

PUTTING A MOTION – THE MEANS WHEREBY

By Chris Raff, 1st Feb 2018

At the last AGM it was suggested that AUSTAT Council develop guidelines for placing motions before an AGM.

Motions work as written instructions for Council by the membership to be used as an addition to or an extension of the AUSTAT Constitution. These require a majority vote to become “resolutions”.

On certain occasions, motions are used to amend or re-write the Constitution when it is felt that the Constitution isn't working or needs clarification. These require a 75 per cent vote in favour to become “special resolutions” because they create a permanent change in policy.

In both instances it is important to take care and thought in drafting the motion/s. It will be difficult for the membership to assess the motion if it is poorly written or expressed.

Here are some pointers to assist:

- What is the purpose of the motion? As a first step, write the purpose down in one clear sentence. Be very specific. What precisely do you want? Distil the purpose into a clear and succinct statement.
- Now draft your complete motion. Keep it as short and succinct as possible so that it is easy for members to read.
- Write an explanation of your motion. Keep it simple. One or two paragraphs if possible. This allows members to understand the intent of the motion.
- What are the pros and cons of your motion? Be your own devil's advocate and argue against your own motion. Do the pros win?
- How does your motion assist the membership? What's in it for them? Remember that you have to convince the majority of the membership to vote for your motion.
- Does your motion give clear instructions to Council? Remember, they have to implement your instruction.
- Is your motion SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-framed. Council and its committees are comprised of volunteers who give up their time. In relation to time commitment of Council volunteers, consider whether the motion is best achieved through an AGM or is the issue more suitable to be tabled at a regular monthly Council meeting for consideration and potential action. For example, issues relating to administrative processes, marketing initiatives, etc may fall into this category.
- Motions need a proposer and a seconder. The seconder should be a person who will read through and workshop the motion with you. They will give suggestions for improvements and amendments and help to create a motion worthy of members' support.
- Have as many people as possible read over the motion and give honest feedback. This also lets you judge whether your motion reflects the views of the members.

Now that your motion is crafted and has had many people comment, make sure that you put it in for inclusion more than 45 days before the AGM.

Email your motion to: info@austat.org.au. Please insert 'New Motion for 2018 AGM' in the subject heading (this may help Karen keep track of them),

or

Mail your typewritten motion to AUSTAT, PO Box 409, Benalla Victoria 3671.

In either instance ensure that your motion is submitted before the due date.

AUSTAT's Constitution rules that all motions must be given prior to 45 days before the AGM. This allows for members to read and consider your ideas.

In order to submit the motion, please follow the following process:

- On the day of the AGM, both you and your seconder should be in attendance. Where a proposer is not present, the motion may be put aside by the Chair. (It's very bad manners to put a motion and not be there to speak to it).
- Be ready to speak to your motion and to answer any questions from members.

If your motion is well constructed and you are able to convince the members, then you have every likelihood of seeing your motion transformed into a resolution.

Council then ensures that your resolution is enacted as a policy of AUSTAT within the next year.