

# Policy committee guide

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## *Important note*

SPSL Limited (Trustee) (ABN 61 063 427 958, AFSL 237905, RSE Licence No L0002059) is the issuer of this guide and takes responsibility for its contents. Throughout this guide where we refer to:

- ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘our’ we are referring to the Trustee.
- ‘plan’ we are referring to your employer sponsored superannuation plan in the SPSL Master Trust
- ‘you’ and ‘your’ we are referring to the plan employer and/or plan member (whichever is applicable)

This guide is issued on 1 April 2022.

This information is current as at 1 April 2022 but may be subject to change. Any information contained in this document has been prepared without taking into account your or an individual’s objectives, financial situation, or needs. For that reason, before acting on this information, you and/or an individual should consider the appropriateness of this information having regard to your or their own objectives, financial situation and needs. You should speak to your financial adviser before making an investment decision.

All statements regarding superannuation law, and other legal and regulatory matters are based on our understanding of the legislation as at September 2017 and are of general nature only.

## Your policy committee

You can have the opportunity to play an active role in the operation of your employer sponsored super plan to make sure it continues to meet everyone's needs. If this sounds good, then you should consider nominating to become a member of your plan's policy committee.

### What is a policy committee?

A policy committee is a group of people, comprised of member and employer representatives, that are part of your super plan. The committee undertakes a variety of functions, such as:

- giving employees a chance to learn more about the operation and performance of their plan
- providing a way for us (the Trustee) to find out the views of employees regarding the operation and performance of their plan, and
- helping us deal with complaints or enquiries about the operation or management of the plan.

The policy committee is an important link between us and members of your plan. It provides a way for us to find out more about employees, their issues and any concerns they may have about the plan.

This doesn't mean you or the policy committee are legally responsible for making sure the plan complies with super legislation – that's for us to do.

### What does the policy committee do?

The main functions of the policy committee are:

#### *Communication*

The policy committee is the 'go between' for members and us so we can find out what information members want to know about their super plan. It also helps us understand how members like to receive information.

#### *Enquiries and complaints*

Members can go to the policy committee when they have questions about their plan, its investment strategy, performance or operation. The committee sources and provides the answers to member questions, and can also provide feedback to us and help us deal with complaints.

### When does your plan need a policy committee?

A policy committee is a legislative requirement for certain plans. We must take all reasonable steps to ensure that a policy committee is established for an employer plan in the following circumstances:

Number of plan members*	Policy committee required
Fewer than 5	No
5 to 49	Yes, but only if requested in writing by at least 5 members
50 or more	Yes

\* Includes members in associated employer plans.

### Your role in the policy committee

Becoming a policy committee member is your chance to play an important role in helping to make your plan the best it can be for everyone. The committee meets regularly to discuss issues relating to your super plan and it gives you the opportunity to take part in the decision making process. You don't have to be an expert, just an interested member of your plan.

### What do we do?

As the Trustee we have to try to ensure the policy committee meets at least once per year. We can also send a representative to attend a policy committee meeting each year. If required, we may ask you to help cover some of the cost of setting up the policy committee.

## Setting up a policy committee

### *How many people do you need?*

Super legislation requires that there must be equal numbers of member and employer representatives on a policy committee. Usually there are four or six representatives in total, although the minimum number is two. Each employer needs to let us know how many members the committee will have.

### *How do you appoint employer representatives?*

Generally the employer needs to nominate and appoint the required number of employer representatives to the policy committee and provide their details to us in writing. This should occur within one month of them joining the plan.

### *How do you elect member representatives?*

Generally speaking, there is a nomination process to elect member representatives, and if needed an election can be held. Under legislation we have to provide your super plan and its members with a procedure for appointing member representatives. The procedure is set out in this guide.

### The nomination process

We've summarised the steps in the nomination process and who is responsible in the table below.

Nominations – step by step	Employer action	Member action
Nomination Step 1 – Notification to members	Distribute a 'notice of election' and 'nomination form' (samples attached) to each employee who is a member of the employer super plan the within one month of the plan commencing, or as soon as possible.	
Nomination Step 2 – Confirmation to us, that you have provided notification to members	Let us know in writing once notification is complete.	
Nomination Step 3 – Nominating to be part of the committee	The employer will appoint the required number of <b>employer representatives</b> to the committee.	Members will nominate to be a committee <b>member representative</b> , get another member to second the nomination and sign the form. The nominee should also complete the supporting statement and return all to the Returning Officer.
Nomination Step 4 – Confirm if committee has been elected or if an election is required	The Returning Officer should check to see if the number of nominations equal the number of positions available on the committee.  If this is the case, the committee has been elected and the employer needs to send confirmation of the committee members.  If there are more positions available than nominations received, the employer needs to call for nominations again.  If there are more nominations received than positions available an election must be held.	

*Step 1 – Notification to members – employer to action*  
 Within one month of commencing your employer sponsored super plan, the employer needs to distribute the following two items to each employee who is a member of the plan:

- a notice of election, and
- a nomination form.

If you need them, we can provide you with electronic copies of these documents for distribution. You need to make sure these are distributed to members with their pay slips or via email to ensure they receive them. Posting them on the internet or a notice board is not acceptable.

*Step 2 – Confirmation that notification has occurred – employer to action*

Employers should let us know once members have been notified of the nomination.

*Step 3 – Nominating to be part of the committee – employer and employees to action*

Any employee who is a member of the plan may nominate, or be nominated, including senior management (as long as they are not a disqualified person under Part 15 of the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993).

All nominations have to be signed by the nominee (to show they are willing to stand for election) and by a second member (supporting their nomination). If a nominee has more information they want to provide as part of their nomination they need to forward this with their nomination.

All nominations need to be sent to a Returning Officer within 28 days. A Returning Officer can be an employee, such as a human resources representative or an administrator we nominate.

*Step 4 – Confirmation that a committee has been elected – employer to action*

If the number of nominations received equals the positions available, the Returning Officer can declare the nominees elected to the committee. Once this occurs the employer needs to confirm the committee to all members.

If there are more positions available than nominations received, the employer will need to call for nominations from members again. This process is repeated until there are enough nominations to either elect the committee or go to a vote. The employer may decide how often the process is repeated.

If there are still not enough nominations to fill the vacancies, the Returning Officer must let us know. In these circumstances, we will chat to the employer about other options such as a reduction in the number of committee members.

If there are more nominations received than positions available a vote is needed. The election process is set out below.

The election process

If there are more nominations than positions available, an election must be held. We’ve summarised the steps in the election process and who is responsible in the table below.

Nominations – step by step	Employer action	Member action
Election Step 1 – Send out voting papers	Send voting papers and supporting statements to all members.	
Election Step 2 – Members to vote		Complete voting paper and send to Returning Officer by the closing date.
Election Step 3 – Count the votes	Returning Officer to ensure only eligible members voted. Returning Officer counts votes.	
Election Step 4 – Confirm committee representatives	Provide election confirmation to all members of the plan, and notify us of the results.	

#### *Step 1 – Send out voting papers – employer to action*

If an election is needed the employer will need to distribute voting papers and voting envelopes to all members within one month of nominations closing. Voting papers can be sent via email (let us know if you would like us to send you an electronic copy).

The voting paper must list the names of each member nominated for election in alphabetical order. Voting envelopes must be labelled with the name of each member so these can be checked against the list of eligible voters.

If a nominee has provided background information they want included with their nomination, the employer will have to send this information to members.

There must be a closing date for the ballot, and members must have one vote for each policy committee vacancy. The employer should let us know once the voting papers (and any background information) have been distributed.

#### *Step 2 – Members to vote – employer and members to action*

Votes can be cast by putting them in the voting envelopes and placing them in a ballot box at your workplace premises. Alternatively, plan members can vote by returning their voting papers directly to the Returning Officer. Only votes cast on or before the nominated closing date will be counted in an election.

#### *Step 3 – Count the votes and notification of successful candidate(s) – Returning Officer to action*

The Returning Officer must use the names on the voting envelopes to make sure only eligible members have voted, and then count the votes.

The candidate with the greatest number of votes will be the first representative elected. The candidate with the next greatest number of votes will be the second representative elected, and so on until all committee positions are filled.

After all positions are filled, remaining unsuccessful candidates with the highest votes will be the first replacement, second replacement, and so-on. These people become part of the committee when a vacancy comes up. Any vacancies must be filled within 90 days and satisfy the equal representation rules.

#### *Step 4 – Confirm committee representatives – employer to action*

Within 14 days of the election, the employer must advise all plan members in writing of the names of the elected policy committee representatives. Employers can do this via a notice board or the intranet. At the same time the employer will need to let us know who the committee members are so their names can be included in the plan members' annual statements.

#### Resignation/removal of committee members

##### *Member representatives*

Super legislation requires the procedure for the removal of member representatives be similar to the procedure for their appointment (ie. via an election process as above).

Member representatives can also cease to be a member of the committee:

- when their term in office finishes
- if they resign from the committee
- when they stop being a member of the employer plan in the Fund
- if they cease to satisfy an eligibility condition of a member representative
- if they die or suffer physical/mental incapacity
- when they terminate employment or retire, or
- become a disqualified person under Part 15 of the Superannuation Industry (Supervision) Act 1993 (the person was convicted of an offence in respect of dishonest conduct, or a civil penalty order was made in relation to the person, or the person is an insolvent under administration).

##### *Employer representatives*

Employer representatives may resign at any time, and may be removed from office by the employer at any time, by providing written notice.

We should be notified of any changes to the policy committee, so the names of current representatives can be included in the members' annual statements.

### *Dissolution of the policy committee*

A policy committee may dissolve itself, and if it does so, we'll consider that we've complied with our duties under the relevant legislation. However, if at least five members of the plan subsequently request in writing to form a replacement committee, we must take all reasonable steps to do so.

### Other things you need to know about the policy committee

#### *Length of membership of a policy committee*

There is no specified length of time committee representatives must remain in place. We will assume committee members are elected for an indefinite period unless we're advised otherwise.

#### *Privacy*

Plan members may have questions or concerns about information committee members will be able to access. Committee representatives aren't entitled to access information about salary or specific super benefit details of any member of the plan. They don't need to access confidential information regarding any employees or any confidential business information.

We recommend that all policy committee representatives be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement when they join the committee. We have included a sample confidentiality agreement on page 13.

#### *Record keeping*

Like any well run committee or organisation, it's important that the policy committee keep records of how it was established, the process for appointing/electing members. It is a requirement to maintain these records and the process for making changes to the committee. It is a requirement to maintain these records so committee members need to make sure they are up-to-date, in case we need this information for a member enquiry.

#### *Frequency of meetings*

Super legislation requires a policy committee to meet at least annually, although we recommend meetings are held at least twice a year. Meetings can be held via a telephone conference facility if a representative is unable to attend in person.

### *Preparing for a policy committee meeting*

The policy committee should nominate a chairperson for the meeting beforehand. This can be a regular role or it can be shared amongst committee members on a rotational basis. The chairperson's role is to organise the meeting (ask members to submit agenda items for discussion), circulate the agenda, schedule the meeting and take minutes at the meeting.

Items a committee may want to discuss/include in their agenda:

- a review of the performance of investment markets and the default investment strategy of the plan
- an update from your plan's financial adviser
- review and answer any member queries regarding the operation of the plan or the policy committee, and
- scheduling the next committee meeting date and chairperson (where applicable).

#### *During the first meeting*

The first meeting should clarify the policy committee's scope and activities, plus the roles and responsibilities of each member.

#### *During all meetings*

Minutes should be taken for all meetings. Any item for which a resolution has been passed, such as a change in benefit design, should be recorded in the minutes and be passed with at least a two thirds majority. Any resolution then has to be approved by us before it can take effect.

#### *After each meeting*

Copies of the minutes should be sent to all committee members and other interested parties. The policy committee should retain all minutes of committee meetings. These records will not only provide a reference for members, but can be used to justify recommendations about ongoing super issues. A copy of the minutes should also be forwarded to us at the following address:

Suncorp Superannuation  
GPO Box 2585  
Brisbane QLD 4001

## Sample documents

### Notice of election

#### We're calling for nominations for the policy committee

*It's time to be involved in your super...*

There are a number of ways for you to take part and have a say in the running of your super plan [ABC super plan]. You may decide you want to be a representative yourself or know of someone you'd like to be a member of the committee. As a member of the plan you can:

- stand as a candidate
- nominate an eligible member as a candidate, and
- vote if there is an election/ballot.

#### *What does the policy committee do?*

A policy committee is made up of equal numbers of member and employer representatives who are elected/ appointed by the plan. The committee is involved in answering questions and discussing issues regarding the plan.

The committee:

- gives members of the plan a chance to learn more about the operation and performance of the plan,
- provides a way for the Trustee to find out the views of members of the plan regarding operation and performance of the plan, and
- helps the Trustee deal with complaints or enquiries about the operation or management of the plan.

#### *Timetable*

Notice regarding nominations (this notice)

D D / M M / Y Y Y Y

Closing date for nominations

D D / M M / Y Y Y Y

Confirm appointments (if enough candidates nominate)  
or distribute voting papers

D D / M M / Y Y Y Y

Closing date for return of voting papers

D D / M M / Y Y Y Y

Announce result of election to members

D D / M M / Y Y Y Y

Policy committee nomination form

For your nomination to be valid please make sure you complete these steps;

- Two members of the plan have to complete and sign Part A of the form (and sign and date a paper nomination form).
- If you are making the nomination by email – both of you need to send an email to nominate your candidate.
- The person nominated (candidate) needs to complete Part B and complete the supporting statement to provide information in support of your nomination.
- Return the nomination form and supporting statement to the Returning Officer by [insert nomination closing date].

*PART A – To be completed by members who are nominating a candidate for the committee*

We are members of the [ABC super pan] and employees of [ABC company].

We want to nominate the member(s) below for the position as a member elected representative of [ABC super plan].

Name of candidate	<input type="text"/>
Full Name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text" value="D D / M M / Y Y Y Y"/>
Full Name	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text" value="D D / M M / Y Y Y Y"/>

*PART B – To be completed by the candidate*

I am a member of [ABC super plan] and an employee of [ABC company]. I accept the nomination to be a member elected representative of [ABC super plan] Policy committee.

Full Name	<input type="text"/>
Position title	<input type="text"/>
Contact Address	<input type="text"/>
Phone (work)	<input type="text"/>
Email address	<input type="text"/>
Signature	<input type="text"/>
Date	<input type="text" value="D D / M M / Y Y Y Y"/>



Voting paper

Policy committee

*Voting paper*

As more than [Number of member-elected representatives on Policy committee] nominations were received, an election is to be held.

*[ABC super plan]*

The following members have been nominated for election as member representatives of your policy committee.

This is your chance to have your say and vote for the [X number of candidates] candidates you want as member representatives, by ticking the boxes below.

Please don't tick more than the required number of representatives as this may render your vote invalid.

Candidates for member representative(s) of the Policy committee

*[Company name]*

Tick  [Number of member-elected representatives on Policy Committee] box(es) only.

[Title, full name and position of 1st candidate]

[Title, full name and position of 2nd candidate]

[Title, full name and position of 3rd candidate]

[Other information, if necessary]

Once you have finished voting, put your vote in the voting envelope and to return to the Returning Officer by

[insert date].

Notice of election results

[ABC Company]

Policy committee

We're pleased to announce the result of the member representative election for your policy committee which was held on

Your employee representatives are:

[Title, full name and position of elected representative 1]

[Title, full name and position of elected representative 2]

[Title, full name and position of elected representative 3]

[Other information, if necessary]

[Name of Returning Officer]

[Name of witness]

Confidentiality agreement

[ABC Company]

Policy committee

Confidentiality Agreement

I understand that, in performing my duties as a member representative of the Policy committee for the [ABC plan], I may have access to information which is confidential and/or proprietary about [ABC company] and its employees.

I confirm that I will treat all such information as completely confidential. I undertake not to disclose any such information to any person, who isn't specifically authorised by [company name or ABC employee] to receive the information, nor use it to my own advantage, or that of a third person.

I understand that if I don't know or am uncertain if the information is confidential, I will seek clarification. I acknowledge that if I breach any of my obligations under this Confidentiality Agreement, the company or relevant employee may take any action it considers appropriate against me in respect of such breach.

Signed

Date

[Name of committee representative]

## How to contact us



Online  
[suncorp.com.au/super](https://suncorp.com.au/super)

### Suncorp Brighter Super®



Call **13 11 55**



Email  
[suncorp@spsl.com.au](mailto:suncorp@spsl.com.au)



Suncorp Brighter Super®  
GPO Box 2585  
Brisbane QLD 4001

### Suncorp Everyday Super®



Call **1800 191 517**



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