

# RAHU Bylaws

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## **Part 1. Disciplinary, Grievance, and Appeals Policy**

### **1 Purpose**

This policy outlines the process for addressing behaviour that violates RAHU's **policies, bylaws, or values**. It ensures that disciplinary actions are fair and proportionate.

### **2 Scope**

This policy applies to all RAHU members whose behaviour is found to breach RAHU's bylaws, policies, or values outlined in the Constitution. It covers both minor and serious breaches, including but not limited to:

- Harassment, discrimination, or bullying.
- Misconduct in RAHU spaces, such as events, meetings, or online spaces.
- Breaches of confidentiality, or trust.
- Grievances between members, or between members and RAHU.
- Actions that harm RAHU's reputation or operations.

### **3 Values Scope**

- **Fairness and Impartiality:** Disciplinary processes will be conducted impartially, ensuring all parties are treated with respect, and dignity.

- **Proportionality:** Disciplinary processes will be proportionate to the severity of the breach.
- **Confidentiality:** All disciplinary processes will be handled with practicable confidentiality.
- **Justice:** All parties will have the right to be heard, and to present their case.
- **Timeliness:** Disciplinary processes will be conducted with practicable promptness, and efficiency.

## 4 Safer Spaces

### [Link to safer spaces resources](#)

- RAHU is a union committed to upholding the rights and dignity of renters and people in precarious housing. RAHU recognises our membership is diverse. RAHU recognises that oppression is layered, and is used as an instrument of power. As such, RAHU strives to keep common places free from oppressive action, behaviour, and language.
- These oppressive actions include but are not limited to: racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, any expression of disrespect and/or intolerance of size, gender identity, sexual identity/expression, (dis)ability, age, educational level, and cultural background.
- We will not tolerate acts of disrespect, violence or oppression to our fellow members. RAHU recognises our shared responsibilities to address these wrongdoings, if and when they occur among our members.
- As a Union we aim to work together to better understand one another and our different needs for care, support and respect. As members we strive to learn from one another, to inform others of our needs and work to address gaps in our own knowledge and understanding.
- If a member believes that another member, group of members, committee, or other body of members has violated the RAHU constitution and/or this policy and/or another RAHU policy, the

following steps may be taken:

- I) Reference the policy in the space where the issue occurred: for example, "In RAHU, we have a 'Safer Spaces Policy' that all members are mutually responsible to uphold. I feel this policy has been violated by talk of '[comments made].' Please keep the Safer Spaces Policy in mind."
  - II) If the policy continues to be violated, the issue should be raised with the member in question directly and/or the Committee Chair, an Office Bearer, a Delegate, or a member whom you would like to act as an advocate on your behalf. This person will be responsible for instituting an effective plan of action.
  - III) If the member considers that the issue has not been addressed sufficiently within the Union, the member or their advocate may engage an outside organisation, or group to help facilitate a further plan of action on behalf of the affected member. This must be conducted in accordance with the principles of RAHU.
  - IV) If a member believes this policy is being violated and is uncomfortable raising this personally, they are encouraged to seek a support person or advocate of their choosing to advocate for them. In a meeting, a member may ask for a point of personal privilege to take a break and discuss any violation with the relevant parties. Committee Chairs, Office Bearers, Delegates, and members should be conscious of this policy and address issues as they arise.
- f) RAHU spaces shall be defined as any office, meeting, event (including trainings, social gatherings, etc.), internet platform (including email communications and social media, etc.) that is in use by the Union, which includes any body formally recognised by the Union, such as the Governing Committee, local Branches, other committees, and any accountable sub-formation of the aforementioned bodies.
- g) If a satisfactory resolution is not able to be achieved, or attempts to address misconduct have not been made by the perpetrating member, the complainant, or any other member may submit a Formal Complaint outlined in the RAHU Grievance Procedure.

- h) This policy can also be applied in situations where a RAHU member/s are subjected to bullying and harassment by another RAHU member or group of members outside of official spaces. For the application of this policy, bullying and harassment shall be any pattern of repeated unreasonable behaviour that creates a risk to the health, safety and well-being of a RAHU member or members, undertaken by another member or group of members, but will not include political disagreements made in good faith.

## **5 Disciplinary Process / Grievance Procedure**

[Link for the AIR Act on Grievance Procedures](#)

### **1. Informal Resolution (Optional)**

- (1) If comfortable, the complainant may address the issue directly with the member involved, explaining how the behavior or incident affected them.
- (2) Alternatively, the complainant may seek support from a RAHU representative (e.g., a Delegate or Office Bearer) to facilitate an informal resolution.
- (3) Where relevant, a procedural grievance may be raised directly with an Office Bearer or Delegate.

### **2. Reporting a Breach**

- (1) Any member may report a breach of RAHU's policies, bylaws, or values to the RAHU Secretary, or any member of the Governing Committee.
- (2) The report should include:
  - (a) A description of the incident(s) or behavior.
  - (b) The date(s) and location(s) of the incident(s).
  - (c) Any relevant evidence or witnesses (if available).
  - (d) Desired outcomes or resolutions.

### **3. Initial Assessment**

- (1) The RAHU Secretary will conduct an initial assessment to determine whether the reported behaviour constitutes a breach of RAHU's

policies, bylaws, or values.

- (2) The RAHU Secretary may empower an impartial member of the Governing Committee to make the initial assessment, or investigation, in the case where no eligible Grievance Investigator or Deputy Grievance Investigator is currently elected.
- (3) In the case where the complaint is against the Secretary, the initial assessment must be made by the Treasurer.
- (4) If the behaviour is deemed minor, it may be resolved informally (e.g., through mediation, or a warning).
- (5) If the behaviour is deemed serious, a formal investigation may be initiated, if required to verify evidence.
- (6) The Governing Committee may suspend the membership of the named party while a formal investigation is carried out.
  - (a) The Secretary or members of the Governing Committee may call an emergency meeting to allow for urgent suspension of a member.
  - (b) The Governing Committee may vote on urgent Suspension of a Member between meetings via electronic means, such as email.

#### **4. Formal Investigation**

- 1) Grievance Investigator and Deputy
  - a) A Grievance Investigator (henceforth known as the “Investigator”) and Deputy Grievance Deputy (which henceforth will be referred to just as “Deputy”) will be elected at the General Membership Branch (GMB) meeting.
  - b) To be eligible to be elected a Grievance Investigator or Deputy a member must;
    - i) Be in good standing, and
    - ii) Not be elected in any other position
  - c) The Grievance Investigator or Deputy is elected until they;

- i) Are recalled by the GMB or Governing Committee, or
  - ii) Are no longer eligible, or
  - iii) Step down with notice to the RAHU Secretary.
- d) The Grievance Investigator and/or the Deputy must recuse themselves if they have a close personal relationship to a named party in the investigation.
  - i) In the case where the Investigator recuses themselves, the Deputy will take over as acting Investigator.
  - ii) If both Investigator and Deputy recuse themselves on the same investigation, a new election for both positions must take place at the next GMB meeting.

## 2) Investigation

- a) The Investigator will be notified to review the complaint.
- b) The Investigator will:
  - i) Interview the complainant, respondent, and any witnesses.
  - ii) Review any relevant evidence.
  - iii) Ensure both parties have an opportunity to present their perspectives where safe and practical to do so.

## 5. Resolution

- 1) An acting Investigator will recommend a resolution to the RAHU Secretary, which may include:
  - a) Mediation between parties,
  - b) Formal apologies or acknowledgments,
  - c) Training, or education for individuals, or groups,
  - d) Unmaking or remaking a decision, or redoing a process,
  - e) Disciplinary action, including:
    - i) A formal warning,

- ii) Removal from RAHU spaces (online and/or in person) for a specified length of time,
  - iii) Suspension of membership and associated privileges for a specified length of time,
  - iv) Some combination of the above, or
  - v) Expulsion from RAHU.
- f) Any combination of the above.
- 2) Recommendations may be in full, or in part, accepted, or rejected by the Governing Committee.
  - 3) In the case that the Governing Committee rejects the recommendations of the Investigator in full, the Investigator may request that the decision be sent for review by the Appeals Committee, if one exists.
  - 4) The resolution will be communicated in writing to all relevant parties, within **7 days** of the investigation's completion.
  - 5) The respondent will be notified of their rights to appeal the action, and the reasoning for the action.

## 6. Appeals Process

- 1) If the respondent is dissatisfied with disciplinary action, they may appeal to the **RAHU Secretary** within **30 days** of receiving the decision.
  - a) Appeals may be submitted in writing, or;
  - b) A meeting may be requested with the Committee handling the appeal.
- 2) The Appeals Committee, should it exist, will review the written appeal, or hold a meeting if requested with the respondent within **30 days**.
- 3) If no Appeals Committee exists, the Governing Committee will review the written appeal or hold a meeting if requested by the respondent within **30 days**.
- 4) The reviewing committee must deliver a decision on the appeal within **14 days** of the meeting with the respondent, or receipt of a written appeal.

- 5) The respondent may make use of an emotional support person at any appeals meetings that are held.
- 6) In the case of anti-social behaviour, measurable, and evidenced actions of ceasing such behaviour will be required in order for the member's expulsion to be overturned.

## **7. Appeals Committee**

- 1) An Appeals Committee may be formed if at least 3 members are accepted to be on the Appeals Committee.
- 2) Members may join the Appeals Committee by making a request to the RAHU Secretary OR be elected by their Branch.
- 3) There should be no more than two members per Local Branch on the Appeals Committee.
- 4) A maximum of 12 members may sit on the Appeals Committee.
  - a) In the case where there is a full Appeals Committee, any Branch with the least representation within the Appeals Committee will be prioritised to submit a new member.
- 5) To be eligible for the Appeals Committee a member must;
  - a) Be a voting member of RAHU in good standing,
  - b) Be approved by the RAHU Secretary, or elected by a Branch,
  - c) Not be a named party in any current disciplinary proceedings,
  - d) Not be a current member of the Governing Committee.
- 6) Members may only be rejected from joining the Appeals Committee if;
  - a) The member does not meet the eligibility requirements,
  - b) There are already 12 members in the Appeals Committee
  - c) There are already 2 members in the Appeals Committee from the member's Local Branch.
  - d) There is a reasonable belief of the Secretary, or the Treasurer in the case of the respondent and the Secretary being the same member, that the member cannot fulfil their responsibilities.

- 7) A member must recuse themselves from an appeal decision if they have a close personal relationship with an appeals respondent or complainant of the disciplinary case.

An Appeals Committee must elect a Chair who;

- a) Represents the committee in communications with the appeals respondent and the Governing Committee,
  - b) Uses an email address assigned by the Secretary or Operations Officer to conduct any correspondence related to the appeal,
  - c) Chairs any meetings of the Appeals Committee,
  - d) Facilitates and moderates communications between committee members,
- 8) If there are more than 5 members on the Appeals Committee;
    - a) The Appeals Committee Chair must assign a sub-committee to decide on an appeal with no less than 3 members and no more than 5 members.
  - 9) The Appeals Committee Chair is not a member of the Governing Committee, and has no corresponding vote.
  - 10) A list of Appeals Committee members is to be kept by the RAHU Secretary with access given to the Governing Committee, and the Appeals Committee Chair
  - 11) Any member of the Appeals Committee may be dismissed by vote of the Governing Committee.
  - 12) The Appeals Committee holds the following powers and responsibilities;
    - a) To vote to accept or reject an appeal after reviewing evidence and appeal,
    - b) To hold a meeting with an appeals respondent,
    - c) To review any appeals, reports, and evidence given to them,
    - d) To ask relevant questions to the appeal respondent,

- e) To assess if they believe the appeal respondent;
  - i) Is showing measurable and evidenced actions of addressing behaviour based on the matter,
  - ii) Is unlikely to reoffend,
  - iii) Is acting within the best interests of the Union and its values.
- f) To inform the RAHU Secretary of outcomes within **7 days** of any decisions.

13) An Appeals Committee vote passes if;

- a) It has more than 50% of votes in favour,
- b) In the case of a tie, the vote is decided by the Committee Chair, and
- c) A quorum of 3 members has been met.

## **8. Information**

- 1) All disciplinary actions and outcomes will be documented and stored securely, with access limited to authorised personnel.
- 2) Records will be retained for a minimum of **2 years**, or as long as required by law.
- 3) Records of a member's disciplinary involvement may be destroyed after **3 years**, given there have been no subsequent disciplinary actions against the members within that period.
- 4) A request for removal of data regarding disciplinary matters may;
  - a) Be made to the **RAHU Secretary** and approved by vote of the **Governing Committee**, and
  - b) Subsequent requests regarding the same data may only be made given new information or a period since the last vote of **12 months**.
- 5) The Governing Committee may decide if the outcome of disciplinary action is given to the membership. This action should be considered if

member safety, or Union reputation would be harmed by an absence of communication following the outcome, but weighed against the interests and confidentiality of the aggrieved party.

## **9. Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually in the first week of April by the **RAHU Governing Committee** to ensure it remains effective, fair, and aligned with RAHU's values, and any bylaws.

## **Part 2. Meeting procedure**

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

### **1 .Agenda**

- (1) The Acknowledgement of Country is to be read out by the facilitator as the first agenda item of every RAHU meeting.
- (2) Every union member has a right to add agenda items.
- (3) Time limits should be included for items on the agenda.
- (4) An opportunity must be given to contest or propose alterations to the agenda at the start of the meeting.
- (5) If contested, the final agenda should be voted on at the beginning of the meeting.
- (6) Before any items are voted on, a delegate or officer should check all attendees dues standing and membership category (i.e. not a homeowner)

### **2 .Facilitator, Minute Taker, Timekeeper Roles, and Online Delegate**

- (1) It is the role of the facilitator to take a speaking list, take motions and put them to the vote, and to ensure the general smooth running of the meeting.

- (2) It is the role of the minute taker to record the proceedings of the meeting in a minutes document.
- (3) The minute taker needs to record who attended the meeting and who gave apologies.
- (4) The minute taker needs to record any motions that are put to a vote, and the number of people who voted for, against and abstained from a motion.
- (5) It is the role of the timekeeper to keep an eye on the time, and to alert the meeting when an agenda item is going over its allocated time or likely to.
- (6) It is the role of the online delegate to monitor online messages, record them when appropriate, and ensure online participation is not missed.
- (7) An opportunity must be given at the start of the meeting to contest these three roles.
- (8) If contested, these three roles need to be elected at the beginning of the meeting.
- (9) These roles may also be elected at the end of a meeting for the next meeting.
- (10) If necessary, the meeting may elect more than one person to a role. Two people could co-facilitate a meeting, for example.

### **3 .Motions and Voting**

- (1) For a vote to be binding under our constitution, the meeting has to reach quorum (see the constitution for rules about quorum).
- (2) Votes should be performed anonymised
- (3) Motions must be made in writing for the facilitator to put to a vote.
- (4) Each motion needs a mover and a seconder.
- (5) Decisions are made by two thirds majority. If 66% or more of people who vote, vote for a motion, it passes.
- (6) Abstentions are not counted in the vote tally, only yes or no votes.

- (7) All motions must be put to the vote unless the mover withdraws the motion, or the seconder withdraws support.

#### **4 .Voting by Proxy**

- (1) A member may appoint another member as the member's proxy to vote and speak on the member's behalf at a general meeting other than at a disciplinary appeal meeting.
- (2) The appointment of a proxy must be done via a standard form that clearly identifies the person appointed as the member's proxy and that has been signed by the member.
- (3) The proxy may vote on behalf of the member in any matter as the proxy sees fit.
- (4) Notice of a General Meeting given to a member must:
  - a) State that the member may appoint another member as a proxy for the meeting; and
  - b) include a copy of any form that the Governing Committee has approved for the appointment of a proxy.
  - c) To be considered valid a form appointing a proxy must be given to the Chairperson of the meeting at least 24 hours before the commencement of the meeting.

#### **5 .Amendments**

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

## **6 .Procedural Motions**

- (1) Motions may be made from the floor to influence the proceedings of the meeting.
- (2) These procedural motions should be put to the vote immediately with at most 5 minutes discussion to prevent meeting trolling.
- (3) Common procedural motions include:
  - a) The motion to put the motion to the vote.
  - b) The motion to extend time on an agenda item.
  - c) The motion to cut a speaking list short.
  - d) The motion to take a break
  - e) The motion for formal debate
  - f) The motion of no-confidence in the facilitator
  - g) Censure motions to condemn bad behaviour.

## **7 .Formal Debate**

- (1) If the meeting votes to move to formal debate on a motion, the facilitator should accept two speakers for the motion and two against, with each taking turns to present their cases. After that, the motion should go to the vote immediately.

## **Part 3. Privacy Policy**

- (1) We request and collect your personal data which you provide by filling out the "Join RAHU" form. This information is used by members of the Union to contact you as part of the onboarding process.
- (2) This information may also be used to contact you as a reminder to pay dues (if necessary) in future. Your address may be used for physical mailouts and to help determine the Union's capacity to form local branches.
- (3) Your email address will be added to our mailing list system. We use this system to send automated emails to your email address, which we use to notify you of upcoming branch meetings, campaigns, and other internal union communications.
- (4) We will never sell or share any of your personal information with any other third parties.

## Part 4. Accessible Meetings and Records Policy

### Accessible meetings

1. All branch and committee meetings held in person must;
  - a. be in a wheelchair accessible space, if
    - i. an appropriate space exists in the branch or committee catchment area, considering any suggested by a member who uses a wheelchair;
    - ii. and, the space doesn't preclude others attending based on accessibility needs. Conflicting accessibility needs should be resolved within the branch/committee, with consultation from the Disability committee.
  - b. have face-mask wearing normalised (mask normalisation).
  - c. have the ability to join online.
    - i. The online component must follow all accessible meeting rules for online meetings.
2. All branch and committee meetings held online must;
  - a. use screen reader accessible software.
  - b. have live captioning support. This should support automatic and manual captioning.
3. The union should facilitate hiring a sign language interpreter or live transcriber, if a member requests it with reasonable notice, for any branch or committee meeting.
  - a. Branches and committees may decide on appropriate notice periods.
  - b. 14 days is suggested as a reasonable minimum notice period.

## Accessible records

4. All meeting minutes and agendas should be made available in an accessible format at request. This may include, but is not limited to, PDF (.pdf), Word document (.doc/.docx), OpenDocument Text (.odt), and print.
  - a. Bulk requests for print records may require the member to pay the cost of shipping and print. This should be determined by the Treasurer in consultation with the Secretary, Disability and Inventory Officers.

## Guidelines:

Ensure the access information is clearly stated and explained in meeting notices.

- 1 “Wheelchair accessible. Mask normalised. We use X software for people to join online. This supports live captioning. We can hire a live transcriber or sign language interpreter with X days notice. Contact <email> to notify us of any accessibility requirements”

For sign up forms and meeting notices, flag that transcription and interpreter services are available on request, and encourage as much notice as possible. Also ask for any other accessibility requirements.

Provide face masks and hand sanitizer. Consider using air purifiers. Encourage members to wear masks, but do not judge those who choose not to.

Use Zoom where possible. Google Meet is also fine. Teams as a backup worst case. Jitsi is not great.

Live transcription: use auto caption plugins for Meet, zoom or teams. These captions will help members with cognitive disabilities, not only deaf members. On request, hire a professional transcriber to improve captioning accuracy.

Ask the member if they have a transcriber or interpreter service they prefer. If there's no preference, you can hire transcribers and sign language interpreters through Deaf Connect: [Interpreting Services](#). Deaf Connect encourages as much notice as possible. To give time for meeting organisers to receive a request, and make a booking, 14 days notice minimum would be reasonable to ask for members to get a high likelihood of service. Organisers are encouraged to attempt to hire services where possible regardless of notice served. It is possible members have a service they regularly engage that needs less notice.

You can convert to and download as many different formats from a Google doc

## Part 5. RAHU Clean Air Policy

RAHU is a union committed to the safety of our members and as such, strives to minimise the spread of infectious diseases both through ensuring our events protect

attendees and ensuring we communicate the importance of safety measures generally.

## **In-Person Formal Meeting Requirements**

- (1) All formal RAHU in-person meetings are to have mask normalisation:
  - a) Respirators of 94% filtration or higher should be provided to members.
  - b) Members should be encouraged to wear these and to keep them on for the duration of the meeting.
  - c) No-one should be shamed for their choice to mask or not.
  - d) The group should assume any lack of masking is to meet a genuine need.
- (2) No activities which would encourage unmasking in the meeting space (such as shared meals) will take place until after formal meeting procedures are complete.
- (3) All formal meetings should also provide as many of the following accommodations as is feasible based on the resources available:
  - a) Holding in-person meetings outdoors.
  - b) Running HEPA filter(s) and opening windows when meeting indoors.
  - c) Monitoring air quality.
  - d) Encouraging attendees to stay up to date with their vaccines.
  - e) Encouraging members who are unwell or who have been in contact with someone with a contagious disease to join remotely or not attend.
- (4) Contact tracing:

- a) Using the minutes to keep track of in-person attendees.
  - b) Encouraging members to notify their branch delegate or committee office bearer if feeling unwell within 72 hours of attending.
  - c) Notifying attendees of any reports of symptoms.
- (5) Branches and Committees will be provided with support from the union to help activities in **Part 5.3** become more feasible.
- (6) All meetings should include information about which accommodations are in place alongside all meeting reminders.

## **In-Person Social Event Recommendations**

- (7) All RAHU social events are recommended to follow as many of the In-Person Formal Meeting Requirements as practical. See **Part 5.1**
- (8) Event organisers will be provided with support from the union to help accommodations in 1.c. to become more feasible for event organisers.
- (9) All events should include information about which accommodations are in place wherever they are advertised.

## **Comms**

- (10) RAHU should use present tense when talking about COVID-19 or the pandemic.
- (11) RAHU should continue to advocate for viral safety measures in the wider community.

## **Part 6. Misc Bylaws**

### **1 .Fines**

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

## **2 .Volunteer Gratitude**

- (1) Elected Office Bearers may be offered an honorarium in gratitude for their labour
  - a) A maximum of \$600 per month may be offered per Office Bearer
  - b) This may change in response to the financial health of the union
  - c) The Secretary and Treasurer have discretion over honorariums
  - d) Reports made to the secretary will factor into any decisions around honorarium
  - e) Honorariums may only be given to Office Bearers meeting union expectations
  - f) Office Bearers are prohibited from receiving stipends if they earn over 40% of the median wage
  
- (2) A returning officer may be offered a \$100 stipend for running a general or by election
  - a) This honorarium may be paid by the treasurer at the end of an election
  - b) There is to be no expectation of favour in return for the honorarium
  
- (3) A Branch member elected to branch leadership (Branch Secretary or Treasurer) may be offered an honorarium not exceeding ~~of~~ \$200 per month
  - a) The Secretary and Secretary have discretion over honorariums
  - b) This may change in response to the financial health of the union
  
- (4) Regular Renters Rights Caseworkers may be offered an honorarium not exceeding \$40 per month
  - a) The Renters Rights Officer and Treasurer have discretion over honorariums

- (5) Phone Bankers may be offered an honorarium not exceeding \$30 per session, or \$60 per week
- a) Phone Banking includes calls and texts to members to welcome them to the union, invite them to upcoming union events, or other union related activities
  - b) Phonebanking should be reported through a form given to Delegates and Office Bearers
  - c) The Secretary and Treasurer have discretion over honorariums

### **3 .Renters Rights Support**

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

### **4 .Grants**

- (1) Accepting grants/donations over \$5000 are subject to a vote at a governing committee meeting.
- (2) When deciding on receiving a grant, members should consider:
- a) What can the grant be used for?
  - b) What will the grant be used for?
  - c) What additional work is required in order to receive the grant?
  - d) Who has agreed to do this work?
  - e) How will receiving the grant benefit the union?
  - f) How will the union continue once the grant money runs out or is unexpectedly withdrawn?
  - g) What are the requirements and restrictions to receive the grant? Are they inline with the union's values?
  - h) Is the organisation offering the grant inline with the union's values?

- i) What restrictions are put on union action by the grant?
- (2) Grants and donations under \$5000 can be contested by a vote, but are accepted by default.
- (3) Rejected grants/donations which cannot be returned should be forwarded to Black People's Union.