



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

## Part 5: A Secretary's Satchel - Guide for Secretaries

---

### **New laws for Victorian incorporated associations**

In November 2012, the laws regulating Victorian incorporated associations changed. The *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (the old Act) was replaced with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (the new Act). This Secretary's Satchel reflects the new laws. It is important to understand how the law has changed – **please read our [Transitional Guide](#) first**. Once you've read this guide, then go to the Secretary's Satchel.

**One key change is that the old role of “Public Officer” has changed to a new role of “Secretary”.** The responsibilities of the public officer under the old Act are now to be carried out by the secretary under the new Act. For more information about the role of the secretary, see [Part 3: Secretary's Legal Role, Powers and Duties](#). Your organisation may already have a secretary (who is different to your Public Officer). See our [Transitional Guide](#) to understand who the secretary under the new Act is now.

### **Important! Rules changes affecting *all* incorporated associations**

From 26 November 2012 there are new laws for incorporated associations. There are also new matters that must now be covered by an organisation's rules, and new model rules. You need to understand how and when the new laws (and **new model rules**) apply to your group. For example, if your organisation uses the model rules under the old Act (**old model rules**), there are transitional arrangements that apply. If your organisation uses its own rules, the new laws may impact on your existing rules – you may have new model rules automatically included in your rules.

Go to our [Transitional Guide](#) to find out more about the new laws and rules – and how they apply to your organisation.

# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

This Part of the [Guide for Secretaries](#) covers preparing for, conducting and minuting annual general meetings (**AGMs**) of an incorporated association in Victoria.

## Key Points

---

### 1. What is an Annual General Meeting

An annual general meeting (**AGM**) is a meeting of the members of an incorporated association required to be held each year (section 63(1) of the AIR Act).

### 2. What is a notice of meeting (and a notice of motion)?

A notice of *meeting* is a written notice that a meeting is going to take place at a specified time. A notice of *motion* is a notice, given by a member of the organisation, that proposes some decision or action be discussed and voted on at the meeting.

### 3. Giving notice of an annual general meeting

Laws regulate the content of the notice of an AGM, the time and method of giving it, who the notice is to be given to, and what to do if the AGM (or a motion) is adjourned to another time and place.

This Part sets out the special requirements for notices of AGMs of the organisation's members. A sample notice and checklist tools are provided.

### 4. Procedures for an annual general meeting

At an AGM, certain matters must be considered by members and elections of the committee may be held. A sample agenda, with guidance for the secretary, is provided in this Part.

### 5. Voting methods

There is a range of ways in which people who are entitled to vote at a meeting can do so. A variety of voting methods are set out in a tool in this Part.

### 6. What are “minutes”?

Minutes are a written record of what was discussed and decided at a meeting. One of the key legal tasks of the secretary of an incorporated association is to make sure that accurate minutes are made of the organisation's AGMs, and that these are kept in a safe place.

Both the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) and an organisation's rules set out legal requirements for the minutes of the organisation. Those requirements are discussed in this Part.

### 7. Preparing and keeping minutes

This Part sets out what should be included in meeting minutes and how they should be kept. It also contains tips and tools for drafting minutes, including “action lists” which summarise people's responsibilities arising from the AGM.

## 8. Confirming and verifying minutes

The secretary should ensure at each AGM that the members pass a resolution confirming the minutes of the previous meeting, and the chairperson signs a copy of the confirmed minutes. This Part explains this procedure and includes a tool to help you.

### 1. What is an Annual General Meeting?

---

An AGM is a meeting of the members of an incorporated association required to be held each year (section 63(1) of the AIR Act).

An AGM is a particular type of “general meeting” of the association (a meeting in which all members of the association are invited to attend, and that is convened in a formal way). An association may hold other general meetings (SGMs) throughout the year - usually these are called “special” general meetings and are convened for a particular purpose. For information, see [Part 6: Special General Meetings](#) in this Guide.

The AGM must be convened using the procedures set out in the organisation’s rules. An organisation will have its own rules and procedures for giving members notice of an AGM.

An AGM must:

- if required, elect new committee members (or board members) and possibly new office-bearers (that is, the president/chairperson, treasurer and secretary) for the following 12 months, and
- report to members on the year’s activities, including financial performance and events.

AGMs also often:

- ensure the details of the secretary (contact person) are up to date
- propose and decide on any changes to the organisation’s rules, and
- discuss any significant issues relevant to members.

### 2. What is a notice of meeting (and notice of motion)?

---

#### What is a notice of meeting?

A “notice of meeting” is a written notice that a meeting is to take place at a specified time. A notice of meeting should set out information (such as the date, time, place, and what is proposed to be done) so that those invited to the meeting know what it’s about and can decide whether to attend.

The contents of a notice of meeting may vary significantly from organisation to organisation, depending on the type of organisation and how formal the AGM is. However, there are certain items of business that must be covered off in an AGM notice of meeting.

The *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) (the **AIR Act**) makes it an offence for an organisation to hold an AGM unless notice has been given to every member eligible to vote at that meeting (section 60).

In some cases, there are particular notice requirements under the AIR Act before certain resolutions can be passed at a meeting (see below, [3. Giving notice of an annual general meeting](#)).

### What is a notice of motion?

A notice of meeting may include a “notice of motion”. This is a notice, given by a member of the organisation, which proposes that a decision or action be discussed and voted on at the next meeting. Commonly the member gives a notice of motion to the secretary, either at the previous meeting (usually at the end) or a specified time before the next meeting. The motion is then included as an item of business for the next meeting (usually under a heading such as “motions on notice”).

A notice of motion gives the other members an opportunity to consider the member’s motion before the meeting takes place and is generally only given if the matter proposed by the member is an important decision for the organisation. A notice of motion may also be required by your organisation’s rules or policies.

#### **Important:**

The secretary of an incorporated association is usually responsible for preparing and giving notice of meetings under the organisation’s rules.

This is an important job. If a notice of meeting is not correctly prepared and given, the meeting may be invalid and decisions made at it may be void (of no legal effect). See further below, [What if a notice of an AGM might be invalid \(defective\)?](#)

## 3. Giving notice of an annual general meeting

### What are the legal requirements for giving notice of an AGM?

For AGMs, there are legal requirements about:

- when the notice must be given
- the content of the notice
- how notice must be given
- who the notice must be given to, and
- what to do if the meeting is adjourned.

#### **Terminology:**

The words “service” and “serving” are used to describe the legal requirements for giving notice of a meeting. “Service” simply means the process of giving a notice to someone who is invited to a meeting. For example, your rules may state that a notice must be “served on” (given to) a person by post, email or in person.

You need to consider:

- any requirements imposed by:
  - the AIR Act
  - the *Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012* (Vic) (the **Regulations**)
  - the law developed by the courts (that is, “judge-made law”)
- your organisation’s rules (sometimes called the “constitution”), and
- any policies your organisation has about this issue.

**Remember!**

Check your organisation’s rules for requirements about notices of AGMs.

Make sure you have the most up-to-date version of your rules, including any changes that the organisation’s members and Consumer Affairs Victoria (**CAV**) have approved.

If you are confused about which rules apply to you and whether the copy you have is up-to-date, the best thing to do is to contact CAV and request a copy of your organisation’s rules and purposes.

Your rules may not reflect all the requirements of new laws for incorporated associations. See our [Transitional Guide](#) and [Rules Checklist](#) for more information.

The checklist in [Tool 1: Checklist for notice of annual general meeting](#) will help you to prepare a notice for an AGM.

## When to give notice of an annual general meeting

The AIR Act requires an incorporated association to hold its first AGM within 18 months of being incorporated (section 63(3) of the AIR Act). After that, your organisation must hold an AGM within five months after the end of each financial year (section 63(4)).

The rules of an incorporated association must set out the time within which notices of AGMs (and notices of motion) are to be given, published or circulated. Many organisations have a rule (similar to old model rule 12 and new model rule 33) that members should receive notice of an AGM at least 14 days (or 21 days if a special resolution is proposed - see more information below) before the meeting.

**Example:**

If your organisation operates on a calendar financial year (1 January to 31 December), your annual general meeting must be held by **31 May**.

If your organisation operates on a business financial year (1 July to 30 June), your annual general meeting must be held by **30 November**.

Also, many organisations have a rule (similar to old model rule 9 and new model rule 30) that the committee may decide the specific date, time and place to hold the AGM.

The organisation's financial statement must be submitted to members at the AGM (sections 94(1), 97(1) and 100(1)). For more information about the financial statement, see [Part 8: Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) in this Guide.

### How to measure time for giving notice

Calculating the number of days' notice can be confusing. Firstly, check whether your organisation has its own rules about measuring time. The model rules do not have any provisions about measuring time.

If your rules do not address measuring time, it is good practice when counting days to exclude both:

- the day on which the notice is sent, and
- the day on which the meeting is to be held.

This would meet the requirements within section 44 of the *Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984* (Vic).

If the notice is sent by post, the commonly accepted rule is that the notice period begins the day after the letter would have been delivered "in the ordinary course of post" (this would meet the requirements within section 49 of the *Interpretation of Legislation Act 1984* (Vic)). You can ask Australia Post for information about ordinary delivery times. For example, it usually takes one business day for a letter to reach an address in metropolitan Melbourne, and longer for remote or interstate addresses.

#### Example:

Most organisations have a rule that a notice of general meeting should be sent to members at least 14 days before the meeting is held.

If a notice is personally delivered to a member on **1 January**, you would count 14 days from 2 January. That makes **16 January** the earliest date for holding the meeting.

### What information should be in a notice of an annual general meeting?

A notice of an AGM should:

- be sufficiently clear and detailed so that any ordinary person who receives the notice and scans it quickly can know what is proposed to be done at the meeting and can then decide whether to attend
- be a full and fair disclosure of the matters to be discussed at the meeting, and
- not mislead any member of the organisation.

These legal requirements have been developed by the courts to help establish good and fair procedures. To meet these requirements, it is best that an organisation's rules specify what details must be included in a notice of AGM. As a minimum, the notice must include the date, time and place of the AGM (section 60 of the AIR Act). Most organisations have a rule (similar to old model rule 9) that the notice must identify the meeting as an "annual general meeting".

The rules of some organisations also specify the "ordinary business" which must be dealt with at an AGM (for example, see old model rule 9 and new model rule 30, see also [4. Procedures for an annual general meeting](#) below). If your organisation's rules specify items of ordinary business for an AGM, these should be included on the notice of meeting, as well as any other (or "special") business to be dealt with at the meeting.

**Remember!**

If your organisation uses the old or new model rules, the only matters that can be discussed and voted on at an AGM are the ones set out in the notice of meeting. All items of business should be set out in the notice. Check your organisation's own rules and procedures, as they may have extra requirements.

**Tip:**

Commonly, agendas for AGMs include a catch-all item such as "any other business" or "general business". This allows members to discuss any additional matters which arise at the meeting (such as setting a time and place for the next meeting).

However, the AGM should not pass resolutions on important matters which have not been previously notified to members. If additional matters of business are raised at the meeting, it is best for the organisation to convene a *special general* meeting (with sufficient notice to members) to consider the issues properly, and vote on any resolutions. For information on special general meetings, see [Part 6: Special General Meetings](#) in this Guide.

Your organisation may also have policies about the content of notices of AGMs. For example, it may be your organisation's policy to specify who authorised the notice.

The notice is usually sent to members together with documents which provide background information on the matters to be discussed at the meeting, such as:

- the minutes of the last meeting
- reports prepared by the committee, staff or volunteers, and
- financial reports.

See [Tool 1: Checklist for notice of annual general meeting](#) and also [Tool 2: Sample notice for annual general meeting](#).

## How to give notice of an annual general meeting

The rules of an incorporated association must set out the way in which notices of AGMs (and notices of motion) are to be given, published or circulated (item 19 of Schedule 1 of the AIR Act).

Many organisations have a rule that a notice of an AGM may be:

- provided in person
- sent by post to each member's address, or
- sent by fax, email or other form of electronic transmission (the old model rules only allow this where a member has requested this form of notification, but the new model rules allow email or fax notification as a matter of course).

Check your own organisation's rules. The way in which notice must be given varies greatly, depending on the type of organisation and the formality of meetings. Some organisations' rules require a notice to be posted to each paid-up member; others require notice by an advertisement in a local newspaper; others may place a notice in their regular newsletter or on a club notice board.



Extra requirements apply if there will be a motion put at your AGM that requires a special resolution to pass. See [Notice of AGM where motion requiring special resolution will be put to members - extra requirements below](#).

Your organisation may also have supplemented its rules with policies about how to give notice of an AGM.

**Tip:**

When giving notice of an AGM, it is good practice to give each member of the association an individual notice (rather than, for example, only putting up a notice on the club notice board). This prevents a claim by a member that they were unaware of an AGM.

With large organisations this may be expensive. Therefore, some organisations' rules may allow for electronic methods of providing notice to members (for example, the new model rules allow for notices to be sent by email).

### Who should be given notice of an annual general meeting?

Unless your rules say otherwise, you should give notice of an AGM to all members listed on the organisation's register of members. (The secretary usually has responsibility for maintaining the members register – see [Part 4: Registers, Records and Official Documents](#) in this Guide).

The AIR Act requires that notice be given to “each member of the association entitled to vote at [annual] general meetings” (section 60 of the AIR Act). This is the minimum requirement. Some organisations may specify in their rules that only paid-up (financial) members or some other special membership class are required to receive notice of an AGM. Your organisation may also have “life members”, who may or may not need to be notified. Check your organisation's rules and policies about who should be given notice of an AGM.

### What if an annual general meeting (or a motion) is adjourned to a later date?

Sometimes, an AGM may be adjourned to a later date – for example, if there are not enough members at the meeting to make decisions for the organisation (see [How many people need to be at an annual general meeting?](#) below).

In such cases, you will need to consider whether a new notice of AGM (or notice of motion) is required. For example, old model rule 15 and new model rule 37 state that if a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, a fresh notice must be served. Check your organisation's rules for any specific provisions about this.

If the adjournment would mean that the organisation's AGM will be held more than five months after the end of the last financial year, the organisation must apply to CAV for an extension of time to hold the AGM (section 105 of the AIR Act). To apply for an extension of time, the secretary can either:

- download the "Application for Extension of Time" form from CAV's website:  
[www.consumer.vic.gov.au/Clubs and not-for-profits/incorporated-associations/fees-and-forms](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/Clubs_and_not-for-profits/incorporated-associations/fees-and-forms) and



select Application for extension of time. Complete this form and then deliver it in person or post it to CAV

- apply online at [online.justice.vic.gov.au](http://online.justice.vic.gov.au) and click on “Business Registration”, or
- Scan completed and signed forms (PDF format) and email to CAV.

Your organisation must pay a fee when applying for an extension of time.

Sometimes, even though the meeting goes ahead, a motion – of which notice has been given – may need to be adjourned - for example, if you run out of time at the AGM to address all motions proposed. If the motion concerns an item that must be addressed at the AGM, then the AGM should be adjourned and remaining essential motions addressed at the adjourned AGM. If the motion/s relates to ordinary business, the AGM can be concluded, and a future special general meeting can be held to address the remaining motions.

### Notice of AGM where motion requiring special resolution will be put to members - extra requirements

There are extra notice requirements if particular types of decisions are proposed to be made at an AGM. One of these situations is when a motion requiring a “special resolution” is proposed.

Special resolutions are required under the AIR Act for an organisation to make certain decisions (such as changing the organisation’s name, rules, removing a committee member from office or winding up the organisation).

#### Why have extra requirements for special resolutions?

The policy reason for having extra requirements for a notice of a meeting proposing a special resolution is that special resolutions are used to make important decisions under the AIR Act. So, it is important to give members more time and information about the matter so that they can consider it carefully before the meeting.

See [4. Procedures for an annual general meeting](#) below for information about passing a special resolution at an AGM (and then seeking approval from CAV, where applicable).

You need to check whether your rules permit these types of “special” business to be dealt with at an AGM. Depending on these rules, you may need to hold a special general meeting to deal with special motions.

#### When to give notice of a proposed special resolution

A notice of a meeting that will include a motion requiring special resolution to pass must be given to all members who are entitled to vote at least 21 days before the meeting (section 64(2) of the AIR Act).

Otherwise, the resolution cannot be passed as a special resolution at the meeting.

#### What information should be included in the notice?

To pass a special resolution at an AGM, the AIR Act (section 64(3)) requires the AGM notice to:

- specify the date, time and place of the AGM,

- set out the *actual wording* of the proposed special resolution in full, and
- state that it is intended to propose the resolution as a “special resolution”.

Check your organisation’s rules carefully for any extra requirements about notices of proposed special resolutions.

**Remember!**

If a special resolution is proposed for an AGM, your organisation must comply with the notice requirements in section 64(2) of the AIR Act. Otherwise, the resolution cannot be passed as a special resolution at the AGM.

See also the [Part 6:Special General Meetings](#) and [Part 7:Committee Meetings](#) parts of this Guide.

**Is it a special resolution to amalgamate the association with another organisation?**

If the motion requiring special resolution is proposing to *amalgamate* (or “join”) an organisation with other organisations (one or more), the notice should:

- nominate the first secretary of the amalgamated organisation
- include the terms of the amalgamation, and
- attach a copy of the proposed rules of the amalgamated organisation.

An application to amalgamate can only be approved by CAV (section 18) if the application includes the relevant details about the amalgamated organisation (name, first secretary’s details) and is accompanied by evidence of the passing of the special resolution(s) approving the proposed terms of the amalgamation as well as the rules of the amalgamated organisation.

**Who should notice be given to?**

The AIR Act requires a notice of general meeting proposing a special resolution to be given to all members of the organisation who are entitled under the organisation’s rules to vote on the resolution (section 64(2) of the AIR Act).

Check whether your organisation has particular classes of members who are, or are not, eligible to vote on the matter.

**Notice of proposal to remove an auditor - extra requirements**

There are extra notice requirements if there is a motion to remove the association’s auditor. This type of motion can only be passed by special resolution. If your AGM will include a motion to remove an auditor, notice of the AGM needs to be sent earlier, to every member, and needs to include extra information.

**When to give notice of a proposal to remove an auditor**

Notice of a proposal to remove an auditor must be given to members of the association at least two months before the AGM at which the resolution is proposed to be passed

**Why have a longer notice period?**

This long notice period is designed to make sure that the organisation’s members, the auditor and CAV have time to consider the proposal, and the auditor has time to prepare any response before the AGM at which the decision is to be made.

(section 106(2) of the AIR Act). This means that the AGM notice will need to be prepared earlier than usual. There are other steps which must be taken before a meeting proposing to remove an auditor can be held (sections 106 and 107):

- a notice proposing a resolution to remove an auditor must state the proposed resolution in full, and
- a notice may be given to members of the organisation personally, by post or in any other way that is allowed under the organisation's rules.

#### **Who should be given notice?**

Notice of a proposal to remove an auditor must be given to *every member* of the incorporated association (section 106(2)). In addition, as soon as possible after the notice is given to members, the secretary of the organisation must give a copy of the notice to:

- the auditor, and
- CAV (section 106(4)). CAV has advised that this can be done in person, by post, or email (attaching the notice as a PDF).

The auditor may write to the secretary of the organisation about the motion (section 107(1)). Unless CAV orders otherwise:

- the secretary of the organisation must provide a copy of the auditor's letter to all members of the organisation before the AGM, and
- the auditor must be allowed to attend and talk to the meeting before a vote on the resolution is taken (section 107(2)).

#### **What if a notice of an AGM might be invalid (defective)?**

If there is a defect with a notice of AGM (for example, it did not contain the details required by the AIR Act, or was sent without providing sufficient notice), the notice may be "invalid". If this happens, any actions taken and decisions made at the subsequent meeting may be void (that is, of no legal effect).

If a member of your organisation alleges that a notice of an AGM is invalid, it can be difficult to work out whether the alleged defect is something that would make the meeting void. The answer will depend on the seriousness of the alleged defect.

#### **Is it possible to waive any defects in a notice?**

If you have realised that your notice of AGM was defective, there are steps you can take to fix the defect. If all the members entitled to attend the AGM (not just those who actually attend) agree to "waive" a defect in the notice (that is, essentially to ignore it), the invalidity may be overcome. The courts have long recognised this as a way of "curing" defects in a notice. However, waiving a defect can prove difficult for an AGM that is large or more formal.

A defective notice of an AGM that includes a proposed special resolution is unlikely to be cured by a waiver. If 21 clear days' notice has not been given, you should seek legal advice. You may need to hold the meeting again or confirm the resolution at a future general meeting (see below).

#### **Is it possible to overcome alleged defects in any other way?**

One method of overcoming any alleged defects in a notice is to continue to hold the (possibly) invalid AGM (if those present agree) and to keep records of the decisions made at the meeting. At the next

validly convened general meeting, a motion can be put adopting the decisions made at that earlier (possibly) invalid AGM.

Of course, until that subsequent meeting validates the decisions of the previous (invalid) AGM, the decisions of that previous meeting will have no legal standing or effect. This approach is therefore usually taken only if there is likely to be no dispute about the previous decisions.

**Tip:**

If there is ever any concern about the validity of any notice, you should seek legal advice.

## 4. Procedures for an annual general meeting

Procedures for AGMs of incorporated associations in Victoria can vary considerably, depending on the type of organisation, who is attending and what is being discussed. Generally, the larger the group, the more formal the AGM procedures (so that order is maintained and the meeting can deal with its business efficiently).

The person who chairs the AGM (usually called the chairperson or president) guides the style of the meeting. As long as the legal requirements are met, the chairperson may run the AGM in as relaxed or formal a style as the particular situation allows.

You need to take into account any requirements imposed by the AIR Act, the Regulations and your organisation's rules when establishing meeting procedures.

Each organisation also develops its own customs, practices and "culture" over time. These may not be formally reflected in the rules of the organisation. So it is important to ask about your organisation's policies and procedures (written and unwritten), as well as the rules, to find out how your organisation usually conducts meetings, and the AGM in particular.

**Tip:**

Some customs and practices are intentionally designed to promote efficiency of time and effort, to focus on certain key meeting issues, or for other strategic purposes.

For example, an organisation may table certain reports and take them as read (that is, the AGM does not deal in detail with the report, but members may ask questions).

### What is the role of the secretary?

The role of the secretary is discussed in detail in [Part 3: Secretary's Legal Role, Powers and Duties](#) in this Guide. In particular, for AGMs, the secretary is usually responsible for the following tasks:

- preparing and distributing any reports or documents to people who are invited to the meeting
- dealing with any correspondence
- assisting in and recording the outcome of any votes taken, and
- taking minutes of the meeting (or arranging for someone else to take them).

## Rules and annual general meetings

Check your organisation's rules and follow the requirements about your AGM, including:

- the agenda for the meeting
- the "quorum" for the meeting (that is, the minimum number of members who must be present)
- how resolutions are passed
- voting methods, and
- how meetings can be adjourned.

Each of these matters are discussed in more detail below.

## Agenda for the annual general meeting

The agenda for the AGM is different to the agenda for other general meetings because the business dealt with at the AGM is different to the business of other types of meetings.

Your organisation's rules may specify the ordinary business to be conducted at the AGM. For example, old model rule 9 and new model rule 30 say that the "ordinary business" of the AGM is:

- to confirm the minutes of the previous AGM, and of any general meeting held since that meeting
- to receive reports from the committee about the transactions of the organisation during the last financial year
- to elect officers of the organisation and the ordinary members of the committee, and
- to receive and consider the annual (financial) statement of the organisation under Part 7 of the AIR Act.

New model rule 30 also allows organisations to confirm or vary the amounts (if any) or annual subscription and joining fees.

Check your own organisation's rules to find out whether any other business (often called "special" business) can be conducted at an AGM, and the type of notice required. For example, old model rule 9 and new model rule 30 say that the AGM may also conduct special business, so long as notice has been given in accordance with the rules. See above [Notice of AGM where motion requiring special resolution will be put to members - extra requirements](#) for examples of special business.

For a sample agenda for an AGM, see [Tool 3: Sample agenda for annual general meeting \(with explanatory notes for the secretary\)](#). Note: this document is a guide only. You should adapt the document to suit your organisation's own rules and requirements.

## How many people need to be at an annual general meeting?

Before you can deal with any business at an AGM, there must be a minimum number of the organisation's members present. This number is called the "quorum".

Your organisation's rules must specify the quorum for AGMs and other general meetings (item 18 of Schedule 1 of the AIR Act). Old model rule 13 says that the quorum for the conduct of business at an AGM is five members, all of whom must be entitled to vote and be personally present. That is, any members present "by proxy" are not counted (see below, [Proxy voting](#)). New model rule says that the

quorum is 10% of members entitled to vote present physically or by proxy. Remember the AIR Act now permits meeting attendance by technology (eg phone or video conferencing).

Check your own organisation's rules for the quorum number, and whether they may be present by proxy.

### What happens if there is no quorum?

If there is no quorum at an AGM, your organisation's rules should set out what will happen. For example, old model rule 13 and new model rule 36 provide that:

- no item of business may be conducted at the meeting unless a quorum of members entitled to vote is present when the meeting is considering that item
- if, within half an hour after the time set for the start of the meeting, a quorum is not present, then either:
  - if the meeting has been convened at the request of members — the chairperson must cancel the meeting, or
  - in any other case — the chairperson must adjourn (reschedule) the meeting. The old model rules provide the meeting should be adjourned to the same time and place on the same day of the next week.

Old model rule 13 and new model rule 36 say that if a quorum is not present by the end of the first half hour of the rescheduled meeting, then, if there are at least three members present, those members shall be a quorum. This means that the rescheduled AGM will be able to deal with the items of business, so long as at least three members are personally present.

You must check your organisation's own rules.

### Motions and resolutions

The words "motion" and "resolution" are often (incorrectly) used as if they mean the same thing. They don't. They have separate, but related, meanings.

#### What is a motion?

A motion is a proposal that a member puts at a meeting in order that some action be done or decision made about an issue. (See discussion of [What is a notice of motion?](#) above in this Part). The technical procedure for a motion is that:

- a member moves the motion, and then
- another member seconds the motion.

Sometimes, members may wish to change the wording of the motion, and if so then:

- a member moves an amendment to the motion, and then
- another member seconds the amendment.

#### Example:

The XYZ Club calls a general meeting at which a motion is put forward by a member "that this meeting approve the lodgment of a zoning application for the association's Club House with the Melbourne City Council". Another member seconds the motion.

Then the meeting can vote to approve or pass the motion (or not).



### What is a resolution?

A resolution is a motion that the meeting has approved or “passed”. A resolution is therefore the result of a motion (or an amended motion) put before, and approved by, the meeting. Once the resolution is passed, the meeting has made a binding decision.

There are two main types of resolutions:

- ordinary resolutions (often simply called a “resolution”), and
- special resolutions.

The requirements for passing ordinary and special resolutions are different, and are discussed in more detail below. For information about drafting motions and resolutions, see [7. Preparing and keeping minutes](#) below.

#### Example:

The XYZ Club meeting votes to approve the motion “that this meeting approve the lodgment of a zoning application for the association’s Club House with the Melbourne City Council”.

The motion then becomes a resolution that legally binds the XYZ Club and its members.

But, if necessary, the organisation can change or cancel its decision by passing another resolution to override the previous one.

### How is an ordinary resolution passed?

Unless your rules say otherwise, an ordinary resolution is passed by a “simple majority” of members who vote at an AGM. A simple majority is when more than half of the members present and voting at the meeting, vote “in favour of” (for) the resolution.

For example, if there were 20 members voting on a motion, you would need 11 (or more) members voting in favour to pass an ordinary resolution.

Check your organisation’s rules for any particular requirements for passing resolutions (either ordinary or otherwise). For example, the rules may require a majority of all members *entitled* to vote (rather than a majority of members who *actually* vote) to pass a resolution. This means that, for example, if you have 50 members, and 30 turn up to your meeting, you will still need 26 votes (that is, more than half the 25 members eligible to vote) to pass a resolution. This is sometimes known as a resolution by ‘absolute majority’.

### How is a special resolution passed?

A special resolution must be passed in accordance with the requirements in section 64 of the AIR Act. As discussed above, special resolutions are required under the AIR Act for certain important decisions, such as changing the organisation’s name or rules. Your organisation’s rules may specify other situations, or types of decisions, which require a special resolution.

To pass a special resolution at an AGM, the AIR Act requires that:

1. notice of the proposed special resolution must be given in the proper way (see [Notice of AGM where motion requiring special resolution will be put to members - extra requirements](#) above), and
2. not less than three quarters (that is, 75% or more) of members who are both:
  - entitled to vote, and
  - who actually do vote at the meeting, either in person or by proxy if allowed (see below, [Proxy voting](#)),



must vote “in favour of” (for) the special resolution (section 64(4)(a)(i)), and

3. any additional requirements in the organisation’s rules about passing special resolutions must be met (section 64(4)(a)(ii)).

Your organisation’s rules can impose additional requirements (for example, a requirement to include certain extra information about the proposed special resolution in the notice of meeting), but cannot reduce or increase the 75% provision.

If it would be too difficult (impracticable) for your organisation to pass a special resolution in the way required by section 64(4)(a), you can ask CAV for approval to pass a special resolution in another way (section 66). CAV has advised that an organisation may get approval if, for example, it needs to pass a motion to wind up (end) the organisation but there is a problem with the organisation’s records and it is difficult to identify all the members of the organisation.

**Remember!**

Some decisions passed by special resolution (for example, changing the organisation’s rules) are not official under the AIR Act until they have been approved by CAV. Depending on the type of decision, you may need to notify CAV that the special resolution was passed at the meeting, and seek approval of the change.

**Proposal to remove an auditor - extra requirements**

There are special requirements if a resolution to remove an auditor is proposed to be passed at an AGM (section 106 of the AIR Act and see [Notice of proposal to remove an auditor - extra requirements](#) above). One of these requirements (section 107(2)(b)) is that, unless CAV orders otherwise, the auditor must be allowed to:

- attend the AGM at which resolution to remove them is to be considered, and
- talk to the meeting before the vote on the proposed resolution is taken.

**Voting at annual general meetings**

If members at an AGM want to make a decision about a matter, a motion or an amendment, it is usual for each member to cast a vote — generally “in favour” (for) or “against.”

Check your organisation’s rules for any requirements about voting procedures. For example, old model rule 16 and new model rule 38 provide that:

- each member has only one vote
- all votes must be given personally or by proxy (see below, [Proxy voting](#)), and
- if there is a tied vote (that is, an equal number of votes “for” and “against”), the chairperson may vote again to decide the matter (sometimes called the “casting vote”).

Old model rule 16 also says that a member is not entitled to vote unless they have paid their annual membership fees (not including the fee payable for the current financial year), and new model rule 12(4) says that a member’s rights (including voting rights) are suspended if they have not paid their annual subscription fee.

For information about voting methods see below, [5. Voting methods](#).

## Adjourning annual general meetings

Check your organisation's rules for any special requirements about adjourning (rescheduling) AGMs.

The rules of an incorporated association will usually require the chairperson to adjourn an AGM if there is no quorum present after a specified time. Old model rule 15 and new model rule 37 also provide that:

- if a majority of the members present consent, the chairperson may adjourn the meeting to another time and place
- at the rescheduled meeting, the only business that may be dealt with is the unfinished business from the meeting that was adjourned, and
- if a meeting is adjourned for 14 days or more, then a notice of the rescheduled meeting must be given in accordance with the rules for notices of general meetings.

Some organisations' rules allow for an AGM to be adjourned in other circumstances as well. You need to check what your rules say.

## 5. Voting methods

---

There are various ways in which votes can be taken at an AGM. The most common methods are voting by show of hands or by poll (that is, a vote in writing). These and other methods (such as voting by voices) are discussed in more detail in [Tool 4: Table of voting methods](#).

Check your own organisation's rules and policies about voting methods. Your rules may require certain methods and not allow others. They may also require different methods of voting at different types of meetings.

### Tip:

The usual procedure for voting at an AGM is that the chairperson will:

- clearly state the motion to be put to the meeting
- take a vote from those present and entitled to vote
- determine the result, and
- announce the result of the vote.

### How to vote on a special resolution

Voting on a special resolution should be conducted as required or permitted by your organisation's rules. The AIR Act says that a special resolution is passed if the chairperson declares it has been passed, unless a member of the organisation demands that the votes be counted (section 65(3), see also below about polls).

### Polls and ballots

A "poll" is a method of voting in writing on a motion (and any amendments) at a meeting. It is usually the role of the chairperson to determine whether a poll is required, to direct the conduct of the poll and to supervise the counting of the written votes. The way in which individual members voted in the poll is not usually disclosed.

In many organisations the rules allow a member to request a poll. Commonly, a poll may be requested by:

- a member who questions the result of a particular vote count (for example, if the AGM is large and there is a close vote on a show of hands), or
- a member who believes that any proxies held may alter the outcome of the vote (because a holder of several proxies has only one vote in a show of hands).

Sometimes a poll must be conducted, if a certain number of members request it. For example, old model rule 17 requires a poll if three or more members demand one on any issue.

A “ballot” is a method of voting for elections of office bearers and committee members. A ballot is usually confidential, in which case it is referred to as a “secret ballot”. In a secret ballot, the name of the voter is not disclosed, compared to a poll where the voter’s name is usually written on the voting paper so the voter’s right to vote can be checked (for example, that they are a paid up member).

Contested elections at an AGM (that is, if there is more than one person nominated for a position) are often conducted by secret ballot.

For more information about how to conduct a poll and ballot, see [Tool 4: Table of voting methods](#).

### **Abstaining from voting and opposing**

Some members may decide not to vote at all (that is, “abstain from voting”) and they may wish to have the secretary record their names in the minutes as having abstained.

Other members may oppose the motion and request that their opposition be noted.

### **What if a vote is tied?**

If a vote is tied, most organisations’ rules say that the chairperson has a second (or “casting”) vote to decide the matter. This is the position in both the old and new model rules. Commonly, the chairperson will exercise this vote to maintain the existing situation (so that a controversial resolution will not be passed).

### **What if a member is unable to attend an annual general meeting and vote in person?**

If a member of an organisation is unable to attend an AGM to cast their vote in person, that member may, depending on the rules of their organisation, vote by “proxy”. See [Proxy voting](#), below.

As an alternative, an organisation may, if its rules permit, allow direct voting so that members who will be absent from an AGM can cast their own vote. The vote can be cast by completing and lodging a voting form prior to that meeting. More information about direct voting, including how an organisation can amend its rules to implement a system of direct voting is provided below, [Direct voting](#).

## **Proxy voting**

### **What is proxy voting?**

If a member of an organisation is unable to attend an AGM and vote on an issue personally, that member may be able to appoint another person to cast a vote on their behalf (that is, “vote by proxy”) at the meeting.

**Terminology:**

When talking about proxies, it is important to know the following definitions:

- the “donor” is the member of the organisation who appoints another person to vote on their behalf
- the “proxy holder” or “proxy” is the person who is appointed to vote on behalf of the absent member, and
- the “proxy form” is the document by which the donor appoints the proxy.

**What are the legal requirements for proxy voting?**

A member of an incorporated association has no general legal right to appoint a proxy (but see below, [Proxy voting](#) and [Powers of attorney](#)). The power or right to appoint a proxy can be given only by the organisation's rules, so you should check if your rules allow for proxy voting.

The AIR Act requires the rules of an incorporated association to specify whether or not absent members are allowed to vote by proxy (item 18 of Schedule 1 of the AIR Act). Check your organisation's rules carefully for any provisions about proxy voting.

The rules of some organisations specify a deadline for receiving proxy forms before the AGM. The new model rules do not contain a time limit for proxy forms provided in person, however new model rule 34(7) requires that forms sent by post or electronically be received 24 hours before the meeting to have effect. Having a deadline in your rules avoids the secretary having to receive many proxy forms at the meeting, which can slow the progress of the meeting.

The rules of some organisations may also allow:

- non-members to act as proxies
- a general proxy (which gives a member the right to appoint another to vote as they see fit on all aspects of the organisation's business for a certain period of time)
- a specific proxy (which allows a person to cast a vote only at a particular meeting in a particular way), and/or
- the chairperson to hold the general proxies of many absent members (and therefore enable the chairperson to exercise the proxy in any manner they see fit).

**Tip:**

See [Part 5 Tool 5: Flowchart for reviewing proxies](#) in this Part. Be sure to check the flowchart against your organisation's rules and policies before relying on it. If your rules are different, adapt the tool to suit your own circumstances.

**What if the donor attends the annual general meeting themselves?**

If the donor attends an AGM and they have appointed a proxy for that meeting, if the donor votes on an issue, the proxy holder may not vote on their behalf. The proxy holder may continue to act in accordance with the proxy form to vote on subsequent matters at the meeting (so long as the donor does not vote on those matters).

### Is the chairperson required to exercise the proxies they may hold?

If the chairperson has been appointed a proxy holder by a number of absent members, there is no broadly applicable rule about whether the chairperson *must* vote on behalf of these donors. It will depend on the wording of the document that appoints them as proxy.

It is good practice for the proxy form to set out whether the chairperson *must* vote in a particular way or whether the chairperson *may* (or may not) vote in a particular way on the resolution. If the chairperson *may* vote but does not have to, this means they have a “discretion” about exercising the proxy. If a donor appoints the chairperson as their proxy to vote on a resolution in a particular way, the chairperson must vote in that way.

### Cancelling a proxy

Generally, a donor may cancel (or “revoke”) a proxy before it is exercised by:

- giving both the proxy holder and the organisation a written notice of revocation (which becomes effective as soon as it is received and which, strictly, must be received by the organisation before the AGM at which the proxy was to be used)
- granting a subsequent and superseding (overriding) proxy to the same or another person, or
- resigning from the organisation.

If a donor dies, the proxy automatically ends.

Check your organisation’s rules carefully for any provisions about revoking proxies. For example, some organisations’ rules require a donor wishing to cancel a proxy to give notice to the organisation by a certain deadline before the meeting.

If the donor has appointed a proxy for a specific AGM (see discussion of “specific proxies” above), the appointment will only be valid for that meeting.

## Powers of attorney

### What is a “power of attorney”?

A person can appoint another person (or more than one) to have “power of attorney” for them — that is, to make decisions on their behalf, either indefinitely or for a specified period of time. This must be done in writing, signed and dated. This is another way to enable a person to vote on behalf of a member who is not attending an AGM.

For more detailed information on powers of attorney, and sample forms, see the Office of the Public Advocate website: [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au) > [Powers-of-attorney](#).

#### Terminology:

When talking about powers of attorney, it is important to know that:

- the “donor” is the person who appoints another person to make decisions on their behalf
- the “attorney” is the person who is appointed by the donor, and
- the “power of attorney” is both the document by which the attorney is appointed, and the actual grant of power.

The attorney may exercise the powers of the donor, and vote on their behalf at an AGM.

A donor may cancel (revoke) a power of attorney at any time in writing.

If a person says they have power of attorney to act on behalf of a member of your organisation, it is good practice to:

- ask that person for a written declaration that they have the powers they claim, and
- request to see, and then carefully read, the original copy of the power of attorney to:
  - confirm that the power exists
  - make a note of the extent of the power granted to the attorney, and
  - make a note of the period of time (if any is specified) that the power operates.

The attorney may sometimes appoint a proxy or be a proxy holder. Sometimes a power of attorney gives a person the power to act on the donor's behalf on all matters (this is a “general” power of attorney). So, in this situation, the attorney would have the authority to appoint a proxy, or to be a proxy holder.

## Direct voting

### What is “direct voting”?

Direct voting is a method of voting which enables members to exercise their voting rights without having to either attend the AGM, or give their right to vote to someone else (ie. a proxy or attorney). With direct voting, members exercise their vote by submitting a binding voting form to the organisation before the AGM, in an approved manner.

### Why is direct voting beneficial?

Direct voting makes it easier for a member to vote (and have their vote counted) when they cannot attend an AGM. In contrast to proxy voting (whereby a person gives the proxy their power to vote at an AGM – but does not necessarily *oblige* that person to attend the meeting and vote on their behalf), with direct voting an absent member can simply lodge their vote in writing before the AGM. Direct voting can therefore foster greater member participation in decision-making – and also avoids a situation where, for example, a proxy holder falls ill on the day of an AGM and cannot attend.

Direct voting does not necessarily replace the proxy system. It can sit alongside it. Direct voting simply provides an additional voting option to members who know they cannot attend an AGM.

### Implementing direct voting

Direct voting is not available to members unless your organisation's rules provide for it.

If your organisation's rules do not currently allow for direct voting, and you would like to adopt a direct voting system, you will need to change the rules to implement direct voting. You will need to consider how you want the procedure to work. For example, do you want your rules to outline the form and process for direct voting, or leave it to the committee of management to determine this form and process in the future as it sees fit?

**Remember!** Check the voting provisions in your organisation's rules. If your organisation uses rules that *do not* allow for direct voting (such as the model rules), you will need to change your organisation's rules to implement direct voting procedures.

Chartered Secretaries Australia (**CSA**) has released a [Guide to implementing direct voting](#). Although the Guide is designed for companies (and refers to shareholders rather than members), it contains some useful information about direct voting.

For sample wording of a new rule to allow direct voting, see [Tool 4: Table of voting methods](#) of this Part.

**Remember!**

In order to change your rules, a special resolution must be passed in accordance with the requirements of section 64 of the AIR Act. See above for more information on the specific requirements for passing a special resolution.

## 6. What are “minutes”?

The word “minutes” has been used for centuries to mean a summary of the proceedings of an assembly or committee. Today, minutes are a formal written record of the matters discussed and decisions made at a meeting.

One of the main legal tasks of the secretary of an incorporated association is to make sure that:

- minutes are taken of each meeting (including the AGM) of the organisation
- minutes are confirmed by the organisation as an accurate record of the meeting, and
- the minutes of all meetings are kept safely by the organisation for future reference.

The legal requirements for preparing and keeping minutes of AGMs arise under the AIR Act and the organisation’s rules. Your organisation may also have particular policies and practices for taking and keeping minutes.

There are other laws which you should be aware of when preparing and distributing minutes, including defamation and privacy laws. These are discussed briefly in this Part.

### AIR Act requirements

The AIR Act requires the rules of incorporated associations in Victoria to include provisions about keeping accurate minutes of AGMs and allowing members access to such minutes of the organisation (items 14 and 15 of Schedule 1). If your organisation’s rules do *not* cover any of the matters in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act, the provisions of the new model rules that address those matters will apply to your organisation automatically.

**New rules requirements**

The AIR Act requires an organisation’s rules to cover *all* the matters listed in Schedule 1, either by adopting the model rules, or having a provision in their own rules that covers the listed matters. See PilchConnect’s [Rules Checklist](#) for more information.



In addition, an inspector from Consumer Affairs Victoria (**CAV**) may, with a Magistrates' Court order, require the organisation, or any person who is involved in the organisation's activities (which includes the secretary) to give the inspector specified relevant documents (which could include minutes) of the organisation. CAV may choose to use these powers to make sure that the organisation has complied with the AIR Act and the Regulations.

It is therefore extremely important that the secretary makes sure that accurate minutes are taken of the organisation's AGMs, and that they are kept in a safe place.

### Your organisation's rules

Many organisations have a rule, similar to old model rule 31 and new model rule 41, which requires the secretary to keep minutes of resolutions and proceedings of each AGM.

Model rule 41 also requires a secretary to keep as part of the minutes of the AGM:

- the names of members attending the meeting
- proxy forms given to the Chairperson
- the financial statements submitted to members
- the certificate signed by two members certifying the financial statements are true and fair view of the financial position of the associations, and
- any audited accounts and auditor's report or reviewer's report that were required under the new Act.

AGM minutes are a "relevant document" of the association, and members can inspect and make copies of the minutes. See [Part 3: Secretary's Legal Role, Powers and Duties](#) of this Guide for more information about a secretary's responsibility to store and provide access to minutes.

### Your organisation's policies

Check your organisation's policies and practices about taking and keeping minutes. If you don't have any, your organisation may choose to create policies, using this Guide for assistance.

## 7. Preparing and keeping minutes

---

The form of minutes varies depending on the type of organisation and the type of activities it undertakes.

### Content of the minutes

For detailed information about the usual matters to include in the minutes of meetings, see [Tool 7: Checklist for content of minutes](#). Importantly, the minutes should record the motions moved and resolutions made at the AGM. For information about "motions" and "resolutions" see [Motions and resolutions](#) in this Guide.

### Drafting the content - generally

The format and style of minutes vary considerably among organisations. Some minutes are very brief and precise, and record the bare minimum of information. Other minutes include "blow by blow"

summaries of the debate. In exceptional circumstances, the minutes will include a transcript of everything that was said at an AGM. Check your own organisation's rules, policies and practices.

Despite variety in the form of minutes, there are some commonly accepted drafting conventions – see [Tool 8. Conventions for drafting minutes](#).

**Tip:**

The minutes are an official historical record of the organisation, so it is good practice to record in the minutes the name and position of office bearers (chairperson, secretary, treasurer) as well as names of members and any other people present (such as observers).

### Drafting motions and resolutions

The exact wording of the motion should appear in the minutes. If there is a problem with the wording of a resolution (that is, a motion which is passed at the AGM), this will have to be corrected at a later meeting. Once the minutes have been confirmed, the secretary has no power to alter the motion in order to correct the mistake.

The wording of the motion must comply with your organisation's rules, including its purposes — it cannot recommend any action outside the scope of your organisation's powers and activities. The motion must also be allowed to be made by the AGM, especially if the meeting has been called for a specific purpose.

**Tip:**

If a motion is proposed verbally at a meeting, the secretary may find it helpful to:

- write the motion down on a board or flip chart and show it to the meeting during the debate, or
- require the motion to be given to them in writing by the member proposing it.

This way, any corrections to the wording of the motion can be made before voting on the matter. It also gives the secretary a chance to draft the motion in a way which can be suitably recorded in the minutes.

For each motion, the minutes should record:

- the names of people who move and second the original motion and any amendments
- the method of voting (for information about voting methods, see [5. Voting methods](#) in this Guide), and
- whether the motion was passed (in which case it becomes a resolution), rejected or was adjourned (that is, put off until another meeting).

See [Tool 8. conventions for drafting minutes](#).

**Tip:**

It is useful for the secretary to circulate draft minutes with an “action list” to the people or sub-committees who have been given specific tasks at the AGM.

### Drafting minutes of difficult meetings

Sometimes AGMs get heated and the participants resort to personal attacks, walk-outs, threats and inappropriate remarks. In many instances, the chairperson may require such remarks to be withdrawn (therefore the remarks are not recorded). In other cases, it is sufficient to record that “a vigorous discussion ensued” rather than a blow-by-blow account in the minutes. See [Tool 8. conventions for drafting minutes](#).

**Tip:**

For difficult meetings, the secretary could consider:

- asking the chairperson for specific help to draft the minutes (in any case, it is good practice for the secretary to always check the minutes they have drafted with the chairperson before distributing them to others), and
- unless a motion was made and/or resolution passed, not including the controversial material altogether. The minutes will have to be approved at the next meeting and, if it is considered necessary to include more detail, it can be agreed on then.

### Defamation

Sometimes a secretary will have to deal with potentially defamatory matters in the minutes of AGMs. A chairperson should challenge any defamatory statements at the time they are made in an AGM and have them withdrawn. The statements will then not be recorded in the minutes.

If an organisation has published defamatory statements in the minutes of an AGM, the defence of “qualified privilege” may be available, however the organisation should seek specific legal advice.

Generally a “defamatory statement” about a person is one that:

- exposes the person to hatred, contempt or ridicule
- tends to lower them in the opinion of other people
- harms their reputation (for example in their profession), and/or
- causes them to be shunned or avoided by others.

**Remember!**

The law of defamation is complex. If a secretary is concerned about any potential defamatory matters when drafting minutes, they should seek legal advice before finalising and distributing the minutes to anyone.

### Storing minutes

**Tip:**

Experience shows that it is best to write up the first draft of minutes as soon as possible after the AGM. Memory is fresh and the task can be done more quickly and efficiently than leaving it until just before the next meeting!

### Minute books

Finalised minutes are often entered into a “minute book”. Until recently a minute book was a securely bound book with sequentially numbered pages. The minutes were handwritten into the book to guard against fraud or tampering. While some small organisations still use handwritten minute books, many organisations create and store minutes electronically and distribute them by email.

However it can be difficult to keep track of the “official” version of the minutes when they are created and stored electronically. It is also relatively easy for someone to tamper with the minutes (or replace them with substitute minutes) if they are stored in a loose-leaf binder. For these reasons you should take precautions to make sure the official minutes of meetings are secure, and easily identifiable.

#### Tip:

Your organisation can take the following steps to keep the minutes more secure:

- lock the minutes document from editing and/or add a password to the document
- distribute the minutes electronically in PDF form rather than in an editable form
- print the minutes out and paste them into an official minute book (and number each page of the minute book consecutively)
- get the chairperson to sign each page of the minute book to confirm official minutes
- number each meeting sequentially (for example, “The Minutes of 2012 Annual General Meeting of XYZ Club Inc”).

#### Remember!

Some types of proposed resolutions require written notice to be given before the meeting – see [3. Giving notice of an annual general meeting](#) in this Guide.

## 8. Confirming and verifying minutes

It is good practice for the secretary of an incorporated association to:

- make sure the accuracy of the minutes is “confirmed” at the next meeting, and
- make sure the chairperson of the AGM (or the chairperson of the next meeting) has “verified” the accuracy of the confirmed minutes, for example by signing them.

See [Tool 9. Flowchart for confirming and verifying minutes](#). Check the rules of your own organisation for any special provisions about confirming and verifying minutes.

## Further information

---

### PilchConnect resources

The PilchConnect web portal contains a variety of resources and fact sheets for community organisations – go to [www.pilch.org.au/legal\\_info/](http://www.pilch.org.au/legal_info/)

- See [Running the organisation](#) for summary information about holding meetings and an annual general meeting, and
- See [When things change](#) for information about changing your organisation's rules, amalgamating your organisation and winding up.

### Legislation

The [Associations Incorporation Act Reform Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#) is the legislation that regulates incorporated associations in Victoria.

The [Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012 \(Vic\)](#) contain additional requirements for incorporated associations in Victoria, including the model rules.

### Government

The Consumer Affairs Victoria website contains a variety of online resources, including online access for incorporated associations. See [www.consumer.vic.gov.au](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au) > [Clubs and not-for-profits](#)

The Office of the Public Advocate has information and publications on powers of attorney. See [www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au](http://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au) > [Powers-of-attorney](#)

### Other links

See [Part 1: The Association in a Nutshell](#) in this Guide for links to other organisations and online resources to assist you and your organisation.

© 2009-2012 Public Interest Law Clearing House (Vic) Inc (PILCH). You may download, display, print and reproduce this material (retaining this notice) for your personal use, or non-commercial use within your not-for-profit organisation. Apart from any use as permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), all other rights are reserved.

To request further permission from PILCH to use this material, contact PILCH at PO Box 16013, Collins Street West, Melbourne 8007, or email [admin@pilch.org.au](mailto:admin@pilch.org.au)

## Tool 1: Checklist for notice of annual general meeting

Order	Description	Done
1	<b>Check your organisation's rules, resolutions and policies for specific requirements, such as how much notice to give, what information should be included, and who it should be given to.</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<b>Content of notice:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as its heading, the word "notice of annual general meeting"</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>name and registration number of the organisation</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>date, time and place of meeting</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nature of business to be discussed at meeting, including for example:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>confirming minutes of the previous annual general meeting and any other general meetings held since then</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>receiving the financial statement and other reports on activities of the organisation in the last financial year</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>electing the members of the committee</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if applicable, receiving the reviewer's/auditor's report on the financial affairs of the association for the last financial year</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if applicable, presenting the reviewed/audited financial report to the meeting for adoption</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if applicable, appointing a reviewer/ auditor</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>date of notice</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directions to the meeting venue and disability access (optional)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>secretary's contact details (optional)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>notice "authorised by xx" (optional)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<b>If relevant, the notice of annual general meeting may also include:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the wording of motions or resolutions to be considered at meeting (if a special resolution is proposed, include the <i>exact</i> wording of the special resolution)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>disclosure of interest of any committee member in the business to be dealt with at meeting (for example, a conflict of interest – see <a href="#">Part 3: Secretary's Legal Role, Powers and Duties</a> in this Guide)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if the rules allow proxy voting, an explanation of how / when to appoint a proxy, and attach a proxy form</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if the rules allow direct voting, an explanation of how / when to vote directly</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Order	Description	Done
	before the meeting, and attach a direct voting form	
<b>4</b>	<b>The notice should also attach background information and documents, such as:</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>minutes of the last annual general meeting (and any other general meetings held since then, if required)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reports from staff, committees or volunteers</li> </ul>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>financial reports (for example, the financial statement)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>where appropriate, relevant background correspondence</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>5</b>	<b>Time for giving notice</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>annual general meeting must be held within five months after the end of your organisation's financial year</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>check your organisation's rules, resolutions and policies for specific requirements (for example, 14 days before the meeting date). Note rules on how days are calculated</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>if a special resolution is proposed, you must give 21 days' notice before the meeting date (section 64(2) of the AIR Act)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>6</b>	<b>How to give notice</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually by post, but can be by email or fax – check your organisation's rules, resolutions and policies for specific requirements (for example, notice in local paper)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>7</b>	<b>Who to give notice to</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually all members of the association (check the members register)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in special circumstances, others (such as Consumer Affairs Victoria and/or auditor)</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## Tool 2: Sample notice for annual general meeting

**Note:**

This notice of annual general meeting is for organisations that have their financial accounts audited by an independent auditor. Not all incorporated associations are required to have their accounts audited. For more information see [Part 8: Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) in this Guide.

### XYZ Club Inc (Registration No A00003333)

#### Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the XYZ Club Inc will be held on *[date]*, at *[time]* at *[address]*.

**The ordinary business of the meeting will be:**

1. To confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting and of any general meeting held since that meeting
2. To receive from the Committee reports upon the transactions of the Association during the last preceding financial year
3. To elect officers of the Association and the ordinary members of the committee
4. To receive and consider the financial statement submitted by the Association to members in accordance with section 100(1) of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic).

**The special business of the meeting will be:**

5. To receive and consider the Auditor's Report and Audited Accounts on the financial affairs of the association for the last financial year
6. To consider any other business.

---

I.N. Order, Secretary, *[date of notice]*

by authority of the Committee

#### Proxies

A member entitled to attend and vote at the annual general meeting may appoint a person to attend and vote at the meeting as the member's proxy. A proxy must be a member of XYZ Club Inc.

A proxy may be appointed by returning the completed proxy form (attached) to the secretary at the club's registered office at *[address]*, at least 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting.

#### Inquiries

All inquiries should be directed to the Secretary, Ms I.N. Order, XYZ Club Inc, 123 Frank Street, Motown, telephone (03) 3333 0000, fax (03) 3300 3300, email [in.order@xyz.org.au](mailto:in.order@xyz.org.au)

**Attached**

- Minutes of Previous Annual General Meeting held on *[date]*
- Chairperson's Report
- Treasurer's Report
- Auditor's Report and Accounts
- Audited Financial Statement
- List of Nominees for Positions on the Committee
- Proxy Form

## Tool 3: Sample agenda for annual general meeting (with explanatory notes for the secretary)

---

**Note:** The agenda and notes here relate to formal requirements and procedures for an annual general meeting. However, for some organisations, the annual general meeting is also a time to celebrate the organisation's achievements, and may include, for example:

- a guest speaker
- awards for volunteers, and/or
- Audio visual presentation of the organisation's activities.

**Annual General Meeting to be held in the XYZ clubhouse, at 123 Frank Street, Motown, 1 November 2012 at 7.00pm**

### Agenda summary

- Chairperson's welcome
- Apologies & attendance
- Minutes of previous meeting
- Report from committee on transactions in previous year
- Election of committee members
- Annual Financial Statement (submitted to members under either section 94(1), 97(1) or 100(1) of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)*)
- Special business
- General business
- Close

### 1. Business

The secretary is responsible for either taking, or ensuring that another person (for example, an employee of the organisation) takes, accurate minutes of what is discussed and decided on at the meeting.

### 2. Chairperson's welcome

The chairperson, who normally acts as chair of the meeting, calls the meeting to order and welcomes any new members and guests.

### 3. Apologies & attendance

The chairperson asks the secretary whether any apologies (that is, the name of any person who is unable to attend and has asked that this be noted) have been received, then asks if any member has an apology to record. These apologies are recorded in the minutes. The secretary also records the

names of the people present, or circulates a book for them to record their own names (ask them to print their name clearly).

#### **4. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The secretary should have already prepared the minutes of the previous meeting. If the minutes have been distributed with the notice of meeting, the chairperson may ask the meeting if there is any objection to taking the minutes as read. Otherwise the secretary may read the minutes to the meeting.

The meeting should confirm that the minutes are an accurate record of the previous meeting. It is usual for a member who was at the previous meeting to propose this motion and for another to “second” the motion. The motion is simply, “I move that the minutes be confirmed as a true and accurate record of the last meeting”. All present may vote on the resolution, whether or not they were present at the last meeting. However, if the minutes are not correct in some aspect, a member may propose a motion to correct them. The members may vote on whether the minutes should be changed. This procedure is to agree on what was said at the previous meeting; not to re-open the debate or reverse previous decisions. The chairperson may sign a copy of the minutes (with any changes marked) and these are kept in the organisation’s records.

#### **5. Report from committee on transactions in the previous year**

The committee (or office bearers such as the chairperson and/or the treasurer) present reports on the organisation’s activities and transactions in the previous financial year. For example, the chairperson may report on matters that the committee has dealt with in the previous year, as well as the organisation’s significant achievements or milestones.

The treasurer’s report usually includes details of receipts and expenditure for the previous financial year. This report may also show a comparison against a budget to date and other comments. If the financial affairs of the organisation are substantial, the treasurer should arrange for the report to be printed and distributed at the meeting (or, preferably, the report will already have been distributed with the notice of annual general meeting). The treasurer moves the adoption of the report. Then the members can discuss the report.

In large organisations with complex financial transactions, the detailed study of the budget and other financial matters has usually been delegated (by the committee) to a finance sub-committee. The treasurer will have presented a summary report to that sub-committee, and the report from that sub-committee is presented to the annual general meeting. The treasurer and members of the sub-committee should be prepared to answer questions at the meeting.

#### **6. Election of committee members**

If nominations for positions on the committee have been received by the secretary before the meeting, the chairperson (or secretary) reads the nominations aloud. If there are fewer nominations than there are positions available on the committee, the chairperson may call for any additional nominations at the meeting.

If there is only one candidate for a position, the chairperson will state that the candidate has been elected (without a vote being taken). However if there are more nominations than there are positions available on the committee, or if there is any opposition to a nomination (or if the organisation’s rules require), a ballot is taken (usually, a secret ballot). For further information about ballots and other voting methods, see [Tool 4: Table of voting methods](#).

## 7. Annual Financial Statement (submitted to members under either section 94(1), 97(1) or 100(1) of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic))

The secretary will have already prepared the financial statement of the organisation containing the details required under either section 94(1), 97(1) or 100(1) of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic) (**AIR Act**) with the treasurer (and/or others with financial reporting skills). The section of the AIR Act applicable to the organisation will depend on whether it is a “tier one”, “tier two” or “tier three” association, based on their total annual revenue. For more information about which tier an organisation falls into, see [Part 8: Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) in this Guide.

If the organisation is a “tier one” association, its committee must submit the financial statement for that financial year to members at the first AGM. This statement must be a true and fair view of the financial position and performance of the association. There must also be a certificate, signed by two committee members, certifying this.

If the financial statement has been distributed with the notice of meeting, the chairperson may ask the meeting if there is any objection to taking the statement as read. Otherwise the secretary may distribute copies of the statement to the meeting, allow time for reading, and then the treasurer will usually summarise its key points.

It is good practice for the meeting to pass a resolution approving the statement as an accurate record of the organisation’s financial position in its last financial year (and authorising the secretary to lodge the organisation’s annual statement with Consumer Affairs Victoria after the meeting). It is common for a member of the committee to propose this motion and for another to second the motion. The motion can be: “I move that the statement be confirmed as a true and fair record of the financial position of the incorporated association during and at the end of its last financial year, and that the secretary submit the statement to Consumer Affairs Victoria within one month of the date of this meeting.” Then a vote may be taken. However, if a member has any concerns about the statement, or considers that its details are not correct in some aspect, a member may propose a motion to correct them. The members may vote on whether the statement should be changed.

The chairperson (or other committee member) must sign a copy of the statement considered by members at the meeting (with any changes marked). The AIR Act requires a member of the committee (who attended the annual general meeting) to certify that the statement was presented to members. The organisations must keep this certification, and the financial statement, for 7 years.

## 8. Special business

Special business consists of matters placed on the agenda by the committee or the secretary. Special business may also be a proposed special resolution or some other important matter to be discussed. Note: there may be particular procedures for giving members notice of special business under your organisation’s rules, and there are special notice requirements under the AIR Act for some matters (such as proposed special resolutions and resolutions to remove an auditor).

## 9. General business

At this stage of the meeting, any member may raise a question or an issue which has not yet been dealt with. These are usually minor matters, such as setting the date of the next meeting (which may be a regular yearly date, such as the first Monday in May, or another agreed date) or votes of congratulations, appreciation and/or farewells.

However, if a new resolution is proposed by a member, it should not be considered at that meeting because proper notice has not been given to all members. If additional matters of important business are raised at the meeting, it is best for the organisation to convene a further meeting (with sufficient notice to members) to consider the issues properly and vote on any resolutions. This is to avoid a situation where a member who didn't attend the meeting complains that they would have attended (and voted on the resolution) if they were aware it would be proposed.

Members who wish to raise complex issues should advise the chairperson of their intentions before the meeting, and provide a written copy of the motion they intend to move. (The rules of most organisations require this.)

## 10. Close

It is usual for the chairperson to close the meeting and thank members for attending. The chairperson may invite everyone for refreshments after the close of the meeting.

## Tool 4: Table of voting methods

This table sets out a number of methods for voting. However the most common methods are:

- voting by show of hands
- voting by voice, and
- voting by poll (especially for important matters and/or to keep votes secret ("secret ballot")).

Method	How to conduct vote	How to count votes	Comments
Voting by show of hands	Chairperson requests those voting in favour of the motion to raise a hand. The procedure is repeated for those voting against the motion.	<p>Usually, chairperson (perhaps with help of secretary) counts the hands. Chairperson states whether or not the motion has been passed. Secretary records the result in the minutes.</p> <p>If the outcome of the vote is clear, it is unnecessary to count the hands. However, it is good practice to count the hands if the result of the vote will be close, and/or the result is likely to be challenged. It may also be necessary to count the hands if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the organisation's rules require a specific percentage majority for a motion to be carried, or</li><li>• an issue must be determined by a certain minimum proportion of the members (for example, a special resolution).</li></ul>	<p>Voting by show of hands is difficult to administer if there are a large number of people voting at the meeting. In these circumstances, the chairperson may ask for help (usually from the secretary) to count the votes. The chairperson may also appoint "tellers" (usually one from each voting "side" or perspective) and use those people (independently of each other) to determine the count on each vote. The tellers will help the chairperson ensure that no person raises two hands or votes for both "sides" of the motion.</p> <p>If necessary (that is, if a record is required), the chairperson can make a list of the names of people voting.</p>

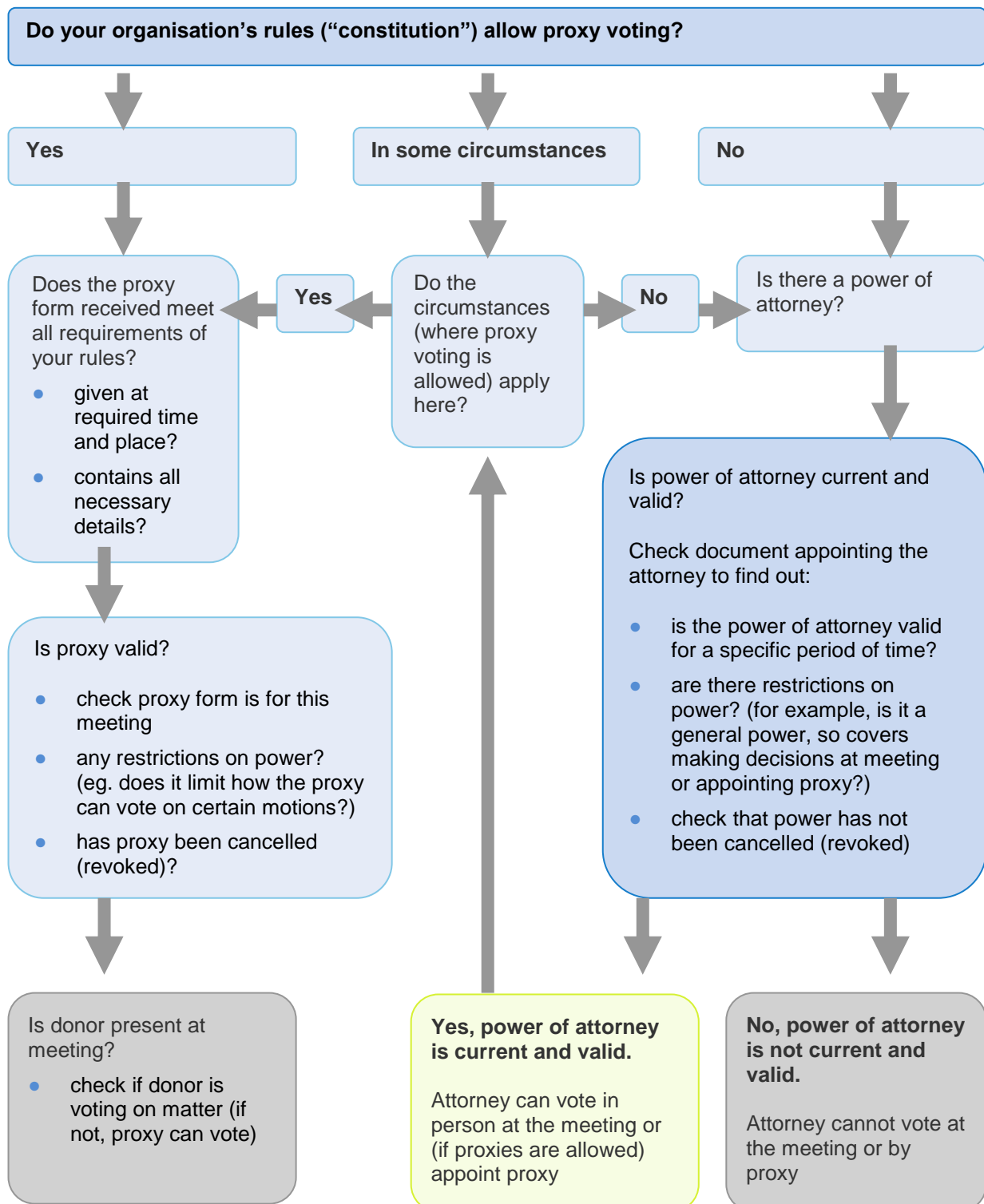


Method	How to conduct vote	How to count votes	Comments
Voting by standing	A similar method to voting by show of hands. The members stand for the motion that they favour.	Usually, chairperson (perhaps with help of secretary) counts the people standing. Chairperson states whether or not the motion has been passed. Secretary records the result in the minutes.	Voting by standing can make the counting process easier and reduces the possibility of a vote being counted twice.  If necessary, the chairperson can make a list of the names of people voting.
Voting by voice (or by applause)	<p>Chairperson says, "All those in favour of the motion say 'Aye'" (or 'Yes'). After noting the volume of sound, chairperson continues, "Those against say 'No'."</p> <p>Voting by applause is similar, except that members clap instead of saying "Aye" or "No."</p> <p>Voting by applause is usually for a vote of thanks.</p>	Chairperson determines which of the "Ayes" or the "Nos" (or claps) made the more noise and states the conclusion by saying, "The 'Ayes' (or the 'Nos') have it". Secretary records the result in the minutes.	<p>A problem with voting by voice or applause is a lack of documentation of individual votes. A written record of votes is useful if the decision is later disputed or if (as in the case of a special resolution) a three-quarters majority is required.</p> <p>So, if the particular matter to be voted on is contentious or if a special resolution is required, it is better to conduct a vote by show of hands, by standing, or better still, by division or a poll (see below).</p>
Voting by division	Chairperson places the motion before the meeting, saying "All those in favour, the 'Ayes', will pass to the right of the chairperson; those against, the 'No's', will pass to the left of the chairperson."	To record votes, members stand and walk past one side or other of chairperson, depending upon their vote. As each person passes, chairperson (or secretary) records their name.	Voting by division takes longer than the methods discussed above. However, it has the advantage of being accurate and straightforward to administer, as well as involving a more objective written record.

Method	How to conduct vote	How to count votes	Comments
Voting by poll	<p>Secretary prepares voting paper containing all relevant details of the matter being voted on (for example, if the poll is to change the rules of the organisation, the text of the proposed special resolution). Secretary distributes the papers to all the people entitled to vote. (If direct voting is allowed, voting forms will be distributed to members before the meeting takes place, eg. with notice of meeting.) Secretary keeps a written record of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>names of the people to whom they distributed the voting papers, and</li> <li>how many voting papers were distributed to each person.</li> </ul> <p>(This is because, for example, a proxy holder may vote on behalf of several people.)</p> <p>Chairperson explains to those voting the manner of voting required by the voting paper (for example, the poll may call for a “Yes” or “No” vote).</p> <p>People who are entitled to vote record their votes in writing on the voting paper. They usually also record their name on the paper.</p> <p>Tellers (people who count the votes) collect the papers. Scrutineers (people who examine the papers) generally supervise the process. (Tellers and scrutineers can be the same people. They may be appointed by resolution at the meeting or by the secretary.)</p> <p>If any votes are doubtful the scrutineer consults with the chairperson, who makes a ruling.</p>	<p>Chairperson checks that all voting papers distributed have now been collected.</p> <p>Tellers and scrutineers count votes and inform chairperson of the result (usually in writing) as soon as it has been determined. Chairperson announces the result to the meeting.</p> <p>If a large number of people are voting (and therefore the counting could take some time), chairperson can usually adjourn the business to after voting papers have been collected and checked.</p>	<p>Voting by poll takes longer to administer than other methods, but the precautions that form part of the procedure are necessary to ensure a correct count.</p> <p>The advantages of poll voting are that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the votes are made in writing</li> <li>all people entitled to vote have an opportunity to do so, (because, if the rules allow for proxies and/or direct voting, proxies are issued additional ballot voting papers and ‘direct votes’ are counted), and</li> <li>members with more than one vote each (that is, differential voting rights) have a say in proportion to their voting entitlement (which may help prevent an overbearing or noisy minority from influencing the vote).</li> </ul>

Method	How to conduct vote	How to count votes	Comments
Voting by ballot (for election of committee)	<p>Secretary prepares ballot paper containing all relevant details of the matter being voted on (for example, the names of all nominated candidates).</p> <p>As with a poll, secretary distributes the papers to all the people entitled to vote and keeps a written record of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>names of the people to whom they distributed the ballot papers, and</li> <li>how many ballot papers were distributed to each person.</li> </ul> <p>Chairperson explains to those voting the manner of voting required by the ballot paper (for example, the ballot may require people to indicate their preference by placing the number 1 against their first preference and placing the number 2 against their second preference).</p> <p>As with a poll, tellers (people who count the votes) collect the papers, and scrutineers (people who examine the papers) generally supervise the process.</p> <p>If any votes are doubtful the scrutineer consults with the chairperson, who makes a ruling.</p>	<p>Chairperson checks that all ballot papers distributed have now been collected.</p> <p>Tellers and scrutineers collect and count votes and inform chairperson of the result (usually in writing) as soon as it has been determined. Chairperson announces the result to the meeting.</p> <p>If a large number of people are voting (and therefore the counting could take some time), chairperson can usually adjourn the business until after ballot papers have been collected and checked.</p>	<p>The benefits of a ballot are similar to those of a poll (see above).</p> <p>Ballot papers usually do not record the name of the voter (in which case it is a “secret ballot”). The secrecy of the process is designed to avoid voters being influenced by other people’s votes or feeling pressured to vote in a particular way.</p>

## Part 5 Tool 5: Flowchart for reviewing proxies



## Tool 6: Sample wording for allowing direct voting in your rules

---

Below is a sample clause which could be included in an organisation's rules to allow 'direct voting' by members of the organisation. Read the wording carefully. Consider whether this procedure is suitable for your organisation. Note that the wording gives the committee of management a *discretion* to allow direct voting at a general meeting – in other words, members do not have an *automatic* right to direct voting at every meeting.

You may like this wording, or you may need to adapt the clause or use different wording altogether. This will depend on your organisation's needs. If necessary, seek legal advice about changes to your rules.

*"The committee of management may determine that at any general meeting of the Association, a member who is entitled to attend and vote on a resolution at that meeting is entitled to a direct vote in respect of that resolution.*

*If the committee of management determines that votes may be cast by direct vote, the committee of management may specify the form, method and manner of casting a direct vote and the time by which a direct vote must be received by the Association in order for the vote to be valid."*

## Tool 7: Checklist for content of minutes

It is good practice to include the following in the minutes of a meeting:

Order	Description	Done
1	Name of your organisation and heading, "Annual General Meeting"	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Date, place and opening time	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Name of chairperson	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	Names of members present (and their status if office holders) and other people present, such as observers (or reference to separate attendance register)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Names of non-members who are attending (if any)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6	Names of those people who have sent apologies (for not attending)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Confirmation of previous meeting's minutes	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Record of motions, resolutions and amendments	<input type="checkbox"/>
9	Names of the people who move and second motions	<input type="checkbox"/>
10	Short summaries of the debates on motions	<input type="checkbox"/>
11	The method of voting on motions etc (for example, show of hands, poll) and the numbers of votes for, against and abstaining	<input type="checkbox"/>
12	The details of any proxy voting or direct voting	<input type="checkbox"/>
13	Results of voting (for example, passed, rejected or adjourned, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>
14	Titles (and any relevant details) of documents or reports tabled	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	(If relevant) cross references to previous minutes or policies of the organisation	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	Committee minutes should approve or ratify all the organisation's expenditure	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	Details of next meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>
18	Closing time	<input type="checkbox"/>
19	List of tasks arising from the minutes and name of person responsible for each	<input type="checkbox"/>
20	After minutes have been confirmed at the next meeting, signature of chairperson	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Tool 8: Conventions for drafting minutes

**Note:** The table below is in two parts. The first deals with drafting minutes of *discussion* at meetings, the second deals with drafting *motions* discussed at meetings.

### Drafting minutes of discussions in meetings

Convention	Explanation	Example
<b>Use simple sentences and simple words</b>	This helps people understand what was discussed (especially if they were not at the meeting).	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <p>“Mr UB Sporty extrapolated that this fine sporting institution’s solar matt 500 water heating appliance with the white duco slimline control panel was performing consistently below its engineered benchmarks.”</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>“Mr UB Sporty reported that the club’s hot water system needed urgent repairs.”</p>
<b>Use active, rather than passive, voice</b>	In the “active” voice, the subject of the sentence performs the action stated by the verb. In the “passive” voice, the subject of the sentence is acted upon. Generally, the passive voice can be more difficult for a reader to understand.	<p><b>Do not write (passive voice):</b></p> <p>“A computer was used by the secretary to write these minutes.”</p> <p><b>Do write (active voice):</b></p> <p>“The secretary used a computer to write the minutes.”</p>
	<p>However, it is acceptable to use the passive voice if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you want to soften an unpleasant message</li> <li>• you don’t know who did a particular thing recorded in the minutes, or</li> <li>• you want to shift the reader’s attention away from the person who did something to other information.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Do write (passive voice) in some circumstances:</b></p> <p>“Complaints were put in the suggestion box.”</p> <p>(That is, you do not want to specify who actually made the complaints.)</p>
<b>Use only one tense</b>	It is usually best to use the past tense in minutes.	<p><b>Do write:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Ms L Little <i>reported</i> that she had ....”</li> <li>• The committee <i>considered</i> that the hot water system <i>was</i> ....”</li> </ul>

### Avoid terms such as “he

This is to avoid “putting words into a

**Do not write:**



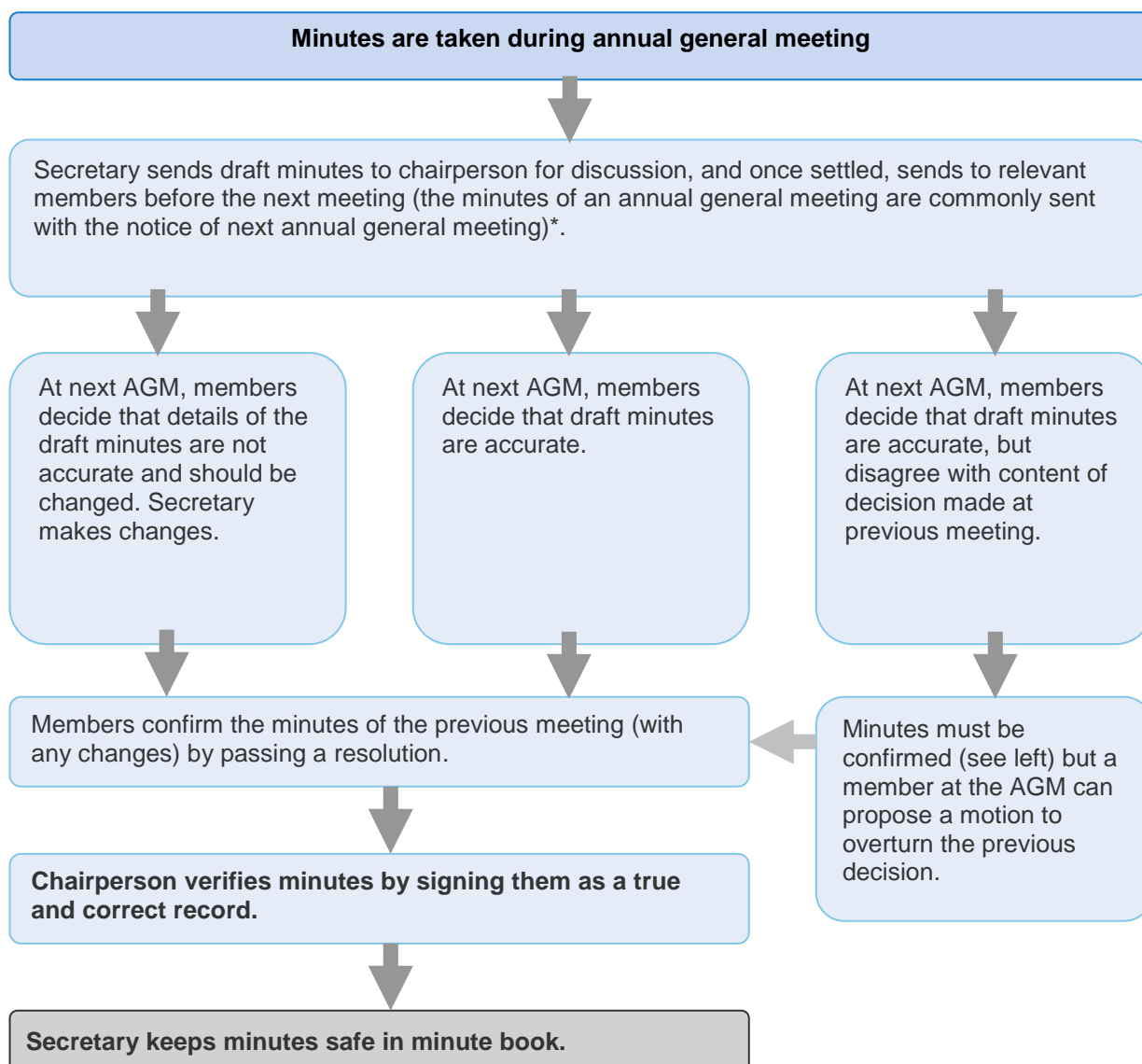
Convention	Explanation	Example
<b>said" or "she stated" unless you quote their actual words</b>	person's mouth."	<p>"Mr S Fry said: 'I got a letter from the Council about this. I reckon the Council is being stupid.'"</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>"Mr S Fry reported that he had received a letter from the Council. He spoke critically of the Council's position on this issue."</p>
<b>Avoid personal descriptions or attributes</b>	This is to make sure that the minutes are as "objective" or "impartial" as possible – the minutes should not include the minute-writer's own personal opinions or reflections.	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The chairman announced <i>happily</i>..."</li> <li>• "The treasurer <i>meanly</i> said..."</li> <li>• "The club representative <i>slammed</i> the report."</li> </ul>
<p><b>Be very careful:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>not to defame anyone</b></li> <li>• <b>when recording matters that include confidential details</b></li> </ul>	See discussion of "Defamation" and "Confidential matters" in this Part of the <a href="#">Guide for Secretaries</a> .	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <p>"Ms L Little reported that the builder engaged to renovate the club house has a history of stealing from organisations and said he was a disgrace to his profession."</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>"Concern was expressed about the suitability of the builder for the task of renovating the club house."</p>

## Drafting motions

Convention	Explanation	Example
<b>Commence the motion with the word "that"</b>	<p>This is so all resolutions of the meeting are in the same format.</p> <p>Before the word "that", imagine inserting the words, "The meeting passed a resolution..."</p>	<p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>"That the treasurer's recommendation be adopted."</p>
<b>Use the verb "be" rather than the word "is"</b>	This is to be grammatically correct when the motion commences with the word "that" (see above).	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <p>"That the newspaper release <i>is</i> adopted."</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>"That the newspaper release <i>be</i> adopted."</p>
<b>Express the motion in the positive</b>	This means that a "yes" vote from the members results in the proposal being approved or supported.	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <p>"That the doors <i>be not shut</i> during the meeting."</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>"That the doors <i>be open</i> during the meeting."</p>

Convention	Explanation	Example
<b>If you cannot express the motion in one sentence, split it up into carefully written parts</b>	Carefully construct a composite motion (one with a number of separate parts) so that the chairperson can split it up to enable the meeting to deal with each of its parts separately.	<p><b>Do not write:</b></p> <p>“That in addition to any other motions proposed this meeting resolve to thank the members of the Town Hall including Ms T Bag for providing the refreshments and Mr B Room for making the accommodation available and instruct the secretary to send letters of thanks to Ms T Bag and Mr B Room with a copy to Mr S Visor.”</p> <p><b>Do write:</b></p> <p>“That the meeting register its appreciation for Town Hall members generally, and specifically ask the secretary to:</p> <p>(a) send a letter of thanks to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(i) Ms T Bag for providing the refreshments, and</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">(ii) Mr B Room for making the accommodation available, and</p> <p>(b) send a copy of these letters to Mr S Visor.”</p>

## Tool 9: Flowchart for confirming and verifying minutes



\* **Note:** If minutes were not sent out before the next meeting, allow time for people to read them or the secretary should read them aloud at the meeting.



Address: PO Box 16013, Collins Street West, Melbourne 8007

Phone: 03 8636 4400

Fax: 03 8636 4455

Email: [connect@pilch.org.au](mailto:connect@pilch.org.au)

Web: [www.pilchconnect.org.au](http://www.pilchconnect.org.au)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pilchconnect](http://www.facebook.com/pilchconnect)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/pilchconnect](http://www.twitter.com/pilchconnect)

Produced with financial support from  
Consumer Affairs Victoria



Department of  
Justice



Produced with financial support from  
the Office for the Community Sector



Department of Planning  
and Community Development