



R S L N S W

Respecting, supporting and remembering
our veterans and their families

Standard Operating Procedure 3

Conduct of sub-Branch Meetings

VERSION	1.0
DOCUMENT STATUS	Approved
APPROVED BY	RSL NSW Board
EFFECTIVE DATE	1 December 2019

Table of Contents

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Procedure	3
2.1. Calling Meetings	3
2.2. Minute Taking.....	3
2.3. Agenda.....	3
2.4. Recording of Meetings	3
2.5. Draft Minutes	4
2.6. Withdrawal of a Motion	4
2.7. Rescission of Resolutions.....	4
2.8. Repetitious Motions	4
2.9. Suspension of Standing Orders	4
2.10. Recommendations.....	4
2.11. Motions.....	4
2.12. Amendments	5
2.13. Order of Debate.....	6
2.14. Disposal.....	6
2.15. Points of Order	6
2.16. Role of Chairperson	7
3. Meeting Agenda Template	9
4. Definitions	10
5. References & Resources	10

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (**SOP**) is to provide the rules for the conduct of all sub-Branch General Meetings. Sub-Branch meeting requirements may differ between sub-Branches. Where possible, meetings should be held in accordance with the contents of this SOP unless a sub-Branch has sought and obtained written approval from the Board to vary any part of the procedures set out below.

Unless otherwise stated, capitalised terms used in this SOP have the meaning set out in Appendix A of the Constitution.

2. Procedure

2.1. Calling Meetings

The sub-Branch Executives may meet as and when it considers necessary and appropriate. A meeting may be called by the President on giving reasonable notice to the other members of the sub-Branch Executives.

The sub-Branch Executives may call sub-Branch general meetings as and when required in accordance with the Constitution provided that they must call sub-Branch general meetings at least quarterly one of which must be an annual general meeting.

All meetings held by a sub-Branch must be conducted in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Constitution.

Every meeting must have a chairperson to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a proper and orderly manner and that the sense of the meeting may be ascertained. Sub-Branch Presidents are to chair meetings of their sub-Branch. If the President is unavailable, the sub-Branch Executives present at the meeting must elect a chair. The nominated chair must be familiar with the Constitution and SOPs.

A sub-Branch must not associate, attend or take part in any sectarian or political gathering or meeting. The Chair of any sub-Branch meeting may refuse to hear any issue or matter which the Chair reasonably considers to be sectarian or political in nature.

Any sub-Branch Committee may meet as and when the members of the Committee deem fit and in accordance with any terms of reference imposed by the sub-Branch Executives.

2.2. Minute Taking

The Secretary is responsible for taking minutes to reflect a true record of the meeting. Should the Secretary be absent then a volunteer should be sought at the meeting, or a second person appointed to take the minutes of the meeting. In this case the person taking the minutes is to collate them and pass them to the secretary in a timely manner.

2.3. Agenda

The agenda is the list of items of business before a meeting and the order in which it is proposed that the meeting should deal with them. A meeting agenda template is shown below.

2.4. Recording of Meetings

Photographs, films or video recordings of persons attending meetings may be taken and the meeting proceedings recorded with the prior written consent given by majority resolution of the meeting.

2.5. Draft Minutes

Draft minutes should generally not be circulated for any purpose other than as a step towards their confirmation. However, the decisions of meetings as recorded in draft minutes are often the starting point for further action. Where awaiting confirmation of minutes would cause unreasonable delay to an action, the draft minutes should be distributed as drafted accompanied by a note highlighting their lack of official status.

2.6. Withdrawal of a Motion

The mover of a motion may withdraw it only if the meeting gives them leave to do so, and if the motion has not already been amended. Permission of the seconder is not sufficient, as other persons may have refrained from bringing the matter forward after seeing it on the agenda. A motion cannot be withdrawn while an amendment is under consideration. However, the amendment can first be withdrawn in the usual way. A member desiring the departure from the rules rises and addresses the Chair, "I seek leave to", and the Chairperson asks the question: "is leave granted?" If the only response is "Aye" leave to withdraw is granted. If unanimous consent is not obtained (and any member says "No"), leave to withdraw is refused.

2.7. Rescission of Resolutions

If it is desired to remove a resolution from the books of the sub-Branch, either later in the meeting which adopted it, or at a subsequent meeting, a motion of rescission can be put. Suitable wording of the motion would be: "That the resolution on aged care adopted on 20th October 2019 be rescinded".

If a rescission motion is lost, then it may be moved again at a later meeting.

2.8. Repetitious Motions

Once a meeting has rejected a motion, with or without amendment, further motions to the same effect, even if in a different form of words, would be out of order at the same meeting. Similarly, a motion substantially covering the same ground of an amendment dealt with by the meeting is not permissible. However, the matter could legitimately be raised again at a subsequent meeting. This principle is important, as otherwise much time could be wasted by bringing back a defeated motion every few minutes. Apart from that, reopening a matter would be unfair to persons who had left the meeting for bona fide reasons, believing that the matter had been finalised.

2.9. Suspension of Standing Orders

Suspension of standing orders at a meeting merely relaxes the normal rules of debate. Proceedings should still be minuted in the usual way otherwise there would be no record of decisions made. A member desiring the departure from the rules should rise and seek leave of the meeting to suspend standing orders. The process for seeking leave is shown above at paragraph 2.6.

2.10. Recommendations

No recommendations in any report shall be taken as adopted by a meeting unless a specific motion on the subject matter of that recommendation has been carried.

2.11. Motions

Any motion put before a meeting of a sub-Branch:

-
- a) must commence with “That”;
 - b) must be specific in regard to:
 - i. what action is to be taken,
 - ii. who is to take the action, and;
 - iii. the time requirement for the action (if applicable).
 - c) must be unambiguous;
 - d) must not be worded in the first person;
 - e) must not contain more than one sentence;
 - f) may be in parts;
 - g) may be followed by a supporting argument (motions placed before RSL NSW Board and/or Congress must have a supporting argument);
 - h) should not be in the negative;
 - i) must not attempt to revive a motion previously rejected at that meeting;
 - j) must be duly proposed and seconded but not by the chairperson;
 - k) may be amended (motions seeking to amend the Constitution at State Congress may not be amended);
 - l) may be altered by leave;
 - m) may be withdrawn, but only by leave;
 - n) should preferably be submitted in writing; and
 - o) gives right of reply.

2.12. Amendments

An amendment is an alteration or proposed alteration to the terms of a motion, designed to improve the motion without contradicting it. An amendment can be to leave some words out, to leave some words out and insert others in their place, or to add new words. Amendments:

- a) must commence with “That”;
- b) must be quite specific;
- c) must be unambiguous;
- d) must be relevant to the motion;
- e) must not contradict the motion or any amendment previously made;
- f) must not attempt to revive any amendment previously rejected at that meeting;
- g) must be duly proposed and seconded but not by the Chairperson;
- h) must be moved after the motion has been seconded, but before it has been voted on;
- i) may not be amended;
- j) may be altered, by leave;
- k) may be withdrawn but only by leave;
- l) should preferably be submitted in writing; and
- m) gives no right of reply.

2.13. Order of Debate

The order of debate of motions is as follows:

- a) the mover of the motion should rise, propose the motion and then explain the motion;
- b) the Chairperson calls for a seconder of the motion (a seconder can reserve the right to speak later);
- c) other speakers to the motion, as follows:
 - i. mover of the first amendment,
 - ii. seconder of the first amendment, then
 - iii. other speakers to the first amendment.
- d) voting on the first amendment;
- e) further speakers to the motion;
- f) mover of the second amendment;
- g) seconder of the second amendment;
- h) other speakers to the second amendment;
- i) further speakers to the motion;
- j) the mover of the motion in reply; then
- k) voting on the motion.

2.14. Disposal

The vote on the motion, whether in its original form or in an amended form, finally disposes of the business. Once a motion is carried, it becomes a 'resolution' of that meeting.

2.15. Points of Order

A point of order is taken when a person officially draws the attention of the chairperson of a meeting to an alleged irregularity in the proceedings.

An alleged point of order can be one involving the following:

- a) the time limit has been exceeded;
- b) a quorum is not present;
- c) the motion is outside the scope of the meeting;
- d) the speaker's remarks are irrelevant or involve tedious repetition;
- e) the proceedings breach the Constitution or Standing Orders; and/or
- f) that resolutions previously made are being disregarded.

Contradictions, personal explanation and a statement of fact or opinion dealing with the principle subject are not valid points of order.

A point of order should be taken immediately a suspected breach of meeting protocol is noticed, in the form of the following:

- g) the person drawing attention to the alleged irregularity rises and says, "Point of Order" and then states the incident objected to and reasons for the objection;

-
- h) a point of order takes precedence over all other business;
 - i) a speaker is to be interrupted to take a point of order;
 - j) a point of order is open to discussion by other delegates (discussion must take place before a ruling by the chairperson is given); and
 - k) when all who desire to speak on the point of order have done so (speakers may only speak once, including the person taking the point of order) the decision of the chairperson is announced, with explanations.

2.16. Role of Chairperson

Every meeting must have a chairperson to ensure that proceedings are conducted in a proper and orderly manner and that the sense of the meeting may be ascertained. Sub-Branch Presidents or their nominees are to chair meetings of their organisation. The chair must be familiar with the Constitution and SOPs.

The duties of the chair at meetings are:

- a) to supervise the preparation of the agenda and any papers to be distributed in connection with the meeting;
- b) to check that all persons entitled to receive a notice of the meeting do so;
- c) to verify the accuracy of any minutes to be presented to the meeting for confirmation;
- d) become familiar with any correspondence, reports or other material to be presented;
- e) talk to any member who is expected to cause difficulties, with a view to reconciling differences in advance;
- f) to formally declare the meeting open, after ascertaining that a quorum is present, complete introductions of guests, new members and if appropriate, to explain the procedure to be followed;
- g) to advise members present of the requirement to declare any "conflicts of interest" in relation to any agenda item;
- h) to preside over and control the meeting and call on the successive items of business listed on the agenda;
- i) to ascertain that a quorum is present at all times;
- j) to sign minutes of meetings as correct when they have been confirmed;
- k) to present any reports for which he/she is responsible;
- l) to introduce guest speakers and arrange a vote of thanks to them;
- m) in the case of elections, to ensure the appointment of a returning officer and to invite that person to declare the result at the appropriate stage;
- n) to sign for identification purposes any document requiring this;
- o) to protect free speech and to ensure that debates are conducted in the correct manner;
- p) to see that motions and amendments are respectfully worded, unambiguous and otherwise in order;
- q) to ensure that all amendments are relevant to the motion and are not direct negatives of it;
- r) to call speakers one at a time and in appropriate sequence;
- s) to ensure that no other person other than the mover in reply speaks more than once to any motion;
- t) to allow no member other than the mover to speak on a motion or amendment which has not been seconded;

-
- u) to prevent irrelevant remarks, tedious repetition and objectionable language;
 - v) to read the motion, amendment and/or foreshadowed amendments before the chair when reasonably requested to do so and before taking a vote and at other times as would be helpful to the meeting;
 - w) to insist that motions and amendments are in writing in appropriate circumstances;
 - x) to ensure that no person is unreasonably denied an opportunity to be heard;
 - y) to call on the mover of a motion for the right of reply at the appropriate time;
 - z) to conduct a vote on the motion ensuring that only those eligible to vote do so;
 - aa) to declare the results of all votes and to clearly announce the decisions reached;
 - bb) to give rulings on points of order and other questions of procedure;
 - cc) to prevent excessive heckling but to be tolerant of reasonable interjections;
 - dd) to preserve order, and if necessary, to name offenders;
 - ee) to prevent discussions from wandering off the subject;
 - ff) to ensure that only persons entitled to be present are admitted to the meeting;
 - gg) to adjourn the meeting as laid down by the rules or by resolution of the meeting or if the meeting becomes excessively disorderly; and/or
 - hh) to close the meeting when all business is completed and when a motion to that effect is carried by the meeting.

The Chairperson is entitled to their normal deliberative vote (that is, their vote as a member), providing that it is exercised before the result of the count is known. The Chairperson will not have a casting vote.

3. Meeting Agenda Template

For sub-Branch General Meetings:

AGENDA
[name] RSL SUB-BRANCH MEETING
TO BE HELD AT [location] [time] [day] [date]

Opening:	If there is a quorum present, the meeting is formally opened by the President. Note: if photos, videos or recordings are to be made then the President must seek the agreement of those present at this time.
Declaration:	To be made if a conflict of interest situation arises.
Welcome to Visitors:	Guest speaker, other visitors and new members.
All Stand:	Silence in memory of departed comrades (may mention recently departed sub-Branch members or prominent persons). Pledge of Allegiance at AGM.
Apologies:	To be moved, seconded and voted upon.
Previous Minutes:	Read by secretary, moved, seconded and voted upon.
Business Arising:	From the previous minutes, if further actions are required then the appropriate motions can be moved, seconded and voted upon.
Correspondence:	In and out read by the secretary, moved, seconded and voted upon.
President's Report:	At AGM, to be moved, seconded and voted upon.
Treasurer's Report:	Treasurer reads the report, to be moved, seconded and voted upon. At AGM – the report must be adopted and Auditor appointed.
Accounts for Payment:	Presented by treasurer, to be moved, seconded and voted upon.
New Member Applications:	The sub-Branch can only provisionally accept new members.
Reports:	Committee, delegates, welfare etc. reports, to be moved, seconded and voted upon.
Election of Office Bearers:	If necessary, nominations called for, to be moved, seconded and voted upon.
Guest Speaker:	To be introduced by the chair and afforded a vote of thanks by a nominated person at the end of the speech. A small memento may be presented.
General Business:	Any matter not otherwise dealt with may be raised here.
Date of Next Meeting:	The date of the next meeting is specified.
Recite the Ode:	All to stand. If the meeting is in progress at 9 pm then the meeting is to cease for the Ode and recommence afterward.
Meeting Closed:	Formally announced by the chair when all business is concluded.

4. Definitions

Unless otherwise stated, capitalised terms used in this SOP have the meaning set out in Appendix A of the Constitution.

Sub-Branch General Meeting means a sub-Branch general meeting and includes annual and general meetings.

5. References & Resources

Legislation, standards, etc.

Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth)

Corporations Act 2001 (Cth)

N. E. Renton 'Guide for Meetings and Organisations', Volume 2, 'Guide for Meetings'