

Welcome to Occupy Melbourne's xth General Assembly

I would like to acknowledge that we are meeting on the land of the Wurundjeri people. I would also like to pay respect to the Elders both past and present of the Kulin Nation and extend that respect to other Indigenous people present. (or less formal adaptation)

1. Principles

We make decisions through an inclusive democratic process called consensus decision-making. We aspire to get everybody's concerns and opinions taken into account in the decision-making process. Rather than just voting and seeing who has the majority, we aim to get everybody to participate in and agree with all decisions made by the movement. All proposals can be worked on and modified in order to get an outcome that everybody is happy with. As many of you know this process can be frustrating and time consuming but it is also one of the most exciting and important things that has come out of the Occupy movement.

2. Purpose

The General Assemblies have two main functions at Occupy Melbourne: firstly, an info-sharing function where Working Groups that have formed to deal with various issues report back to the Assembly on their activities; and secondly a decision-making function where both Working Groups and individuals can put forward proposals to be debated and decided upon.

3. Process

It's important that everyone understands the process so that everyone knows how to have their voices heard, and still show respect for their fellow occupiers. The agenda we have been using consists of: Working Group report backs, then proposals from Working Groups, then proposals from individuals and then we finish up with general announcements.

Let me first introduce the facilitation team. My name is Beth and my only political affiliation is to Occupy Melbourne. Assisting me up the front will be X and Y who have Z affiliations. But most importantly there is the participant's team who will be running through the crowd, taking down

your proposals, checking for clarifications and making sure your voices are heard. If you are unsure on what's happening, want to clarify something, or speak for or against a proposal, then these are the people you need to speak to. They are here to help you participate.

The final point I wish to make about process is to tell you how we will work through proposals. When a proposal is made we will do the following. Firstly, I will repeat the proposal. I will then say "are there any clarifications needed". If you wish to have a question clarified you should raise your hand and a member of the participant's team come out and bring your question forward. After everyone is clear on what is being proposed I will then test for consensus. I will say "all those in favour of the proposal please raise their hands". I will then ask the assembly if there are any strong objections to the proposal.

If we have full consensus the proposal will be passed. If we cannot achieve consensus on the proposal, we will have two additional speakers for and three speakers against the proposal. All speakers will have two minutes. We can then suggest modifications and take a few straw polls to judge people's reactions to different amendments. We may also break off into small groups to discuss possible ways forward. As a final move, if it is impossible to get full consensus on an issue, in order to be able to move forward as a movement we can attempt to go for a 90% consensus.