

APGF Safe Meeting Procedures

Updated 11 June 25

Introduction

- These procedures have been developed to encourage positive and productive meetings where everyone attending can feel safe when participating and expressing their opinions, whether in agreement or disagreement.
- It is important to ensure that meetings are conducted well so that: [a] Every voice is heard when making decisions, including the majority, the minority, individual members, absentee members; and [b] Decisions can be made efficiently with respect for time and with APGF members' commitment to consensus decision-making.
- Note: In APGF processes, Co-Convenors are the facilitators of all meetings; and/or a Facilitator, external to APGF, may conduct an APGF meeting.

The procedures describe:

- How participants are expected to behave at meetings;
- Expected behaviour of meeting participants;
- The roles of office-bearers in the meeting (convenors, administrative support, other);
- How speaking at Greens meetings are managed;
- Facilitation and speaking order;
- How decisions are made;
- How disruptions of these procedures are handled; and
- When attending a meeting, everyone should follow these procedures.

2. Meeting Participants

As a meeting Participant you are encouraged to:

- Attend meetings in good faith with the goal of working towards a consensus decision that is in the best interests of APGF.
- Attend with good intentions with the aim of ensuring the meeting will be effective and efficient.
- Work intently with commitment towards consensus decision making.
- Extend goodwill to all participants.

- Try not to bring previous differences, difficulties and problems to a meeting
- Be honest, truthful and ethical.
- Follow endorsed procedures that have proven to be positive and successful.
- Try to listen without having preconceptions, and be open to new ideas.
- Show respect for others' opinions.
- Address the issue at hand and not the person.
- Avoid aggressive verbal or non-verbal interactions.
- Do not interject, express asides or make snide comments.
- Some people express themselves better than others, be considerate with your accomplished oratory skills.
- If you do not wish to listen or participate - leave the room, zoom or meeting.
- If you wish to have a private conversation, have it far enough away from the room for it to not disturb the meeting or participants.

As a meeting Participant, please remember to:

- Be present and be punctual (on time).
- Speak slowly and more softly than you might normally, as 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 your thoughts 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 talking 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 or other points of the meeting.
- The Convenors or facilitators 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.
- If the discussion in a meeting is divided, and you feel your opinion would contribute to the outcome of the vote, make sure to voice your support for one side. 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 Convenor/Facilitator

3.1 Convenor/Facilitator:

- 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;
 - Effective participation means that everyone can participate safely, and clear decisions are reached.

3.2 The meeting convenor/facilitator should:

- Prepare for the meeting by familiarising themselves with the agenda;
- Ensure 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; and
- Encourage those who have not previously contributed to the meeting to do so.

4. Translation (written word) and Interpretation (spoken word)

- The Meeting Convenor/Facilitator or Secretariat should provide an opportunity for all members to ask questions to the convenor/facilitator or any APGF members.
- Confirm at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting that both the person needing interpretation/translation services and the interpreter/translator are able to join;
- Provide the meeting agenda and any meeting documents to the interpreter/translator at least 48 hours in advance to the meeting;
- Confirm with the interpreter/translator that the technology and process being used for interpretation/translation requirements; and
- If the meeting contents are confidential, the Convenor/Facilitator should consider if the interpreter/translator have signed a non-disclosure agreement if they are from outside of APGF.

5. Minutes

Minutes of any meeting should be circulated to all members as soon as possible after that a 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 Convenor/Facilitator;
- The name of the Scribe (minute-taker);
- A list of issues considered;
- Any resolutions reached and time frame for them to be undertaken; and
- Any other matters discussed.

Bibliography

<http://www.carter-carter-manuals.net/polproc/1/en/topic/4-4-safety-meetings>

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<https://greens.org.au/nsw/about/constitution#agm>

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