



# **STRONG AND CAPABLE COOPERATIVE LIMITED RULES**

Easy-Read

**STRONG & CAPABLE**

# How to read this document



What you are reading is an easy explanation of the Rules of the Strong and Capable Cooperative Limited.

The actual Rules are written in another document and have lots of hard words.

You can get a copy of the Rules with all the hard words in it from the Strong and Capable Cooperative.



When you read the word, **'Rules'** it means the Rules of The Strong and Capable Cooperative Limited.

## STRONG & CAPABLE



When you read the word, **'Cooperative'** it means, 'The Strong and Capable Cooperative Limited'.

When you read the word, **'member'** or **'members'**, it means like belonging to a club where you follow their rules and use their services.



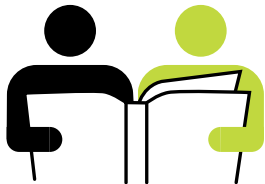
When you read the word **'you'**, it means the person who is reading this report.

**1. 2. 3.**

When you read the numbers at the start of each section, these are the numbers that relate to each piece of information that is in the Rules of the Strong and Capable Cooperative Limited document.



In this document, you will sometimes read some hard words. When you read a hard word for the first time, we will explain what it means.



You can get someone to help you read this document if you are having trouble understanding it.

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# INTRODUCTION



A **Cooperative** is a legal organisation that is owned and controlled by its members.

It is set up to provide a service and get money for some of the services it provides



The Strong and Capable Cooperative is a not-for-profit organisation.

This means members are not allowed to take any of the Cooperative's money when there is some left over after all the bills are paid.



Every Cooperative has Rules that its members have to follow.

What you are reading now are the Rules of the Strong and Capable Cooperative.

The Rules say:

- Who can be a member of the Cooperative
- How the Board of Directors are chosen
- What happens to the money that the Cooperative makes
- What will the Cooperative do

# THE INFORMATION IN THE RULES



## STRONG & CAPABLE

### 2. Meaning of words

In part 2 of the Rules, all the hard words are explained.

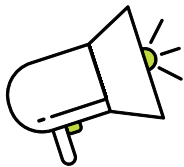
### 3. Name of the Cooperative

The name of the Cooperative is the Strong and Capable Cooperative Limited.

### 4. What the Cooperative does and what the members of the Cooperative have to do

#### 4.1 What the Cooperative does:

- Provides **advocacy** and information. Advocacy means the Cooperative will help you with problems you might have with services you use.
- **Supports planning and coordination.** Support planning and coordination means the Cooperative can help you to make your NDIS plan and find the services you need.
- Helps the members of the Cooperative to meet their service providers and talk to them if the members have trouble telling their service providers what they need or what their problems are.





- Gives a chance for people with disability to help other people with disability, or their carers or family members, with any problems they might have with the NDIS or anything else to do with disability.



- Collects information about the products and services that members use.
- This information will show the Cooperative important information like what services do members want and what are the problems they are having.
- The information might be shared with members and other people who ask for it, like the government.

#### 4.2 What do the members have to do?



To be a member of Strong & Capable, you have to be **'active'**. Being an **active member** means:

- You have to pay a membership fee every year.
- You have to use at least one service provided by the Cooperative every year that you are a member of the Cooperative.

The Cooperative would also like active members to:

- **Buddy Up** with new members.

**Buddy up** means make friends with new members, help them meet other members and share your stories about disability with each other.





## 5. Who can be a member?

This Rule explains who can be a member of the Cooperative.

There are two types of membership:



- People with a disability or their **nominee**.

A **nominee** is someone who talks and does things for people who cannot talk or do things by themselves.



- The main carer of a person with a disability who uses the services of the Cooperative

The carer can be a family member or someone who helps you most of the time.

## 6. What does membership cost?

Members of the Cooperative choose the **Board**.

The **Board** is the group of people who lead the Cooperative.

This Rule says that the Cooperative's Board must decide how much it will cost to be a member of the Cooperative.

The Cooperative must show how much it costs to be a member on its website.





## 7. How do people become a member?

This Rule explains how the Cooperative decides who can be a member and how new members join.

- People have to apply and fill out a form, if they want to be a member of the Cooperative.

The form that is filled out is called an **'application'**.

- The Board must consider if each **applicant** can be a member.

An **applicant** is the person whose name is in the application form.

## 8. How to stop being a member



This Rule explains the reasons why a person may stop being a member of the Cooperative.

Membership can be stopped if a member:

- Is not an active member.
- Dies.
- **Resigns** from the Cooperative.

This means that a member has to tell the Board in writing that they don't want to be a member of the Cooperative anymore.

## 9. Making a member leave the Cooperative

This Rule explains why the Board may have to make a member leave the Cooperative.

This Rule also explains what members can do if they think the Cooperative is not being fair to them.

The word for making a member leave the Cooperative is '**expel**'. Members can be expelled if:

- They don't follow the Cooperative's Rules.
- They stop the Cooperative doing its work.
- They say or do something that makes the Cooperative look very bad to other people.

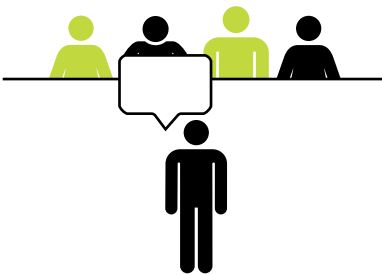
The Board has to be told by other members in writing who should be expelled from the Cooperative and the reasons why.

The member who is being expelled has to be invited to the Board meeting where the reasons why they are being made to leave will be discussed.

The member can also tell the Board what they did.

If the member does not go to the meeting and does not give a good reason for not going to the meeting, the Board can still decide if they should be expelled from the Cooperative.

A member who is expelled can become a member again if the Board lets them.



## 10. Owing money to the Cooperative



This Rule explains what happens if there is money **owing** when a member leaves the Cooperative or is expelled from the Cooperative.

**Owing** means that you have money that you need to give to someone to pay for services or products that you received.

If a member owes money to the Cooperative when they leave or if they are expelled they have to pay the money back.

If the Co-operative owes a member money when they leave or are expelled, the Cooperative has to pay the money back.

## 11. Putting membership on hold



This rule explains how a member can put their membership **on hold**.

**On hold** means to stop membership for an amount of time.

Instead of being expelled, a member's membership can be put on hold. This is called '**suspension**'.

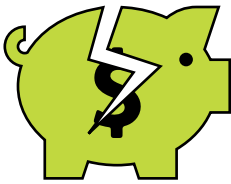
**Suspension** of a member cannot be for more than one year.

The Rules for suspension are the same as the Rules for expelling a member.

A member who is on hold can still vote at a members' meeting of the Cooperative.

## 12. The rights and responsibilities of members who find it hard to manage their membership

This Rule gives two reasons why members might not be able to keep their membership.



1. The first reason is '**bankruptcy**'.

**Bankruptcy** is when a person owes a lot of money to the bank or another business and can't pay it back.

When a member of the Co-operative becomes bankrupt, their membership has to stop.

2. The second reason is when a member might not be able to keep their membership.

This could happen if they cannot make decisions for themselves anymore because they get very sick.

When this happens, the law can give the right to make decisions for that member to another person.

This person will also have the right to make decisions about the Cooperative for the member who is sick.



## 13. Settling an argument

This Rule explains how **disputes** should be **settled**.

When an argument is put into writing, it is called a '**dispute**'.

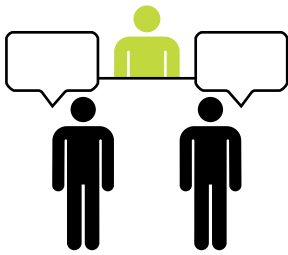
**Settled** means when a decision is made between the two people that are having an argument.

A dispute can happen between:

- One member of the Cooperative against another member or
- A member against the Cooperative.

A member can include someone who used to be a member but is not anymore.

When a dispute happens, the Cooperative has to try to settle, or sort out, the dispute.



If this does not work, the Cooperative can get **mediation**.

**Mediation** is when someone who is not part of the organisation is asked to help to settle the dispute.

If the mediation does not work, the Cooperative or people having the dispute can take their dispute to court.

## 14. Fines



A fine is a when someone has to pay an amount of money for not following a rule.

This Rule says that the Cooperative can fine members for breaking the Rules explained in this document.

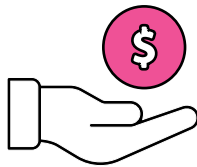
The Cooperative is not allowed to fine members more than \$1.



## 15. Borrowing money

This Rule allows the Cooperative to borrow money from banks and other places.

Borrow is when a bank or someone else gives you money and you pay it back to them over an amount of time.



## 16. Making money for the Cooperative

This Rule allows members of the Cooperative, and other people and businesses who are not members, to make an **investment** in the Co-operative.

An **investment** is when people or businesses put money into the Cooperative in the hope that the Cooperative will make money to pay them back, and even give them more money than what they put in.

A big problem for new Cooperatives is getting money to grow.

This Rule also explains the rights of people and businesses who invest in the Cooperative.

## 17. Meetings, making decisions and voting



This Rules describes:

- How Cooperative meetings can be held
- How many votes members have
- The kinds of decisions that can be made at different meetings.



## General Meetings

A General Meeting is a meeting that is held for the members of the Cooperative.

There must be at least one General Meeting held each year where all members are invited.

This is called an 'Annual General Meeting'.

Other general meetings can be held if:

- 20 percent of members ask for one or
- The Board decides to hold one.

The Cooperative has to tell members about the meeting at least 14 days before the date of the meeting.

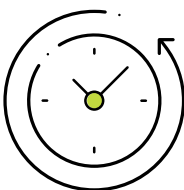
If members can't attend a General Meeting, they can get another member to vote for them. This is called '**proxy voting**'.

One per cent of all the members who have the right to vote have to be at the meeting, in person or by proxy, to go ahead with the meeting.

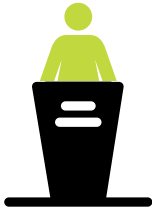
Members can join the meeting face to face or online.

If one percent of the members are not at the meeting half an hour after the meeting was supposed to start, the meeting has to be held the next week.

If the meeting is put off to the next week and there are not many members attending, the meeting can still go ahead.







The Chairperson of the Cooperative's Board, or any of the Directors of the Board, can be chair of a general meeting. The **Chairperson** leads the meeting.

If no-one has been asked to chair a meeting, or the person who was asked does not turn up, the members at the meeting can choose a Chairperson from the people who are at the meeting in person.



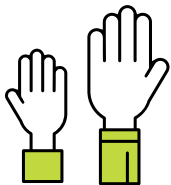
If the meeting time runs out and there are still important things to discuss, the Chairperson can hold another meeting just to discuss those issues. The Chairperson can only do this if the other members at the meeting agree.



## Voting

A member only has one vote for any decision.

The choice that gets more than half of the votes becomes the decision.



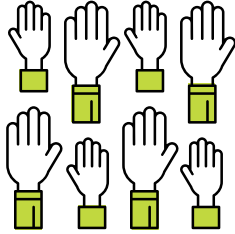
A vote can be made by a show of hands, or a way that is easiest for the member to show.

This way, members can see what other members voted for.



Sometimes it might not be a good idea for members to see what other members voted for, so votes can be made in secret and sent in the post.

If two members get the same number of votes, the Chairperson can decide which member to take. If the Chairperson is not a member of the Cooperative, or does not want to make a decision, the decision will be to make no new changes.



Some important decisions, like changing any of the Cooperative Rules, can only be made if most of the Cooperative's members agree. This is called a **'special resolution'**.

## 18. The Board of the Cooperative

This set of Rules are about the group of people who the members choose to manage the Cooperative.



This group is called 'the Board'.

Each person on the Board is called a 'Director'.

The Rules say who can be a Director, and what experience and qualifications they need to have.

### The Board



The Board of the Strong & Capable Cooperative is made up of both member and non-member Directors.

A Director who is not a member of the Cooperative is called an **'Independent Director'**.



All the Directors must have a skill that will help the Cooperative.

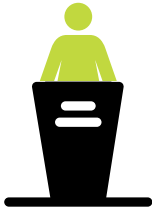
Skills can be things like being good with money or having an experience of living with disability.

The Board must have between 5 to 9 Directors, with more member Directors than independent Directors.

The Board will always have one independent Director from Carers SA.

The members of the Cooperative choose the member Directors of the Board.





The Board chooses its Chairperson. The Chairperson leads the Board and the Cooperative.

The Board can also choose a person to do the day-to-day management of the Cooperative.

If this person is chosen from the Board, they will be called the 'Managing Director'.

If the person is not on the Board, they will be called the 'Chief Executive Officer'.

Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting of the Cooperative.

### Choosing member Directors



When members are chosen to be on the Board of the Cooperative, it is called an '**election**'.

Before an Annual General Meeting, members are asked to suggest people to be on the Board.

Member Directors can stay on the Board for 3 years without a break.

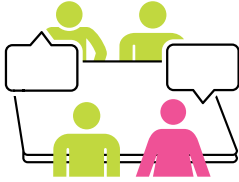


After 3 years the Cooperative's members can choose to keep the Director for another 3 years.

If a Director has to leave the Board before the next election, the Board can choose someone else to take that Director's place.

If a Director is sick or can not be on the Board for a while, they can choose someone else to take their place until they are ready to go back on the Board.

The Board can choose a person or a group of people to do a task. A group of people chosen to do a task is called a '**committee**'.



## Board meetings

The Board must meet at least every 3 months.

Decisions at meetings can be made by voting.

Half of the members have to be at the meeting for that meeting to go ahead.

More member Directors have to be at the meeting than independent Directors for the meeting to go ahead.

**Minutes** have to be written for every Board meeting.  
**Minutes** are the notes of the meeting.



## 19. Copies of the Cooperatives Rules and making changes

This set of Rules are about making changes to the Rules of the Cooperative.

The Cooperative's Board or a group of members can ask to change some of the Rules.

The Rules can be changed by the members by a special resolution, where at least 20 percent of the members need to agree.

A member can get a copy of the Cooperative's Rules for free.



## 20. The Cooperatives paperwork

This rule explains how the Cooperative must show and keep their documents and evidence of what they have done.

Important documents need to have the '**common seal**' of the Cooperative.

**'A common seal'** is like a logo.

The Cooperative can have more than 1 common seal.





Members can get copies of General Meetings or Board meetings if they ask for them in writing.

All of the Co-operative's documents need to be kept in a place where they are safe.

The Board can decide where the documents are kept.



The Board has to give notice of General Meetings to the members and others who are interested to attend. A notice can be sent through post or in other ways that the members choose.

## 21. The Cooperative's money

This Rule explains what is done with the Cooperative's money each year.

The **financial** year of the Cooperative begins on the 1st of July of a year and ends on 30th of June the following year.



**Financial** means anything to do with money.

The Board must have at least one bank account for the Cooperative.

The Cooperative must get a financial expert called an auditor to check that all the records of money being spent and made by the Cooperative is kept accurately.



With any money that is saved, the Cooperative can choose to:

- Keep the money and spend it on things the Cooperative needs
- Give some of it to charity. This amount must not be more than 33 percent.



The money the Cooperative saves cannot be given to members.

If the Cooperative is spending more money than it is making, the Board has to tell the members at a General Meeting.

The Cooperative must give the Government all the reports they need.



## 22. Ending the Cooperative

This rule says that if the Cooperative has any money or other things when it is ended that it will:



- Give the money or other things to another not for profit that is similar to the Strong and Capable Cooperative
- Not pay or share the money or other things with the members of the Cooperative

