



Branch Office Bearers' Guidelines

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1. Introduction

This document is derived from an earlier version prepared in 2008 and is intended as a general guide to AGV branch office bearers, not a prescriptive list of things to do/not to do. In addition to the information provided here, office bearers should consult the Charter, the AGV constitution and the bylaws, all available on the AGV website at <http://vic.greens.org.au/our-story/structure>

Structure of the Greens Party

The Australian Greens Victoria (AGV), formed in 1992, is a political party and an incorporated association with a constitution that incorporates the Charter and bylaws.

Together with the other state and territory Greens parties, the AGV forms the confederation that makes up the Australian Greens. When an individual joins the Greens, they join their state or territory party and they have the rights and obligations as designated to members of that state or territory party. Once their membership is approved, they are automatically members of the Australian Greens and their nearest local branch.

A few of the organisational arrangements that are in place to operate this federation are outlined below:

The Australian Greens have a small secretariat and office in Canberra and there are elected national office bearers.

National Council is made up of representatives from each state and territory elected according to their specific state or territory constitution and the formula set out in the National constitution. With over 2,700 members, the AGV is entitled to four representatives on National Council. There are a minimum of two face to face National Council meetings each year held in rotating locations around Australia.

National Conference is held each year and Victoria is entitled to send ten delegates, an MLC and a local government councillor delegate. Special conferences can be called when the need arises. National Greens policies are decided at National Conference.

Australian Greens Coordinating Group (AGCG) is a telephone or email process used when a collective decision is needed between National Council meetings. The AGV Convenor is automatically a member of AGCG.

Federal Election campaign committee is formed by the Australian Greens for Federal elections and is made up of state and territory representatives.

National Greens policies are developed separately from state and territory policies (and agreed at National Conference) but state and territory policies are expected to be consistent with National Greens policies.

Other National bodies including policy development and review groups, policy coordinating structures, and the constitutional review panel are also made up representatives from the AGV.

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Structure of the AGV

Branches and Regional Councils

Branches and Regional Councils are the fundamental and most important basis of the AGV as they underpin the grassroots structure of the party. Branches and Regional Councils have considerable autonomy and responsibility to carry out their own affairs provided they comply with the Constitution.

A branch may be formed when the signatures of six or more financial members are submitted to Regional Council (or, where there is no Regional Council, ¹ to the AGV Secretary).

Branch boundaries should generally be in line with or within local government boundaries.

When an individual applies to join the AGV, the administrative process of the application is handled by the State office but it is the local Regional Council (or in those regions that don't have a Regional Council, State Council) that must approve the membership.

For more information see AGV Constitution Chapter 3.2 Branches & Chapter 3.3 Regions

State Council, State Executive and Office bearers

State Council is the AGV's peak decision making body. It meets a minimum of once each quarter to make decisions about policy, strategic directions, budget, senate pre-selection processes, and setting up working groups and committees. In practice, State Council meets about five or six times a year. Because State Council is the primary decision-making body of the AGV, it ratifies decisions made at Executive meetings.

State Council is made up of:

- the three Office Bearers (Convenor, Secretary and Treasurer);
- Regional Representatives;
- nine General Members; and
- representatives of our Federal, State and Local Government public office holders.

The three *Office Bearers* are elected annually from and by financial AGV members through a state-wide postal ballot in the weeks before State Conference. The three Office Bearer positions can be held by two people so, for example, there may be a convenor or co-convenors.

The *Regional Representatives* are also elected annually by postal ballot of financial members resident in those regions that have Regional Councils in the weeks before the annual State Conference. The number of Regional Representatives a region is entitled to is based on its membership numbers at the annual census date of 1 March. The maximum number of Regional Representatives per region is seven.

The nine *General Members* are elected by and from financial members present at the annual State Conference.

Public office holders are represented on State Council by:

- up to five federal parliamentarians (currently, Adam Bandt and Richard Di Natale);
- up to six State parliamentarians (currently, Colleen Hartland, Greg Barber and Sue Pennicuik);

¹ Currently, Central Highlands, Geelong, Goulburn Valley, Mallee Sunraysia, Southern Coastal, and Southern Suburbs and Bayside regions do not have Regional Councils.

- up to six Local Government representatives.

In addition, the federal parliamentary leader of the Australian Greens, Bob Brown, is entitled to be a member of State Council.

It is crucial that State Councillors participate fully in the deliberations of State Council and that Regional Representatives report back to, and represent, members in their regions. State Council is subject to the direction of State Conference and any State-wide plebiscites.

State Executive is made up of the three Office Bearers and eight other State Councillors elected by and from the State Councillors present at the annual State Conference.

State Executive usually meets at 6.30pm on the second and fourth Thursday each month (other than December and January). Meetings are held at the AGV office in Melbourne.

State Executive has all the powers of State Council except the power to adopt or amend policy. It is the body that implements the decisions, plans and strategies of State Council between State Council meetings.

For more information see AGV Constitution Chapter 3.4 – State Council and Executive and section 15 Greens Party Office Bearers

Standing committees and working groups under the remit of State Council

A number of committees and groups perform specific functions and roles by virtue of the AGV constitution or through establishment by and direction of State Council. These groups report to and make recommendations to State Council. They have defined decision making capacities usually outlined in Terms of Reference which clarify the scope, purpose, term of operation and so on of the group/committee and which are approved by State Council.

Current Standing Committees of State Council are:

- the Constitutional Review Panel; and
- the Disputes Panel.

Other committees formed by State Council include:

- the Victorian Communication Campaign and Election Committee (VCCEC); and
- the Policy Coordination Committee (PCC)

Working groups may be formed to bring together members of the party interested in particular issues (such as economics, animals etc) or for the purposes of developing policy.

Strategic directions and goals for the Greens

The AGV operates within a broadly agreed Strategic Plan reviewed and revised periodically. Branches should be guided by the strategic directions of the AGV and support achievement of the goals and targets set out in the Strategic Plan. In addition, branches and Region Councils are encouraged to develop their own strategic and operational plans consistent with the AGV Strategic Plan.

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Communicating within the AGV

Ebulletin

The ebulletin is one of the primary information sources within the party and is emailed to all subscribing AGV members (and many non-members) every second Thursday. To have an item included in the ebulletin, send an email to ebulletin@vic.greens.org.au by close of business on the Tuesday before publication date.

Greens Vic News (GVN)

The GVN is produced quarterly and can be received as a hard copy or via email. To submit an article, send an email to editor@vic.greens.org.au. Deadlines for submissions are regularly advertised in the ebulletin.

Email lists (elists)

There are a number of elists set up for members to communicate amongst themselves. These are generally set up to be 'opt in' so that members can decide if they wish to join or not and manage their own subscription. Some elists are topic based or linked to a working group and others are branch specific.

The AGV website <http://vic.greens.org.au/>

The AGV website is regularly up-dated and is a key source of current information about the party, our elected representatives and campaigns. Each of our elected representatives have their own websites that can be accessed from the 'meet us' tab on the front page of the AGV site.

2. Managing and operating a Branch

Every branch has its own way of doing things so this section aims to provide office bearers with some general guidance as well as a few 'must dos' set out in the AGV Constitution or mandated by State Council through various policies and/or by-laws. Branch office bearers are advised to discuss with branch members on an annual basis, how the branch operates, whether members have suggestions for improvements and to set achievable plans, goals and targets.

Guiding principles and some ideas

The following are suggested guiding principles for the operation of a branch and it is recommended that these be discussed with members and a document created and reviewed on an annual basis.

Ensure all members are familiar with the Greens Charter.

The Charter is set out in the AGV Constitution and is accessible from the website at <http://vic.greens.org.au/our-story/charter>. Hard copy leaflets setting out the Charter are also available in the AGV office.

Ensure all members are familiar with the AGV meeting code of conduct

Bylaw 13 sets out the AGV meeting code of conduct and is accessible from the website at <http://vic.greens.org.au/our-story/structure> (at the 'Bylaws' link).

Develop a statement about affirmative action

The branch should be encouraged to develop and monitor the application of a statement about affirmative action to ensure all members, regardless of sex, age, sexuality, ability, religion,

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geography, ethnicity, financial circumstances, parental status, and mode of transport feel welcome and able to participate on an equal basis to the degree that they choose. An example of a statement about affirmative action is set out at Appendix A.

Consultation with members

Think carefully about how power operates within the branch and seek to ensure processes are fair, inclusive and transparent. Negotiate and consult with members on a regular basis about all matters and ask members how they want to be informed about branch and wider party activities.

Encourage new members

The branch should actively encourage and welcome new members such as with new member information sessions, a buddy system or even a new member information sheet. An example new member information sheet is set out at Appendix B.

Value all members

All members, including those who have been around for a while and might feel burnt out or those who might be a bit difficult to get along with, need to be valued. The branch might consider negotiating with them a particular role they are well suited to filling

Mix it up

No one wants to attend a boring meeting. The branch should think about ensuring meetings are informative and interesting. Members may want to do some social things and this can be a good way to encourage new members to get involved.

Plan, do, evaluate

The branch should develop strategic directions within the current strategy of the AGV. A good way to do this is to set some specific goals and targets and conduct an annual review:

- raise \$x;
- recruit x number of new members;
- hold x number of stalls at local events;
- elect x number of councillors at the next Local Government elections;
- invite x number of speakers including MPs and Senators;
- learn more about x, y and z topics;
- try to have a letter in the local paper once every x weeks,
- try to get two articles in the local paper about candidates before x date.

Must dos /must nots

Money matters

Branches can raise and spend money, and open their own bank accounts but they must comply with bylaw 10, Branch and Regional Financial Management and Reporting. Bylaw 10 requires the branch treasurer to provide regular quarterly financial reports to the AGV office using templates provided the office in accordance with the financial procedures set out in the Treasurer's Manual. For more information, contact the Party Manager at party.manager@vic.greens.org.au

Branches cannot borrow money.

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Media matters

Branch convenors can liaise with local media and make comment on behalf of the branch on matters that impact no wider than branch boundaries. Any other matters must be handled by the designated AGV spokesperson.

Branch records

All branch meeting minutes must be forwarded to the State Secretary at secretary@vic.greens.org.au and to the Party Manager at party.manager@vic.greens.org.au as soon as possible after the meeting. All branch newsletters or other publications should be forwarded to the Regional Council or where there is no Regional Council, to the State Secretary at secretary@vic.greens.org.au.

How to find out more

If you're not sure who you should contact, have a look at the list set out in Appendix E or else ring or email State office and ask. The phone number is 9602 1141 and the email address is office@vic.greens.org.au. Office hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm.

Leadership

Branch office bearers and other designated roles are key leadership roles within the party. Vibrant, inclusive and smoothly functioning branches are critical to the Party's growth in membership, achievement of targets and our goal of achieving government in the long term. Good branch leadership makes all the difference.

AGV Sexual harassment policy

In line with the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (effective from 1 August 2011), the AGV has adopted the sexual harassment policy set out at Appendix F which covers all AGV volunteers and paid staff. Branch office bearers and all others who assist the AGV in a voluntary capacity (such as helping with campaigning, fundraising, attending and participating in meetings and so on) need to be aware of and comply with this policy.

Branch office bearers

Branches should normally have a convenor and a secretary, and must have a treasurer if the branch has a bank account. The normal duties of the branch office bearers are broadly consistent with those of Regional Council Office Bearers.

The branch convenor is the primary link between the branch, the party, other like minded local organizations and the general local community and the branch secretary, in consultation with the branch convenor, is responsible for maintaining appropriate contacts with local media.

For more information, see sections 21.5, 21.6, 28, 29 and 30 of the Constitution.

While the constitution does not require branches to hold Annual General Meetings or to elect its office bearers, it is recommended that an annual election be conducted.

Other designated roles

Branches may wish to create a range of other designated roles to share the workload and to encourage the involvement of more members. Such roles could include:

- a membership officer;

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- a fundraiser;
- a policy Coordinator;
- a returning officer;
- a Local Government election campaign manager;
- a media officer (but note the Spokesperson's policy below);
- a branch webpage editor;
- a stalls coordinator;
- a public meeting coordinator.

All positions can be held singly or jointly so, for example, there could be co-convenors or co-fundraisers. Alternatively, there could be assistant or trainee positions where a new member works in conjunction with a more experienced member.

Expectations and role descriptions

While each branch can work out its own arrangements for office bearers and other designated roles, it is recommended that a role description and clear expectations be collaboratively developed and agreed to. For example,

Performance of Office Bearers *Office bearers are expected to attend a minimum of eight branch meetings a year (out of eleven) but not miss three meetings in a row. If an office bearer is unable to attend a meeting they need to send apologies via the convenor and provide a written report to be tabled at the meeting.*

The Convenor's responsibilities *include arranging venues, speakers and topics for meetings, facilitating meetings or ensuring that there is a facilitator, and liaising with the local community.*

The Secretary's responsibilities *include sending out agenda papers, minuting meetings, ensuring meeting minutes are provided to State office and dealing with correspondence. The Secretary is also responsible for advising State office when there has been any change of office bearers.*

The Treasurer's responsibilities *include maintaining branch finance and the branch bank account and providing regular reports to the branch. The Treasurer is also responsible for providing financial records, copies of bank statements and such other reports as may be required by the AGV Treasurer and bylaws to State office.*

Branches should ensure that anyone filling a role feels able to seek assistance and/or guidance and is not left to bravely struggle on if they encounter difficulties or give up and feel disillusioned.

Required skills

All branch office bearers and any others in designated branch positions need to have, as a minimum:

- excellent English language skills, including editing, concise writing;
- IT skills;
- excellent organisational and administrative, including archiving, skills; and
- the ability to work to deadlines

Branch meetings

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How often?

The constitution requires branches to conduct meetings at least once every three months (i.e. once per quarter).

Quorum

A quorum for a branch meeting will be six branch members or two thirds the total number of branch members, whichever is less.

Meeting minutes

Branches must ensure that meeting minutes are kept and that these include a record of attendance and of all decisions reached. A copy of the meeting minutes must be provided to both the Regional Secretary (in those regions with Regional Councils) and the State Secretary within seven days of the meeting. In addition, meeting minutes must be provided by email to the Party Manager at party.manager@vic.greens.org.au so that accurate party records can be maintained by State office. For a sample minutes format, see Appendix D.

Correspondence, newsletters, media statements

Branches also need to ensure that all correspondence received is tabled at the next meeting and that copies of any newsletters, publications and media statements emanating from the branch or media reports about the branch are provided to both the Regional Secretary (in those regions with Regional Councils) and the State Secretary.

For more information, see section 21.9 of the Constitution.

Other suggestions for branch meetings

- Roundtable introductions and wrap-ups: having each person introduce themselves at the start of the meeting helps break the ice and encourages them to participate in future discussions. A closing round gives everyone the chance to provide feedback about how they think the meeting went.
- Consensus: meetings should be run on a consensus decision making model. Consensus is a structured approach based on negotiation and discussion rather than voting. See Appendix C an outline of consensus decision making and some sources of more in depth information.
- Consider the venue: does it cater for the needs of members? What about members with children? Is it accessible to someone in a wheelchair or with a pram or with other mobility considerations ie. No stairs.
- Timing: consider the time and day of meetings to accommodate members, particularly office bearers. If someone has the time, interest and skills to be an office bearer they should not be put off because a meeting has traditionally been held at a certain day and time. This arrangement should be negotiated.
- Late comers: people arriving late can be very disruptive. The facilitator should acknowledge their arrival by making eye contact and then quickly welcome them at the next natural break in discussions. A very, very brief summary of where the meeting is up to in relation to the agenda can be provided and the offer made to catch the person up on matters that have been missed after the meeting.
- Facilitation: good facilitation is crucial but new facilitators need to have the chance to practice. A newer facilitator could be accompanied by a more experienced one to provide quiet assistance when required.
- AGM's: are not required but an annual assessment of finances, roles, office bearers, operations, strategy plans and goals should be conducted and an AGM is a useful model to

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do that.

Branch communications

Email aliases

Each branch has an email alias, set up by State office, in the format [xx][branch@vic.greens.org.au](mailto:[xx]branch@vic.greens.org.au). Each branch office bearer also has an alias of convenor.[xx][branch@vic.greens.org.au](mailto:[xx]branch@vic.greens.org.au), secretary.[xx][branch@vic.greens.org.au](mailto:[xx]branch@vic.greens.org.au), or treasurer.[xx][branch@vic.greens.org.au](mailto:[xx]branch@vic.greens.org.au). These are updated whenever branch office bearers change (provided State office is told of the change) and are used primarily by State office to communicate with the office bearers.

Email aliases are also advertised on the AGV website so can be used by anyone wishing to contact branch office bearers without the need to make personal email addresses public.

When a new member joins a branch, the Membership Officer sends their name and contact details to the branch alias so the office bearers can welcome them to the branch and invite them to the next meeting. Note that the branch aliases do not go to all branch members so they cannot be used to communicate amongst members - see branch elists below for this.

Branch elist

State office can set up a branch elist for members to communicate amongst themselves and for office bearers to provide members with meeting information, agendas and other party information. A branch elist will be in the format [xx][branch@lists.vic.greens.org.au](mailto:[xx]branch@lists.vic.greens.org.au) and members need to manage their own subscription to the elist. The elists are moderated (usually by the branch convenor) so that non-members can't post to the list. This avoids the problem of spam. If you wish to set up a branch elist (or have questions about an existing elist), contact the Party Manager on party.manager@vic.greens.org.au.

Branch web page

Branches are encouraged to provide State office with up to date information that can be posted on their branch page on the AGV website. These pages are accessible from <http://vic.greens.org.au/groups/vic-branches> and are a good way to publicise branch contacts, meeting schedules, boundaries, events, and other information that may be of interest to both members and potential members. To update your branch information, contact our Office Co-ordinator on office@vic.greens.org.au with the changes you wish to make. Usually, branch pages will include the branch email alias and the names of the office bearers but no other contact information. If you want more or less information on your branch page, please let the office know.

Branch website

Some branches have set up their own websites, again accessible from <http://vic.greens.org.au/groups/vic-branches> and these may be for general branch information or even particular campaign events. If your branch sets up its own website, you will need to provide the url to our Members and Community Liaison Officer on comms@vic.greens.org.au to get it linked to the AGV site.

Branch facebook group

Some branches have set up a facebook group for members to keep members up to date on upcoming events and fund raisers. If your branch decides to do this, remember to make it a closed group to protect members' privacy.

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Quarterly membership lists

Each quarter our Membership Officer will provide the branch office bearers with a list of current members, including those whose membership may be due for renewal or about to expire. Branch office bearers should carefully review the list and may even wish to contact due to renew or expiring members to remind them to renew.

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Appendix A - Statement about affirmative action

The [insert name] Branch aims to ensure that all members have the opportunity to engage in branch activities in an environment that is encouraging, empowering and caring. The Branch acknowledges and recognises that there may be a range of systemic, structural, personal and cultural barriers to equal participation in Branch deliberations and decision making processes.

In this context, we explicitly seek to minimise barriers that individuals and groups may encounter, in order to promote equal:

- voice;
- participation; and
- opportunity.

The following strategies are in place and may be supplemented from time to time with additional focussed strategies as required:

- mentoring or buddying opportunities are offered to all new members;
- each member takes personal responsibility for actively and respectfully listening to the contributions of other members;
- all members take personal responsibility to minimise dominance of individual voices and the convenor or meeting facilitator actively promotes participation of other voices;
- affirmative action will be a touchstone as each decision is made. The convenor or meeting facilitator should make reference to affirmative action and ask questions such as:
 - o 'Does this decision actively promote equality?'
 - o 'Does this decision have any unintended implications for continuing inappropriate stereotypes?'
 - o 'How can we use this opportunity to promote equality?'
- at the conclusion of each meeting, there is a five minute review of processes and an opportunity for members to raise concerns about participation etc;
- every six months, an assessment of Branch roles and structures is undertaken to ensure we are adhering to our affirmative action principles

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Appendix B - Sample new branch member information sheet

[xx] Branch New Members Information

Introduction to [xx] Branch

Welcome to the [xx] Branch of the Australian Greens Victoria (AGV). We are a committed and energetic group focussed at the moment on running *[insert current campaign information]*.

Meetings:

We meet on [xx] of the month, at [xx] at [xx] pm. New members are invited to attend an introductory briefing at [xx] pm.

Consensus decision making:

Meetings are run and decisions are made using a consensus model. There will be a speaking list, so please indicate to the facilitator that you have something to say and you'll be added to the list.

Other Party bodies to know about:

State Council consists of about 65 people elected to represent regions/branches and other groups/categories. This is the key decision making body of AGV and meets about every two months.

State Executive is a subset of State Council that meets more frequently to conduct Party business between meetings.

What's coming up:

- Trivia night on xx for fundraising.
- Campaign: letterboxing, forums *[insert relevant details]*

Communication:

Ask [xx – eg Convenor or Secretary] about subscribing to our Branch e-list [xx]. Keep an eye on the AGV website and look out for the e-bulletin from State office that will be emailed to you on a regular basis.

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Appendix C – Consensus decision making

Why have consensus decision making?

Decisions at all Greens meetings are made primarily by consensus and a serious attempt to encourage equal participation by all participants through minimising power imbalances and barriers to participation. Making decisions by consensus can sometimes require additional time to fully discuss issues and can be criticised as too time consuming or reducing decisions to a compromise. However consensus decision making is not unstructured and utilising good processes can manage the time involved and there are mechanisms for expressing and recording differences of opinion without impeding a consensus decision.

Facilitation

A key and important feature of consensus decision making is the role of the facilitator who has the responsibility of ensuring decision making is fair and inclusive. This is a crucial but sometimes difficult role so the party tries to organise regular training. All branch convenors and those keen to facilitate branch meetings are strongly encouraged to participate in training and increase their knowledge of consensus decision making strategies.

Member responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each member to participate in the process in a respectful manner and work with perseverance to clarify and understand concerns and then put forward suggestions and proposals that seek to accommodate or resolve concerns.

Common features of consensus decision making

- **A speaking list** - this is a list of those people indicating they wish to speak on a matter, usually kept by the facilitator. A good facilitator will encourage reluctant participants, moderate dominant participants and ensure there is a fair balance of male and female speakers.
- **Suspend the speaking list** - in some instances a speaking list can be restrictive so the facilitator can suggest suspending the speaking list to discuss a particular matter in a more informal way. It is a good idea to set a time limit and then return to the speaking list.
- **Setting and starring the agenda** - structure the agenda carefully, allocating time limits for each item and confirm the agenda at the start of each meeting, allowing for the rearrangement of items if necessary. Star those items that members present feel must be discussed or dealt with at the meeting in the event that there is not time for all matters to be covered.
- **Timing**- if the allocated time for an agenda item is reached and a resolution has not been agreed, seek the views of those present about whether to continue with that item and, if so, decide how long to continue or whether to defer it for a later time or meeting.
- **Roundtable** - the facilitator asks each person at the meeting to provide a view. This gives quieter people the opportunity to contribute their view.
- **Workshopping of issues** - smaller groups of people can gather to work through a particular matter to try to resolve an impasse or contentious issue with the aim that this

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group can return to the larger group with recommendations agreed by consensus.

- **Straw poll** - this a show of hands, not a vote, and is not binding an individual or the group to a decision. It is designed to give an indication to the facilitator and members of the general feeling of a group.
- **Test for consensus** - if it appears that there is broad agreement the facilitator can test for consensus. This is often done by asking 'Do we have consensus?' and this allows people to raise any queries they may have. Alternatively, a straw poll can be taken which indicates to everyone the degree of agreement or dissent. If consensus is clear, a proposal can be carried and a decision recorded in the minutes.
- **Deferral of non-urgent issues** - when, despite the best efforts of everyone present, agreement cannot be reached and the matter is not considered urgent, it can be deferred to a subsequent meeting or opportunity. Sometimes an email discussion can be conducted to provide further opportunity for people to try to work through their concerns prior to the next meeting.
- **The opportunity to abstain** - this means a member can indicate their opposition to a proposal or parts of a proposal but indicate that they do not wish to get in the way of a proposal that has clear support. Reasons for abstention can be noted in the minutes.
- **The opportunity to block a decision** - this option should not be taken lightly and only used sparingly after all avenues for discussion and dialogue have been exhausted. If a member blocks a proposal, the proposal lapses and any prior decision stands.
- **Recourse to a vote in exceptional circumstances** - at State Council, for example, decisions are made by consensus wherever possible, however, if consensus cannot be reached, a vote can be taken. First, however, State Council must agree by vote that the matter is urgent enough that a vote needs to be taken on that matter. A majority of 75% is required for both votes to be carried.

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Appendix D – Sample meeting minutes

Minutes [xx] Branch Meeting

[date] [place] [time]

Facilitator: [name]

Minutes: [name]



Agenda items	Time
1. Welcome and formalities *The meeting opened with an acknowledgement of the traditional owners. *Previous meeting minutes were accepted by consensus Attendance: [xx] Apologies: [xx]	
2. Guest Speaker [xx] – topic [xx]	
3. Party business	
4. Fundraising	
5. Other Branch business	
6. Members’ announcements – upcoming events	
7. Meeting close	

Current office-bearers:

Role	Name	Phone	Email address
Convenors			
Secretary			
Treasurer			
Membership			
Fundraising			
Regional Council reps			

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Appendix E - Who to contact?

Branch minutes	Party Manager Secretary	party.manager@vic.greens.org.au secretary@vic.greens.org.au
Branch financial records	Party Manager Finance Officer	party.manager@vic.greens.org.au finance@vic.greens.org.au help@vic.greens.org.au
Branch information on website	Members & Community Liaison Officer	comms@vic.greens.org.au
Branch members list	Membership Officer	members@vic.greens.org.au
General queries	Office Co-ordinator	office@vic.greens.org.au
Specific queries about branch operations	Party Manager	party.manager@vic.greens.org.au
Ebulletin announcements	Editor	ebulletin@vic.greens.org.au
Items for the Greens Victoria News (GVN)	Editor	editor@vic.greens.org.au

Contacting the State office
Phone (03) 9602 1141; email office@vic.greens.org.au.
Office hours are Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm.

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Appendix F – Australian Greens Victoria Sexual harassment policy covering all AGV volunteers & paid staff

Statement of policy

Sexual harassment is unlawful. The Australian Greens Victoria (AGV) does not tolerate sexual harassment in any form. All AGV volunteers, staff and party members have a responsibility to ensure that sexual harassment does not occur.

This policy applies to and covers every AGV volunteer and paid staff member.

Anyone found to have sexually harassed another person will be subject to disciplinary action that may include an apology, counseling, transfer of duties or dismissal.

Reports of sexual harassment will be treated promptly, seriously and confidentially. Complainants have the right to determine how a complaint will be treated. They also have the right to have a supporter or representative chosen by them involved in the process and the option to stop the process at any time.

The alleged harasser also has the right to have a supporter or representative chosen by them present when they respond to the allegations made.

No volunteer or paid staff member will be treated unfairly as a result of making a complaint of sexual harassment. Immediate disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against someone who has made a complaint of sexual harassment.

The AGV will afford natural justice to any person involved in a dispute.

Definition of sexual harassment

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature that could be reasonably expected to make someone feel offended, humiliated or intimidated. This may include, but is not restricted to:

- an unwelcome sexual advance;
- a request for sexual favours;
- unwelcome comments about someone's sex life or physical appearance;
- leering and ogling;
- sexually offensive comments, stories or jokes;
- displaying sexually offensive photos, pinups or calendars, reading matter or objects;
- sexual propositions or continued requests for dates;
- physical contact such as touching or fondling, or unnecessary brushing up against someone; and
- indecent assault or rape (these are criminal offences).

Sexual harassment may occur between one volunteer and another, between volunteers and staff members, or between volunteers/staff members and party members, suppliers or visitors. It may occur wherever volunteers and paid staff are interacting with others in the context of their position in the AGV, including in the AGV office, work for the AGV off site (such as at campaign events) and at social functions.

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Making a complaint

A volunteer or paid staff member who has been harassed may choose to take their complaint to the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission who can be contacted on 1300 292 153.

Internal complaint

A volunteer or paid staff member who believes they have been harassed (the complainant) should:

- if they feel comfortable to do so, inform the alleged harasser the behaviour is offensive, unwelcome, against the AGV's policy and should stop;
- make a note of the date, time and location of the incident/s;
- if they do not feel comfortable to confront the alleged harasser or if the unwelcome behaviour continues, report it to the Party Manager or, if this is inappropriate, report it to the State Convenor.

The Party Manager/State Convenor (as the case may be) will follow the procedures set out below. The complainant has the right to discontinue this process at any time.

Complaints process

When a complaint is received, the Party Manager/State Convenor will:

- obtain and record a full, step-by-step account of the incident/s;
- ensure the AGV's process for handling the complaint is understood;
- ascertain the complainant's preferred outcome, e.g. an apology, the behaviour to cease, a change in working arrangements;
- agree on the next step: informal resolution or formal investigation; and
- keep a confidential record of all details of this discussion and subsequent steps in the process.

Informal resolution

Where a complainant has chosen informal resolution, following an informal process the Party Manager/State Convenor will:

- inform the alleged harasser of the complaint and provide an opportunity to respond;
- ensure both parties understand their rights and responsibilities under the AGV's policy;
- if possible, mediate an outcome that is satisfactory for the complainant;
- ensure that confidentiality is maintained; and
- follow up to ensure the behaviour does not re-occur.

Formal investigation

If a formal investigation is requested by the complainant, or if an informal resolution fails, the Party Manager/State Convenor will escalate the matter to the State Executive.

If the complaint is raised by and is about a member, the State Executive will refer the matter to the Disputes Panel. If the complaint is raised by or about a non-member, the State Executive will:

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- afford natural justice to all involved;
- interview all directly concerned, separately;
- interview witnesses, separately;
- keep records of the interviews and investigation;
- ensure confidentiality and minimise disclosure;
- make a determination as to whether there is sufficient evidence that a reasonable person could conclude, on the balance of probabilities (i.e. it's more likely than not), that an incident/incidents of sexual harassment as defined by the legislation has occurred;
- in such a case, determine appropriate action, which may include a change of duties for the harasser, change to working arrangements or, where the incidents were frequent and/or severe, dismissal;
- where it cannot be determined by the required test that an incident/incidents of sexual harassment as defined by the legislation has occurred, may still take action to ensure the proper functioning of the workplace, but these actions should not prejudice any party. State Executive will also continue to closely monitor the situation and provide retraining where required; and
- check to ensure the action meets the needs of the complainant and the AGV.

Outcomes as they affect the complainant will be discussed with the complainant to ensure that needs are met, where appropriate.