) If contested, these three roles need to be elected at the beginning of the meeting.
- (9) These roles may also be elected at the end of a meeting for the next meeting.
- (10) If necessary, the meeting may elect more than one person to a role. Two people could co-facilitate a meeting, for example.

4 Motions and Voting

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

5 Voting by Proxy

- (1) A member may appoint another member as the member's proxy to vote and speak on the member's behalf at a general meeting other than at a disciplinary appeal meeting.
- (2) The appointment of a proxy must be done via a standard form that clearly identifies the person appointed as the member's proxy and that has been signed by the member.
- (3) The proxy may vote on behalf of the member in any matter as the proxy sees fit.
- (4) Notice of a General Meeting given to a member must:
 - a) State that the member may appoint another member as a proxy for the meeting; and
 - b) include a copy of any form that the Governing Committee has approved for the appointment of a proxy.

- c) To be considered valid a form appointing a proxy must be given to the Chairperson of the meeting at least 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting.

6 Amendments

- (1) The mover may be asked to amend the motion.
- (2) If the mover accepts the amendment, it is the amended motion in writing that should be put to the vote.
- (3) If the mover does not accept the amendment, the motion and the amendment will need to be voted on separately.
- (4) The motion should be voted on before the amendment.

7 Procedural Motions

- (1) Motions may be made from the floor to influence the proceedings of the meeting.
- (2) These procedural motions should be put to the vote immediately with at most 5 minutes discussion to prevent meeting trolling.
- (3) 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.

8 Formal Debate

- (1) 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.

Part 3) Privacy Policy

- (1) We request and collect your personal data which you provide by filling out the "Join RAHU" form. This information is used by members of the Union to contact you as part of the onboarding process.
- (2) This information may also be used to contact you as a reminder to pay dues (if necessary) in future. Your address may be used for physical mailouts and to help determine the Union's capacity to form local branches.
- (3) Your email address will be added to our mailing list system. We use this system to send automated emails to your email address, which we use to notify you of upcoming branch meetings, campaigns, and other internal union communications.

- (4) We will never sell or share any of your personal information with any other third parties.

Part 4) Misc Bylaws

9 Fines

- (1) The Renters And Housing Union is not financially responsible for covering fines incurred by Office Bearers or members during activities and actions connected with the union.

10 Stipends

- (1) General Office Bearers are to be offered a stipend of \$600 per month
- The stipend comes with an expectation of an average of 6 hours per week work over the month
 - This may change in response to the financial health of the union
 - The secretary may withdraw payment for not fulfilling obligations
 - The stipend is to be paid by the Treasurer at the start of each month unless directed by the secretary
 - To be entitled to a stipend, office bearers must perform 1 hour of member outreach per month. Accessibility requirements will be taken into consideration in the methods of outreach e.g. email, phonebanking, text, door knocking
 - Office Bearers are prohibited from receiving stipends if they earn over 40% of the median wage
- (2) A returning officer is to be offered a \$100 stipend for running a general or by election
- This stipend is to be paid by the treasurer at the end of an election
 - The stipend may be withdrawn by the secretary for not fulfilling obligations
 - There is to be no expectation of favour in return for the stipend
- (3) A Branch Officer (Branch Secretary or Treasurer) is to be offered a stipend of \$200 per month
- The stipend comes with an expectation of an average of 2 hours per week work over the month
 - This may change in response to the financial health of the union
 - The secretary may withdraw payment for not fulfilling obligations
 - The stipend is to be paid by the Treasurer at the start of each month unless directed by the secretary
- (4) Regular Renters Rights Caseworkers are to be offered \$40 per month
- This comes with an expectation of 2 hours of casework per month
 - Caseworker wanting a stipend are to apply via a form supplied to the Renters Rights Officer
- (2) Phone Bankers are to be offered a \$30 stipend up to twice per week

- a) Phone Banking includes calls and texts to members to welcome them to the union, invite them to upcoming union events, or other union related activities
- b) Phonebankers must apply through a form supplied to Delegates

11 Renters Rights Support

- (1) Renters Rights support will not be prioritised or expected for those who have been a member for less than 3 months.

12 Grants

- (1) Accepting grants/donations over \$5000 are subject to a vote at a governing committee meeting.
- (2) When deciding on receiving a grant, members should consider:
 - a) What can the grant be used for?
 - b) What will the grant be used for?
 - c) What additional work is required in order to receive the grant?
 - d) Who has agreed to do this work?
 - e) How will receiving the grant benefit the union?
 - f) How will the union continue once the grant money runs out or is unexpectedly withdrawn?
 - g) What are the requirements and restrictions to receive the grant? Are they inline with the union's values?
 - h) Is the organisation offering the grant inline with the union's values?
 - i) What restrictions are put on union action by the grant?
- (2) Grants and donations under \$5000 can be contested by a vote, but are accepted by default.
- (3) Rejected grants/donations which cannot be returned should be forwarded to Black People's Union.