

Growing our union to Change the Rules

Encouraging Non-Members to Join

Union members across the country are campaigning hard to Change The Rules.

We are stronger when everybody works together. That means signing up new members, at big sites and small sites, white collar and blue collar.



The best people to recruit new members are our delegates, OHS Reps and Activists.

We know that the most common reason people DON'T join a union is that they are NEVER ASKED.

Having a conversation with a non-member at your worksite – or even with a friend at the pub – is the best way to grow our union.

Recruiting new members is both a positive and challenging experience.

Many potential members will respond positively to the question: “Would you like to join?”

For others, you'll need to take time to explain the benefits of membership and to address any concerns. Not everyone immediately understands why belonging to the union is good for them and for the collective power of members in their workplace.

We hope this kit will help you – and others – to sign up new members. You can join them up with a paper form, OR online by using your phone at: www.amwu.org.au/join

The first time you ask someone to join can be daunting – but there's no better feeling than signing up a new member! If you're nervous to do it by yourself, see if you can do it with another delegate or member for support.

Recruiting new Union members – basic steps:

- Know potential members at your workplace, and whether they are new to the workplace. Try to be aware if they are full time, part time, or casual.
- Don't discount workers who are in the office or who work in an administration role. They are also able to be AMWU members!
- If they are new to the workplace, you can introduce yourself as the union delegate.
- Find out what's going on for them at work, ask questions and listen to their concerns. As a delegate you might be able to give them advice.
- Explain that you are an AMWU member and tell them why you're a member. Remember that many people (if they are new to the site) may not have had contact with a union before.
- Give information about the union and talk to them about the benefits of being a member. Try to make a connection between the conditions you have at work and being union members – for example, if you have a new EBA you could explain that these conditions are higher than the Award because the site is a union site.
- Give them opportunities to ask questions about the union – no question is stupid!



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- Reassure them that the union does not reveal or disclose membership lists to your employer.



- When the time is right, ask them if they would like to join – give them a membership form or show them the “Join online” website page (www.amwu.org.au/join).
- Sign them up as soon as they make the decision to join – if they opt for a membership form, be sure to check that it has been sent in. Offer to send it yourself or give it yourself to your organiser.
- Check our common objections sheet for suggestions on how you might handle it if people have objections to joining.

Before you can begin recruiting, it is important to understand why people decide to join the union so that you can introduce these key points into your conversations with potential members.

Common reasons why people join the union:

- To be part of a strong collective that wants to make things better for workers.



- For strength and a voice at work – together we achieve more and can balance the power of the employer.
- To protect and improve existing rights and entitlements, including higher pay.

- To obtain support at work when you need it.
- For information and advice on workplace issues.
- For individual representation at the times you need it most.
- For member benefits such as our Emergency Transport or Journey Accident Insurance*. You can see more member benefits here: www.amwu.org.au/member_benefits

* some states have different benefits depending on state-based schemes.

New Workers vs Existing Workers

New Workers

If your workplace has new staff inductions, it is a good idea to try to attend them with membership forms.

Ask the person coordinating the induction whether our union can be a part of the induction. Some workplaces allow this, but many do not.

If there's no formal induction activity or you are not given permission to talk at this forum, you might like to organise a small welcome for new staff, where you and a few other members get together with the new staff during a break.

This is a great opportunity to welcome them and emphasise that our union is an integral part of their new workplace, and to encourage them to join their colleagues in union membership. They can also meet you as a delegate, so they know who they can ask for advice.



Existing Workers

In most workplaces, there will be workers who may have worked there for some time without joining our union. Even if a non-member has been asked to join before, it is still worthwhile asking again.

However, it will probably be advisable to be more careful and plan your conversation – try and find out in advance why they said they didn't want to join before you talk to them.



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