

FACT SHEET 15: SPECIAL MEETINGS

Special meetings, or extraordinary meetings as they are sometimes called, provide a P&C Association with an opportunity to discuss one or more specific matters which cannot be dealt with at the next general (or ordinary) meeting because of urgency or some other declared reason.

Special meetings can *only* deal with business of which notice has been given. While apologies can be accepted at a special meeting, no other formal business such as the minutes of the preceding meeting, correspondence, special reports or general business can be transacted.

Who can call a special meeting?

The P&C Secretary is constitutionally required to give formal written notice of a special meeting but can only issue a notice of special meeting if a request for such a meeting is received from the Executive Committee or by at least ten financial members of the organisation.

Requests for special meetings should refer to the specific matters which will be raised and discussed at the meeting.

How much notice of a special meeting is required?

The Secretary is expected to ensure that all existing financial members receive at least seven *clear* days notice of any special meeting. The notice must indicate the time and place of the meeting as well as the specific business which will be transacted at the meeting.

The actual meeting date and time should be designated by the Executive Committee but, in any case, it must occur within a month of the request being received by the Secretary.

The President should preside at special meetings. In the President's absence this task can be taken by one of the Vice-Presidents and in the absence of either Vice-President the meeting itself can elect a chairperson.

Can new memberships be taken at special meetings?

Special meetings provide an opportunity for *existing* financial members to discuss specific items. It is not appropriate for new members to join an association immediately prior to or during a special meeting and expect to exercise voting rights and the other privileges of membership.

The Constitution provides for membership lists to be updated after each general meeting. If a person pays a membership fee immediately before or during the special meeting he/she is not entitled to voting rights until after the next general meeting.

Special meetings are called because of an *urgent* need to address specific items of business. Most association business, including constitutional amendments, decisions to incorporate and no confidence motions, can be properly dealt with at general meetings. Referral of these matters to a general meeting ensures that requirements of due notice and wide-ranging consultation are better served.

