

Topic 1 - Introduction to general meetings

There are two kinds of meetings relevant to the business of running a body corporate: "committee meetings" and "general meetings." General meetings are open meetings for all lot-owners, or their representatives, and all lot-owners must be invited to attend a general meeting. There are detailed provisions in the Act and the Modules about how a general meeting must be called and held. In the following topics these provisions will be covered.

General meetings are the means by which the body corporate deals with matters of business that are beyond the powers of the committee to determine.

Once a year, the body corporate must hold an Annual General Meeting (**AGM**). All other general meetings are called "Extraordinary General Meetings" (**EGMs**) (SM. S64). The AGM must be called and held each year within 3 months after the end of the scheme's financial year, (SM. S66) and must consider certain specific motions, ('statutory motions'). An EGM may be held at any time in compliance with the time limits and procedures set out in the Act and the Modules, and a group of owners may request the committee to convene an EGM which will be a requested extraordinary general meeting.

At a general meeting (whether an AGM or EGM), motions proposed on an agenda are put to the vote. Only those motions on the agenda can be voted on, and therefore the business of managing the body corporate is by previously proposed motions, and not by discussion and proposals put from the floor. There can be no votes taken on "other or general business" although members may of course discuss whatever they please at the meeting, and canvass views for a subsequent meeting at which a motion is presented.

One vote only may be exercised for each lot in the scheme.

Voting is generally "**open**" (see Topic 2: Voting papers for open motions) although certain motions are required under the Act or the Regulations to be voted on secretly. **Secret voting** (see Topic 2: Secret voting papers) requires that a ballot is held, with voting papers being deposited in a way so that the identity of the voter cannot be ascertained.

The body corporate must keep certain **records** (see Topic 7: Keeping records of General Meetings) about general meetings and the votes taken on motions.

Persons who are not lot-owners may be invited by the committee to attend a general meeting. For example, a prospective contractor for the scheme such as a body corporate manager, or landscape gardener, can address the members on their expertise. Such persons have no right to attend a meeting except by invitation. If a lot-owner wishes to bring another person to the general meeting, such a person may be invited by a majority of those present at the meeting to remain, or to address the meeting. Only lot-owners or their authorised representatives have a right to attend.

There is nothing in the legislation about how many general meetings a scheme should have (other than the annual general meeting) or how long they should be. Basic meeting etiquette applies to general meetings in that the chairperson may keep such order as is required. For example, a chairperson may put a time limit on submissions on a motion in order to prevent lengthy speeches or one person dominating a meeting. Common courtesies, such as allowing all speakers an equal amount of time, and keeping remarks formal and polite apply.