



Conference motions are how members turn issues into union direction.

Through sub-branches and delegates, members use motions to ask Branch Conference to set policy, guide advocacy, request action, or begin a process for change. When carried, a motion becomes a formal democratic decision of the Branch.

Branch Conference is the Branch's highest governing body, but its power is exercised within the limits of the Rules. A motion cannot override the Rules, bypass required processes, make financial management decisions, or exercise powers reserved for Branch Executive or Branch Officers.

A strong motion clearly says:

What the issue is, what Conference is being asked to decide, and who should act.

More detailed guidance, examples and instructions for each step are provided on the referenced pages.

Overview of motion writing process

1. Name the issue (Page 2)	What is happening? Who is affected? What needs to change?
2. Consider whether the issue is broadly and deeply felt (Page 3)	Conference motions should address issues affecting members beyond one workplace or reflecting a broader pattern.
3. Check existing Conference decisions (Page 4)	Search the Conference Decisions Register on ClickUp. Motions duplicating existing Conference policy may be ruled out of order.
4. Decide what Conference is being asked to do (Page 5)	Is Conference being asked to note, call on, direct, refer, support, oppose, affirm, or include something in the log of claims?
5. Name the right body, process or position (Page 6)	Who has responsibility for the change being sought?
6. Draft the motion (Page 7)	Under the Standing Orders, motions must start with "That..." or "That this Conference..."
7. Add a preamble if needed (Page 8)	Use a short preamble to record important context, evidence or existing decisions without overloading the main motion.
8. Seek Sub-Branch Endorsement and Submit your motion (Page 9)	Take the motion through the appropriate democratic pathway, usually by seeking sub-branch endorsement before submission.



Step 1: Name the issue

Start by naming the issue in plain language.

At this stage, you do not need to write formal motion wording. The first task is to clearly identify what is happening and why it matters.

Ask:

- What is happening?
- Who is affected?
- What needs to change?

Try to write the issue in one or two clear sentences before turning it into motion wording.

Example

A first version might be:

Students and staff are being exposed to extreme heat and scorching sun on uncovered school footpaths.

To better understand the issue, you might break it down like this:

Question	Example response
What is happening?	Students and staff are exposed to extreme heat and scorching sun when using uncovered footpaths, creating risks such as burns to feet, sunburn and heat stress.
Who is affected?	Students, teachers and other staff who use the footpaths during the school day.
What needs to change?	People need safe, shaded access along school footpaths.

Tip

Avoid starting with the final wording too early. It is usually easier to write a strong motion after you have clearly named the issue.



Step 2: Consider whether the issue is broadly and deeply felt

Under the Standing Orders, Conference motions should address issues that affect members beyond one school or workplace, reflect a broader pattern, or require collective union action.

Ask:

- Does this issue affect members beyond one person, class, workplace or sub-branch?
- Is it part of a broader pattern across schools, regions or classifications?
- Is it significant enough that members want collective action?

Issues affecting only one school or workplace should usually be handled locally first, such as through sub-branch motions or organiser support, and can be escalated through your Regional Council where appropriate.

Example

In Step 1, the issue was identified as:

Students and staff at **Your School Name** are being exposed to extreme heat and scorching sun on uncovered school footpaths.

Question	Example response
Does this affect members beyond one workplace or sub-branch?	Probably, if other schools have similar uncovered walkways.
Is it part of a broader pattern?	It may point to a gap in minimum shade standards.
Is it significant enough that members want collective action?	Yes, if heat exposure is a recurring safety concern.

At this step, the issue might be reframed as:

Students and staff across schools need safe, shaded access along school footpaths and walkways.

Tip

Regional Councils can help test whether an issue is shared across workplaces. If you are unsure whether an issue belongs at Conference, you can speak with a regional rep, organiser or contact the Branch office for support.



Step 3: Check existing Conference decisions

The Standing Orders prevent motions from simply repeating existing Conference policy. Before drafting a new motion, search the Conference Decisions Register (*access instructions on next page*) to see what Conference has already decided, and consider whether your motion should build on, update, or seek action on an existing decision. This is how Conference policy is built over time.

Ask:

- Has Conference already adopted policy on this issue?
- Does the existing decision already cover the concern?
- If so, should the issue use the existing decision, or does a new motion need to add, update or change something?

Example

In Step 2, the issue was reframed as:

Students and staff across schools need safe, shaded access along school footpaths and walkways.

A search of the Conference Decisions Register found **Decision 78/2025**:

That this Conference calls on the Department of Education to fund and prioritise the installation of permanent shade structures over exposed school footpaths and outdoor thoroughfares, particularly in areas where students are regularly required to walk during peak heat periods.

Question	Example response
Has Conference already adopted policy on this issue?	Yes. Decision 78/2025 addresses shade over exposed school footpaths and outdoor thoroughfares.
Does the existing decision already cover the concern?	Yes, if the concern is about permanent shade structures over exposed footpaths and thoroughfares.
Does a new motion need to add, update or change something?	Only if it develops the policy further, such as adding a broader minimum infrastructure standard for heat protection across schools.

A motion that simply repeats the need for shaded walkways may not be considered. *For the purpose of the worked example in this guide, the next steps develop the existing policy into **a broader minimum infrastructure standard for heat protection.***



Using the Conference Decisions Register in ClickUp

The **Conference Decisions Register** is a public ClickUp list called **Current AEU NT Conference Policy**. It records Branch Conference decisions from 2021 onwards and is updated regularly by the AEU NT team. You do not need to log in to view the public register.

Open the public ClickUp view here: <https://bit.ly/aeunt-decisions-register>

Search the register

Use the search box on the top left of the ClickUp view to filter the list. Try several search terms, as previous motions may use different wording from the wording you first think of.

For the shaded walkway example, try:

shade, shaded walkways, footpaths, infrastructure, facilities, safety, heat, safe access, minimum standards

Use filters and tags

Each decision is categorised in three layers:

ClickUp field	What it means
Strategic Values and Vision	Links the decision to the Strategic Plan.
Grouping	Shows the main issue area or workstream.
Motion Topic	Explains the content of the motion in a few words.

Use the search box, filters or tags to find decisions connected to the issue you care about.



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Step 4: Choose the motion pathway

Under the Standing Orders, motions must start with “That...” or “That this Conference...”.

Most motions use “That this Conference...”, followed by the action Conference is being asked to take.

If Conference is being asked to...	Use wording like...
Formally acknowledge an issue	That this Conference notes...
Ask another body to act	That this Conference calls on...
Direct internal union work	That this Conference directs...
Refer a matter for further work	That this Conference refers...

Example

In Step 3, the shaded walkway issue followed the pathway of developing existing Conference policy into a broader minimum infrastructure standard for heat protection in schools.

Question	Example response
What is Conference being asked to do?	Ask a body to act.
What wording pattern fits this pathway?	That this Conference calls on...



Step 5: Name the right body, process or position

Some motions do not need to name another body. For example, a motion may simply set a Conference position by stating what Conference supports, opposes, notes or affirms.

Where the motion does need to name a body or process, use the table below.

If the motion is about...	It may name...
DET policy, staffing, payroll, school operations, education delivery or Department-managed implementation	Department of Education and Training (DET)
NTPS-wide employment policy, determinations, by-laws, classification frameworks or public sector employment administration	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE)
Funding, legislation, whole-of-government commitments, political decisions or cross-agency standards	Northern Territory Government (NTG) or Commonwealth Government
Union resources, supporting sub-branches, developing bargaining claims or progressing existing policy	Full-Time Officers (FTOs) <i>Branch President and Branch Secretary</i>
AEU NT governance, internal policy, resourcing or elected leadership decisions	Branch Executive

Example

For the shaded walkway example, the motion is asking for action on school infrastructure standards, so it would name the Department of Education and Training.

The motion is starting to take shape as:

That this Conference calls on the Department of Education and Training to...

Tip

Avoid asking FTOs to lobby DET where the motion is really about action DET should take. Use FTOs for work the union itself needs to do. It is inherent that the FTOs should lobby for things that are conference policy.



Step 6: Draft the motion

Use the motion pathway from Step 4, the body, process or position from Step 5, and then bring it together with the change being sought.

A strong motion should be:

- clear enough to read aloud;
- specific enough to act on;
- broad enough to apply beyond one workplace;
- focused on the decision being sought.

You may include a short phrase to clarify the scope of the action, or give examples of what the action should include. Keep this brief. If the information explains why the motion is needed, gives background, or records existing policy, it belongs in the preamble instead.

Example

For the shaded walkway example, the motion can be built like this:

Motion part	Example wording
Opening	That this Conference
Action	calls on
Body, process or position	the Department of Education and Training
Change sought	to develop minimum infrastructure standards for heat protection in schools
Scope or examples	including shaded footpaths, covered outdoor thoroughfares and shaded outdoor work areas

That this Conference calls on the Department of Education and Training to develop minimum infrastructure standards for heat protection in schools, including shaded footpaths, covered outdoor thoroughfares and shaded outdoor work areas.



Step 7: Add a preamble if needed

The motion itself should be as clear and simple as possible. If extra context, evidence or background is important, consider whether it belongs in a short preamble instead of being built into the main motion.

A preamble usually begins: *That this Conference notes...* or *Noting that...*

A preamble can help record information that may be useful when the motion is followed up after Conference. Not every motion needs a preamble. If the motion is clear without extra context, leave it out.

A preamble can record...	Examples
Existing Conference decisions	Decision 78/2025
Industrial or policy sources	enterprise agreement clauses, policies, determinations or by-laws
Formal findings or evidence	research, data, court decisions, Fair Work decisions or government reports
Key context or concerns	why further action is being sought, or what issue the motion is responding to

Example

Rather than adding all the background into the core part of the motion, a preamble can record the existing decision and the safety concern.

The final motion reads:

That this Conference notes Decision 78/2025 and the ongoing safety risks created by extreme heat exposure on uncovered school footpaths, walkways and outdoor areas.

That this Conference calls on the Department of Education and Training to develop minimum infrastructure standards for heat protection in schools, including shaded footpaths, covered outdoor thoroughfares and shaded outdoor work areas.



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Step 8: Seek Sub-Branch Endorsement & Submit Your Motion

Once the motion is drafted, take it back to your sub-branch for discussion and endorsement where possible.

Any member can raise an issue through their sub-branch. Sub-branch endorsement gives the motion stronger democratic weight because it reflects collective member discussion.

Ordinary motions must be submitted to the Branch Secretary at least six weeks before Branch Conference starts. The easiest way to submit is usually through the motion submission form provided each year by email.

Ask:

- Has the sub-branch seen the final wording?
- Has the sub-branch endorsed the motion?
- Has the decision been recorded in the meeting notes or minutes?
- Has the motion been submitted by the deadline?

After submission

Branch officers review motions to help prepare Conference business. Where motions are similar, officers may contact movers or submitting bodies to discuss whether they can be combined. A motion endorsed by a sub-branch can still be amended, either with the mover's agreement or by Conference under the Standing Orders.

Tip

Take your motion to a Regional Council, reference group or Conference motion workshop to connect with members interested in similar issues and strengthen the motion before submission.