



Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association

Branch Democracy Policy

This is the Branch Democracy Policy adopted on 06 February 2018 by the Branch Committee of Management of the Victorian Allied Health Professionals Association.



The Union rules and the provisions of the Fair Work Act 2009 and Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Act 2009 will prevail over the terms of the policy to the extent of any inconsistency.

Mission Statement

VAHPA is a democratic community of Allied Health Professionals. We are a political organisation. We work together to ensure that Allied Health jobs are good jobs and that the care we deliver is the best it can be. We stand for fairness, equality and for an end to discrimination. We understand that social structures have a profound impact on poverty and wealth. We recognise the significance of class-consciousness. We strive to end all forms of exploitation. Solidarity makes us strong. We are union. We are VAHPA.

General Statement of Policy and Intent

Our aim in writing this policy is to ensure VAHPA is able to pursue its objects and be true to its Mission Statement at all times. This can only be achieved while VAHPA is properly controlled by the membership. We recognise that VAHPA must be open, transparent, democratic and accountable. Every VAHPA member bears a responsibility for the success and vibrancy of the Branch. We must be active, engaged and genuinely committed to VAHPA. VAHPA is a union of Allied Health Professionals for Allied Health Professionals.

Objects

The objects of the Branch are:

- a) To ensure that Allied Health jobs are good jobs and that the care we deliver is the best it can be;
- b) To uphold, foster, protect and improve the rights and interests of members and persons employed in the industries referred to in Rule 2 of the Rules of the HSU, industrially and otherwise, to the best possible conditions and just remuneration and to guard them against any hardship, oppression or injustice in connection with their work;
- c) To uphold, foster, protect and improve the rights of members to freely associate and to collectively struggle in solidarity;
- d) To take all necessary steps for the protection, health and safety of members;
- e) To encourage and foster improvement in the status, training, advancement and qualifications of all members;
- f) To obtain equal remuneration and employment and civil rights for members, regardless of the member's race, country of origin, appearance, gender, sexual preference, age, physical or mental ability, relationship status, family or carer's

responsibilities, pregnancy, religious views, political opinion, socio-economic status, or any other illegitimate basis of discrimination;

- g) To ensure that members enjoy the same civil rights as are enjoyed by other citizens;
- h) To improve the lives, including the working lives, of members and their families;
- i) To strive for fairness, equality and for an end to discrimination and exploitation in all forms through all just and legitimate means, including via active social justice campaigns;
- j) To represent the Union and members in any court, body or tribunal dealing with matters of interest or concern to members;
- k) To secure the participation of and influence of members in the administration, development and planning of industries referred to in Rule 2 of the Rules of the HSU;
- l) To encourage genuine ownership of the Branch by all members through democratic practice, solidarity, education and collective struggle;
- m) To establish Branches and sub-Branches throughout Victoria, and to encourage the appointment of delegates and other representatives of members;
- n) To act as an agent for and on behalf of members and/or, where deemed practicable, non-members in a manner consistent with these objects and the Rules of the HSU and consistently with the interest of members;
- o) To provide legal and where relevant financial assistance and other representation and support to members and their dependants in the pursuit of these objects;
- p) To co-operate with and assist other organisations, associations, institutions and groups in the pursuit of these and similar objects;
- q) To democratically amalgamate, affiliate or in any manner associate with other organisations, associations, institutions and groups in the pursuit of these objects and where such amalgamation, affiliation or association is beneficial to VAHPA members;
- r) To uphold the rights of labour and to represent members in the peak councils of the trade union movement and in international forums or organisations;
- s) To determine actions on matters of concern to members in relation to international affairs and to carry out these actions;
- t) To borrow or raise money, invest the funds of the Union, acquire or deal with land and other property real or personal, in such a manner as may be determined from time to time by the Union;
- u) To facilitate political and industrial education for VAHPA Members, Delegates, Employees and Elected Officials, including via focussed and intensive training

and via the establishment of a library of texts of relevance to such a project;

- v) To establish a worker friendly environment, in political, industrial and legal terms, within the state of Victoria and across Australia by playing an active role in the political sphere and to support VAHPA members and other political actors with a genuine interest in the objects, as herein detailed, to do likewise;
- w) To elect, appoint and employ officers and employees for the furtherance of the Union's objects and to remunerate such persons;
- x) To do all such things as the Branch may from time to time deem incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects as herein detailed.

Branch Elections and Appointments

Upon the calling of elections, for any position within the Branch, including the filling of casual vacancies, the Secretary will ensure that:

- (i) The calling of nominations, including requirements for nomination and relevant dates, is advertised widely, through:
 - a. Notices on the Branch website;
 - b. Notices in the Branch eNews, commonly referred to as the AHP Update;
 - c. Notices in Branch print publications where practicable;
 - d. Notification of all eligible members by email and / or text message.
- (ii) Nomination forms are posted in a prominent position on the Branch website.
- (iii) Election processes and other relevant information is posted in a prominent position on the Branch website.

Where the unexpired portion of the term of office in which a casual vacancy occurs does not exceed three years, the Branch Committee may fill such a vacancy by appointment of an eligible member of the Union.

All casual vacancies shall be advertised in the manner detailed above and expressions of interest sought.

The selection shall be based on merit and the process transparent.

Branch Decision-Making

a. General Plebiscites of Members

The Secretary will ensure that decisions on the following questions shall be put to a general plebiscite of Branch Members:

- Merger or demerger with other HSU Branches;
- Merger or demerger with other Unions.



Any merger, such as those indicated above, that is not directly and specifically approved by VAHPA Members in a general plebiscite shall be deemed to be invalid and unauthorised.

b. Enterprise Bargaining, Sector-wide Bargaining etc.

Branch Organisers will strive to ensure that all relevant members are genuinely consulted during the drafting of logs of claim.

Members should be encouraged, where practicable, take an active role in bargaining. Members must also be encouraged to play an active role in setting bargaining strategy.

At least one elected Delegate should be present at all meetings between the Branch and the employer and/or employers bargaining representative. Where this is not possible for whatever reason, the Branch employee is obliged to properly and ethically represent the relevant members and to provide a timely meeting report to the membership following the meeting.

The Secretary should ensure that, prior to the lodgement of any log of claims in relation to public sector hospital bargaining, a participatory members' forum be held to discuss and debate claims in bargaining.

Policy review

The Union Democracy Policy can be amended by a resolution passed by the Branch Committee of Management. Such an amendment can be rescinded by a plebiscite of the Branch.

Dissemination of policy

A copy of this policy will be published on the VAHPA website.

END OF POLICY



Policy version control

Date	Author/Department	Version number	Summary of changes
13 Feb 2013	Branch Committee	1.00	
15 Oct 2014	Branch Committee	2.00	
08 Dec 2015	Branch Committee	2.1	Branding and references updated
12 Jul 2016	Branch Committee	2.2	Casual Vacancy EOI process
25 July 2017	Branch Committee	2.3	Inclusion of Mission Statement & clarification of member responsibilities.
06 Feb 2018	Branch Committee	2.4	Refinement of Mission Statement

END OF DOCUMENT