

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS PROCEDURES (INCLUDES ENTITLEMENTS & VARIANCES)

<u>Procedures number</u>	5120	<u>Version</u>	1
<u>Drafted by</u>	Secretary	<u>Approved by Branch Executive on</u>	2 May 2019
<u>Responsible person</u>	Secretary	<u>Scheduled review date</u>	March 2021
<u>Affects</u>	All	<u>Subject Area/Chapter</u>	Finance

RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to include in the Union’s proposed Annual Budget, or such other time as may be necessary, a recommendation to Branch Executive on the amount of any entrance fees, subscriptions, levies and fines payable by members.

It is the responsibility of Branch Executive to determine all subscription fees, levies and fines, what services are to be provided to categories of members and what circumstances policy in these areas may be varied.

It is the responsibility of the Branch Secretary to recommend to the Branch Executive when appropriate, changes or additions in this area and to oversee the implementation of the policy and related procedures.

It is the responsibility of all employees to ensure that they are familiar with and observe all the Union’s membership subscription procedures.

It is the responsibility of all members to ensure that they pay all entrance fees, subscriptions, levies and fines determined by Branch Executive.

PROCEDURES

- 1) FEE LEVELS** – Members’ subscriptions are the principal revenue resource for every union. The setting and collection of fees are the mechanism that creates the potential to effectively bargain, campaign and organise for members’ best interests. Fee levels need to be fair and transparently applied.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee will include in the Union’s proposed Annual Budget, or such other time as may be necessary, a recommendation to Branch Executive on the amount of any entrance fees, subscriptions, levies and fines payable by members.

- 2) ACCESS TO REPRESENTATION (OR OTHER MATTERS)** - The principle of solidarity is a core union value that encourages workers to join their union for the good of all not just because they have an individual problem at work.

Branch Secretary

The Branch Secretary will ensure people who wish to join their Union and request assistance with matters that are established to have occurred prior to the person joining will not be allowed to access any Union support for those matters, until they have paid upfront an

entrance fee equivalent to at least three months of their normal Union subscriptions calculated at the time of joining.

This entrance fee will not be required if:

- i. The person is in their first three months of employment within public education in the NT; or
- ii. Branch Executive approves a waiver based on the member putting forward a case for exceptional circumstances. Consideration will be given to the member's personal circumstances, the impact of the matter on the broader Union membership and any evidence of being a union member whilst with their previous employer.

Before accepting an application for membership and providing representation, the Branch Secretary will consider the nature of the offence, its implications and potential conflict with the Objects contained in the AEU Federal Rules.

The Branch Secretary will recommend to the Branch Executive when appropriate, any limitation to the range of services that the Union will provide to individual or groups of members.

- 3) MAINTAINING FINANCIAL STATUS** – To maintain finicality, members must not be more than 2 months in arrears with their subscriptions. Unfinancial members have restrictions placed upon their rights in the union's rule book. An accurate count of current members is essential for financial and campaign planning.

Union Employees – *(The following 4 steps are aspirational intentions that require building in as automated functions of the AEU NT membership database.)*

One month prior to a member becoming unfinancial due to non-payment of their membership dues Letter 1 shall be sent to them (see Appendix A).

As soon as a member becomes unfinancial they shall be sent Letter 2 (see Appendix B).

One month after they have become unfinancial they shall be sent Letter 3 (see Appendix C). If no response is received, then the Secretary shall prepare a written report for Executive recommending that the person cease to be a member.

If Executive accepts that recommendation, then the person will be sent Letter 4 (see Appendix D) via registered post.

- 4) RE-JOINERS AND ARREARS** - The principle of solidarity is a core union value that encourages workers to join their union for the good of all and not terminate their membership because they disagree with a particular action or position.

Branch Secretary

The Branch Secretary will ensure an individual seeking to re-join the Union within 12 months of their membership ending will be requested to repay any debt from time spent as an unfinancial member at the time of their re-joining. Any returning former member who is reluctant to make good this debt may apply for a waiver as per 5) below.

- 5) **WAIVERS** – Financial distress or other hardships may be encountered by members as some stage. Administrative errors can occur in the union office, by third parties involved in subscription collection and by members themselves.

Branch Executive

The Branch Executive will consider any request by a member to waive in full or part any amount of unpaid entrance fees, subscriptions, levies and fines.

Branch Executive will consider the member's personal circumstances and any proven previous record of union membership. If the waiver is for access to representation, then the impact of the matter at hand on the broader Union membership should also be considered.

Branch Secretary

The Branch Secretary will present to Branch Executive any request by a member to waive unpaid entrance fees, subscriptions, levies or fines. Alternatively, in an urgent situation the Branch Secretary may approve a waiver on the condition that, if Branch Executive does not approve the waiver at its next meeting then the entrance fee must be paid.

Union Employees

In assisting any member who wishes to request their unpaid fees to be waived, Union employees will first:

- offer the member free financial advice through an appointed advisor/company;
- advise the member of the range of low cost and discount options they may access through their union membership (e.g. TMB, ME Bank, THF.);

If the member still wishes to request a waiver then Union employees will assist the member to prepare a written submission to the Branch Executive, explaining the nature of their special circumstances.

6) FEE VARIATIONS

Calculating fees based on salary means members pay a different amount according to their salary point of each classification of AEU coverage. Accurate application of this formula relies upon members informing our office of when they change salary point or classification. Systems are now in place to record pay scale succession dates. However, for historical reasons AEU does not hold this information for all members, nor do all members regularly inform AEU of a changes to their classification (or location, address and other contact details changes). In practice this means a significant proportion of members are not on the correct rate for their actual salary.

In phone calls to and from the AEU office, individual records are updated, and the appropriate rate applied. No repayments of underpaid fees are sought.

Automatic Waivers/Reductions in Fees

- a) Student Teachers will not be required to pay fees and will be categorised as "Associate Members".
- b) Members whose employment is ongoing, but their pay has reduced to nil can have their fees reduced to the Associate member rate. They will be categorised as "Associate Members". There are 5 situations where this occurs:

- i. Unpaid Maternity/Paternity Leave;
- ii. Sick absence at Nil pay and without Workers Compensation for income;
- iii. Members being represented through appeals and Fair Work Commission processes following dismissal;
- iv. Career Breaks. Members who are currently not working or are on approved special leave without pay.
- v. Retired members and others who wish to retain an association with our union.

Organising Initiatives

From time to time specific groups or sections of members and potential members may be selected for targeted recruiting for bargaining and campaigning purposes. Reduced fee rates or waived fee periods may be applied as best suits prevailing requirements.

7) REFUNDS

Members will receive full refunds where there has been an error made by the union up to a maximum period of two years.

Union Employees will contact third party subscriptions providers (Payroll sections or Banks) where they have continued to deduct monies from members who have cancelled union membership. Where incorrect deductions have been made by third parties and sent to AEU a letter and spreadsheet to inform them that AEU no longer wish to accept the payment and that further refunds will need to be paid for by the provider.

Union employees also endeavour to contact cancelled members who continue to have deductions to alert them and to request them to end the deduction with their bank or payroll provider.

Only in exceptional circumstances, where there has been an error made by the member concerned, refunds can be considered up to a maximum period of six months prior to the date of written application for the refund claimed.

Guidelines that explain the responsibilities for members in managing their subscriptions along with the necessary contact information are published on the AEU website and in the Member Handbook. This describes how to resign membership, change employer details, change fee rates and apply for waiver status.

Applications for refunds can be made by e-mail or letter to AEU NT Membership who will investigate and determine the amount owed by the union. Union employees will obtain a nominated Bank Account from the member and refund by an Electronic Funds Transfer or where Fees were paid by Credit Card, a CC Refund will be made.

8) MEMBERSHIP RESIGNATIONS

Requests to terminate membership must be received in writing (Email, Letter, or Signed Resignation Form) and will take effect 2 weeks from receipt by the AEU (or later if so, indicated in that notice).

Related Documents

- Budget Planning Policy
- Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009
- AEU Federal Rules - Donations
- Legal Assistance to Members Policy

AUTHORISATION

Secretary
AEU NT Branch

APPENDIX A

LETTER 1: [or email/text/phone message]

Dear

On **[insert date]** the attached account was sent to you.

As of today, the AEUNT has not received any fees from you for two months. Members who are more than 2 months in arrears with their fees are no longer a financial member of the Union.

During any period when you are not a financial member you are not entitled to access the services provided by the Union, including free legal advice.

The Union has been greatly appreciative of your previous contributions and looks forward to your continued membership. If you are experiencing any hardship (financial or otherwise), or your employment circumstances have changed, please contact our office and speak with one of our Officers.

Alternatively, you may restore your financial status by paying your outstanding fees.

Again, please don't hesitate to contact our office on 8948 5399 or via email admin@aeunt.org.au if we can assist you further.

Yours sincerely

Branch Secretary

[Insert Date]

APPENDIX B

LETTER 2:

Dear

Further to our letter dated [Letter 1] the AEU NT has not received any payment of your outstanding membership fees.

Accordingly, please find attached a further statement, which indicates the amount outstanding to the end of the current quarter.

Until payment of the balance indicated in the statement is received you will continue to be an unfinancial member and will not be eligible for the full range of benefits and protections that AEU NT membership offers.

Remember, if you are experiencing hardship, or your circumstances have changed, then please contact our office on 8948 5399 or via email admin@aeunt.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Branch Secretary

[Insert Date]

APPENDIX C

LETTER 3:

Dear

As advised in previous correspondence dated [Letter 1]. And [Letter 2] you have an outstanding debt to the Union of \$[INSERT].

Unless we receive a response from you about settling this account within seven days from the date of this letter, as Branch Secretary, I will have no option but to recommend to the AEU NT Branch Executive that your membership be cancelled.

Should you wish to discuss this matter then please contact our office on 8948 5399 or via email admin@aeuntorg.au.

Yours sincerely

Branch Secretary

[Insert date]

APPENDIX D

LETTER 4: AFTER EXECUTIVE HAS CANCELLED MEMBERSHIP

Dear

The AEU NT has previously advised you of your outstanding membership dues on three separate occasions [insert dates of Letters 1, 2 and 3].

Unfortunately, I am now required to advise you formally that the AEU NT Branch Executive has determined to cancel your Union membership effective from [date of Executive decision].

Should you wish to re-join the Union at any point in the future, please do not hesitate to contact us on 8948 5399 or via email admin@aeunt.org.au.

Yours sincerely

Branch Secretary

[Insert Date]