USU POLICY/PROCEEDURE: JOINING IN DISPUTE MSR-02

August 2026

MEMBERSHIP – JOINING IN DISPUTE

This Policy seeks to provide guidance to delegates, members and staff as to how the Union's resources are to be used when called upon by individuals that seek to join the Union while in dispute. The principle underpinning this policy is to ensure that income derived from Union fees is spent on members who are committed to unionism and not on non-members who join the Union for convenience purposes only, particularly if they have been eligible to join over a significant period whilst employed with their current employer.

This Policy is based on the commitment of USU Executive and staff to providing industrial advice, advocacy and professional representation of the highest quality on an equal basis to all financial members.

This Policy is to be read in conjunction with MSR-01 – Membership Status & Representation.

PROCEDURE

a. There will be no assistance to non-members who join the Union with a pre-existing issue, unless a special exemption is approved by the General Secretary, following a recommendation by the relevant Branch Manager. Such exemptions will only be approved in circumstances where it is in the best interests of the majority of our members in the workplace and would only occur with the endorsement of the relevant delegate(s) and/or members at the workplace.

b. In the first 3 months from the date of joining as a member, the new member will only be provided with advice and assistance to resolve an issue at a local level only. An exceptional circumstance would be if a member joined within 2 weeks of being employed, or in the case of a new member where a problem developed that required advice and/or assistance after the date of joining.

c. In the case of unfair dismissals, the Union will only make application once a person has been a financial member for 6 months or more and have completed their probationary employment period, whichever comes first.

d. Where a non-member seeks advice about an existing problem or a member seeks advice about a problem that arose prior to the time they joined the Union, no assistance will be given, subject to the provisions of clause 6 below.

e. Where a person experiences an ongoing problem while a financial member of the Union, but is no longer eligible to be a member of the Union, the member shall ordinarily continue to receive advice and assistance in relation to that problem, however depending on the circumstances the union reserves the right to cease further advice and or assistance.

f. In the interests of advancing the objectives of the Union, a special exemption may be granted at the discretion of the General Secretary, whereby the above clauses may be waived in whole or in part.

g. Where an exemption is granted pursuant to clause f, a fee equivalent to twice the annual fee at the time of joining or rejoining shall be charged.

h. This policy will not apply to junior Apprentices or junior Trainees and those members who are in classified in Band 1 Level 1 of the NSW Local Government (State) Award.

Member Policies and Procedures Approved by State Executive March 2024

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