Members

Members and members decision-making in PBCs

Members are the most important people in a PBC, without them the PBC could not exist. Members are essential to the success of a PBC, including its decision-making.

All PBCs should represent and act in the best interest of their members.

Why become a member?

People who wish to have an active role in PBC business should become a member. Members have a say in what happens, how their PBC does business and the decisions it makes – particularly at its AGMs.

Members have important rights. Members of PBCs have the right to:

- Participate in any and all PBCs activities;
- Receive notice of meetings such as AGMs;
- Speak and vote in AGMs;
- Put forward ideas about what the PBC can or should do;
- Inspect the records of the PBC; and
- Stand for director positions on the PBC Board

Who can become a member?

A PBC’s rule book explains who can become a member. The qualifications of membership are decided by a PBC and often say that a member must:

- be at least 15 years old,
- live on country,
- be descended from and/or identify with a particular apical ancestors,
- be accepted as such by other decedents of that PBC’s Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island owners.

How to become a member is written in a PBC’s rulebook. Often, this process will involve filling in an application, being review and accepted by the PBC’s board and then being entered onto the register of
The roles and responsibilities of members

Members play a crucial role in a PBC and ensure that they function properly and effectively. The key responsibility of members is to ensure that their PBC is the best corporation it can be.

A PBC’s rule book lists what members are required to do for their corporation. For a PBC to function well, members should:

- Be active in the business of the corporation;
- Act in good faith;
- Be respectful of others involved;
- Be willing to listen to others, especially those who may have a different opinion to yours;
- Not use the PBC for personal gain;
- Not disparage the PBC in public or to others outside the corporation;
- Notify the PBC of changes of details (such as address or phone number); and
- Declare any real or perceived conflict of interests at meetings.

Managed by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and produced with the funding support of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Geospatial data has been provided by the National Native Title Tribunal.