

# WA Labor Branches

## Understanding and implementing the new WA Labor Rules 2023



### Charter of Member Rights and Responsibilities

Our new Charter of Member Rights and Responsibilities sits at the beginning of our rules (Rule 1.6) and sets out the obligations of WA Labor members. They include:

- Upholding the Party Rules
- Having no other political party associations
- Refraining from activities and behaviours that can bring the Party into disrepute
- Refraining from speaking with media about Party business
- Supporting Labor candidates for office (and not supporting any candidates running against endorsed Labor candidates)

### Branch Meetings

Branches work best to engage members and support local campaigns when they're active. During the Rules Review, we were consistently told that people have a poor member experience when they join branches that don't meet regularly.

Our rules have always required branches to meet every 3 months - now they set out penalties for branches that don't (see Rule 10.8). Meetings might take the form of formal meetings or a campaign event.

**Branches will need to supply evidence to Party Office that meetings have taken place every 3 months. A signed attendance sheet (and for a formal meeting, a copy of the meeting minutes), should be provided to Party Office within 30 days of meeting.**

**Where branches fail to provide evidence of meetings to the State Secretary by Census Date, their delegates will lose their voting entitlement for their Federal Electorate Council or Direct Branch Council Annual Meeting.**

Appeal rights do exist and the State Secretary will consider cases where a branch has genuinely tried to meet but has fallen short (eg. where quorum has not been reached).

### Branch Member Numbers

During the Rules Review, we consistently heard that larger branches tended to be more active and engaging places for members to participate.

**As a result, our new rules increase the minimum number of people required to create and maintain a branch over time (see Rule 10.3).**

To create or maintain a Local Branch, the minimum number of members required will be:

- In 2023, a minimum of 20 members (or 10 in the regions)
- In 2024, a minimum of 25 members (or 15 in the regions)
- In 2025, a minimum of 30 members (or 20 in the regions)
- In 2026, a minimum of 35 members (or 25 in the regions)
- In 2027, a minimum of 40 members (or 30 in the regions)



To create a new Direct Branch, a minimum of 80 members is required. To maintain one, the minimum number of members required is:

- i. In 2023, a minimum of 40 members
- ii. In 2024, a minimum of 60 members
- iii. In 2025, a minimum of 80 members

### **What happens if a Branch falls under the number of members above?**

If at Census date, an existing branch has fewer than the minimum number of members required (as per Rule 10.3), the branch will have its rights suspended. The branch will then have one year (until the next Census Date) to bring its numbers up to over the minimum.

If it does, the State Secretary will help the branch run an election to establish office bearers once again (Secretary, President etc). If it doesn't, the branch will be disbanded and members invited to join a neighbouring branch of their choice, or go into our 'Central Branch'.

### **Merging Branches**

Our Rules now contain provisions to help branches merge with other branches if they wish (see Rule 10.5). The branches must agree to merge, and each send a motion to the Administrative Committee. The Administrative Committee will then tick off on the merger.

Where two or more branches merge, their existing delegate entitlements will be combined for the remainder of that year.

Any branches thinking of merging, should contact Party Office for information and support.

### **Branch Meeting Agenda**

Branches should have more freedom to include items on their meeting agendas that are interesting and engaging for members. The rules around agendas have changed (see Rule Appendix 1), and there are fewer essential items. Agendas must now include:

- confirmation of minutes
- business arising from the minutes of the previous meeting
- correspondence
- new member applications

Other than these items, branches are free to come up with their own agendas which may include:

- reports from members, party units, individuals and guest speakers
- discussion around matters of policy
- discussion around campaigns and campaigning activities
- general business
- reception of motions on notice

### **Delegates to FECCs**

The composition and powers of FECCs (now Federal Electorate Councils or FECs) have changed (see Rule 9). When holding branch elections and explaining roles to your branch, it's worth noting that FECs will no longer be bodies that regularly meets or have campaign functions. Their sole role is to elect delegates to State Executive, and this will be done through an annual ballot.