

APGF Safe Meeting Procedure

1. Introduction:

1.1 These procedures have been developed to encourage positive and productive meetings where everyone attending can feel safe to participate, express their opinions and disagree if necessary.

1.2 It is important to ensure that meetings are conducted well so that:

- In making decisions every voice is heard. This includes the majority, the minority, individual members, absentee members.
- Decisions can be made efficiently with respect for the time and commitment of members of APGF.

1.3 The procedures describe:

- How meeting participants are expected to behave at meetings
- The role of meeting facilitator and support people
- How speaking at Greens meetings are managed
- How decisions are made
- How disruptions of these procedures are handled.

1.4 When attending a meeting, everyone should follow these procedures.

2. Meeting Participants:

As a meeting Participant you are encouraged to:

- Be here in good faith with the goal of what is in the best interests of APGF
- Come with good intentions to make the meeting succeed
- Have the intention of reaching consensus and a commitment to consensus decision making
- Extend goodwill to all participants
- Try not to bring previous differences, difficulties and problems to this meeting
- Be honest
- Follow procedures laid down in the past which are known to be positive and successful
- Try to listen without preconceptions, and be open to new ideas
- Show respect for others' opinions

- Address the issue not the person
- Avoid aggressive verbal or non-verbal interaction
- No interjections or asides
- Some of us can express ourselves better than others - try not to overwhelm with your oratory skills
- If you don't want to listen leave the room
- If you want to have a conversation, have it far enough away from the room for it not to disturb the participants

As a meeting Participant, please remember to:

- Be present and on time
- Speak slower and more softly than you might normally- it lowers tensions in the room
- Frame your proposal as "suggested" ways forward - it leaves it open for others to disagree freely
- Introduce your point/ comment/ proposal succinctly
- Explain further if people indicate that they don't fully understand or accept your point

Equal participation at meetings:

- All participants should be aware that often men will speak much more than women and even speak over the top of women or younger participants in the meeting.
- It is advised that a speaking rule of taking it in turns between a man and a woman can assist with this or through providing the opportunity for someone that has not yet spoken to have preference in the speaking order. This is acknowledged clearly at the beginning of the meeting.
- The Facilitator and all meeting participants are responsible for assuring equal participation in the meeting.

Helping the meeting's flow, safety, and productivity:

- You may need to leave your issue unresolved. After explaining once, allow the conversation to flow. If there is no agreement, acknowledge that, then reflect later what to do next if anything
- Comment in support of someone else's position if the discussion is divided and your support adds weight to one side

- If you feel not everybody is being heard, suggest that the facilitator go around the group for comments from everybody
- Accept when most participants feel like everything necessary to be covered in the meeting has been, even if you think something essential has been missed
- You can always follow up with an email to present the issues and a suggested way forward for issues not covered.

3. Meeting Facilitator:

3.1 The pivotal role of meeting facilitation is the key to the successful functioning of meetings. Ideally the facilitator will be trained. The facilitator should have excellent listening and observation skills in order to:

- Monitor the flow of speaking and the general atmosphere of the meeting
- Facilitate decision making
- Equalise input as much as possible while encouraging wide ranging debate

3.2 Good participation means that everyone can participate safely and clear decisions are reached

3.3 The meeting facilitator should:

- Prepare for the meeting by familiarising yourself with the agenda
- Make sure the room is set up so all participants can see each other easily
- Foster a friendly, open, participative culture by welcoming people to the meeting, both personally and again publicly at the formal start
- Encourage all participants to feel acknowledged, safe, comfortable and to contribute
- Explain processes and procedures whenever doubts or concerns arise
- Encourage those who have not previously contributed to the meeting to do so

4. Translation and Interpretation:

4.1 The Meeting Facilitator or Secretariat should provide an opportunity for all members to ask questions to the facilitator or any APGF members.

- Confirm at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting that both the person needing interpretation services and the interpreter are able to join

- Provide the meeting agenda and any meeting documents to the interpreter at least 48 hours in advance to the meeting
- Confirm with the interpreter that the technology and process being used for interpretation works
- If the meeting contents are confidential, the Facilitator should consider if the interpreters have signed a non-disclosure agreement if they are from outside of APGF.

5. Minutes

5.1 Minutes of any meeting should be circulated to all members as soon as possible after that meeting, and before the scheduled date of the next meeting. The minutes shall record:

- The date, time and venue of the meeting
- The names of those members and facilitators present
- Any apologies (or proxies)
- The name of the Meeting Facilitator
- The name of the Minute Taker
- A list of issues considered
- Any resolutions reached and time frame for them to be undertaken
- Any other matters discussed

Bibliography:

- <http://www.carter-carter-manuals.net/polproc/1/en/topic/4-4-safety-meetings>
- https://greens.org.au/sites/default/files/2018-06/1._Meeting_Procedures_2017_0.pdf
- <https://greens.org.au/nsw/about/constitution#agm>
- <https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/files/policybank/ConductofMeetingsPolicy2015.d>
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