



# Overview

## A guide to the new 2023 WA Labor Rules



### Charter of Member Rights and Responsibilities

Our new Charter of Member Rights and Responsibilities sits at the beginning of our rules (Rule 1.6) and sets out the obligations of WA Labor members. They include:

- Upholding the Party rules
- Having no other political party associations
- Refraining from activities and behaviours that can bring the Party into disrepute
- Refraining from speaking with media about Party business
- Supporting Labor candidates for office (and not supporting any candidates running against endorsed Labor candidates)

The Charter also sets out the rights and responsibilities of Members of Parliament, along with an explicit statement about WA Labor's commitment to diversity in our membership and parliament.

### Changes to the Policy Development Process

Our new rules establish a body called the 'WA Policy Forum', which is responsible for developing our Party's platform in consultation with members and Party Units.

This body is similar to the successful National Policy Forum structure and replaces the previous structure of Policy Committees. It is made up of:

- i. ten elected representatives of the rank-and-file
- ii. ten elected representatives of trade unions
- iii. eight State Members of Parliament
- iv. two Federal Members of Parliament

Elections for the positions above will take place in early 2024. Once they're complete, the Forum's first task will be establishing the mechanisms for how they engage with Party membership around policy development.

We know how important our members are in helping to shape Labor policy, and we look forward to providing you with information in 2024 on how you can get involved with the discussion.

### Digital Meeting Provisions

The new rules contain provisions for online meetings of Party Units, making our Party more inclusive and helping regional members to participate.

When a member makes a request for an online meeting, the approval will no longer have to come from Party Office. It'll now be up to the person Chairing branch meeting, Party Organisation meeting etc, to run the meeting with an online option.

## **Changes to Minimum Branch Numbers**

During the Rules Review consultation, we consistently heard that larger branches tended to be more active and engaging places for members to participate. As a result, our new rules increase the minimum number of people required to create and maintain a Local Branch over time (see Rule 10.3), as follows:

- i. In 2023, a minimum of 20 members (or 10 in the regions)
- ii. In 2024, a minimum of 25 members (or 15 in the regions)
- iii. In 2025, a minimum of 30 members (or 20 in the regions)
- iv. In 2026, a minimum of 35 members (or 25 in the regions)
- v. In 2027, a minimum of 40 members (or 30 in the regions)

If at Census date, an existing branch has fewer than the minimum number of members required, it will have its rights suspended. The branch will then have one year (until the next Census Date) to bring its numbers up to over the minimum, or members of the branch will be invited to join another active branch (or be put into our 'central branch'). Separate provisions apply for Direct Branches - please see Rule 10.3

## **Changes to Branch Meeting Requirements**

Branches work best to engage members and support local campaigns when they're active. During the Rules Review, we were consistently told that people have a poor member experience when they join branches that don't meet regularly.

Our rules have always required branches to meet every 3 months - now they set out penalties for branches that don't (see Rule 10.8).

Where branches fail to provide evidence of meetings to the State Secretary by Census Date, their delegates will lose their voting entitlements for their Federal Electorate Council or Direct Branch Council Annual Meeting.

## **New Federal Electorate Council Structure (Replacing FECCs)**

Under our new rules, Federal Electorate Campaign Committees or FECCs have effectively ceased to exist and have instead been replaced with Federal Electorate Councils or FECs.

Under the new rules, the sole purpose of a Federal Electorate Council is to elect delegates to State Executive. To fulfil this role, an Annual Federal Electorate Council Meeting will be held each year in November. The State Secretary will make arrangements for the meeting, including notifying members of the time, date, location and arrangements for the meeting/election.

## **Party Preselection Changes - Legislative Council**

As a result of changes to the boundaries in the Legislative Council, we've established new rules to preselect candidates.

Candidates will be elected in groups by a ballot of State Executive.

## **Other**

- A new glossary section and language to help members navigate our rules
- Harmonised ballot provisions for internal Party elections to make it easier for members to participate
- New process to guide members in creating Party Organisations
- New process to help branches who wish to merge
- Clear disputes processes and procedures to help resolve conflicts in the Party
- Formalising the current practice of holding State Conference every two years
- We've heard your feedback on the format of the rules - and we're scrapped the two column layout!