

Fact Sheet

FSU Workplace Reps & the Privacy Act

As an employee in the finance sector you have probably already had some training or know about the Privacy Act.

As a Workplace Representative you have a unique and vital role both within your workplace and the union and the aim of this information is to clarify how the Privacy Act affects your Representative role.

The main purpose of the Privacy legislation is to establish rules relating to the collection, use and storage of personal information.

FSU and Privacy

The first thing the FSU would make clear to you is that the union has always valued the privacy of its members and has developed a privacy policy in accordance with the Act.

Being a duly appointed FSU Representative

An important fact that Workplace Representatives need to understand is that the union must duly appoint each FSU Representative, this is particularly important in relation to the Privacy Act as it allows Workplace Representatives access to membership information.

The appointment occurs when a Branch Committee meets and approves the current list of Workplace Representatives.

If you have any questions about whether you are a duly authorised Representative please contact the Union office.

Membership Lists

As a Workplace Representative you often receive a print out that details the members the union has recorded as working in your workplace and the union often asks you to check that information.

As a properly authorised Workplace Representative, you are entitled to receive, check the accuracy of the information and use that information in accordance with the union's objectives.

However you are not entitled to pass on or disclose the information contained in a membership list to another employee, including another member (unless they are an authorised Workplace Representative) without the consent of each member concerned.

Potential Member Information

Workplace Representatives play a vital role in recruiting and identifying potential members in workplaces. The Privacy Act does have an impact on how the union, including Representatives undertake these activities.

If you are going to record, store and/or use information about potential members then you need their consent.

One way of doing this is when you are talking to a potential member ask them whether they would mind if you record their details and arrange for the union to send them information about the union from time to time. If the potential member says this is ok then note down that they gave you consent and forward the information onto the Union office.

Can the Privacy Act stop you from talking to members and potential members?

Always respect the privacy of anyone you speak with. The Privacy Act is designed to protect people's information, and it's important to always bear that in mind when speaking with members and prospects.

What happens if a member or potential member raises privacy issues with you?

If a member or potential member raises privacy questions or issues with you, answer the question if you can.

Otherwise, please contact the Member Rights Centre on 1300 366 378.