The following is the constitution of the South East Queensland Union of Renters, also referred to in this document as SEQUR, the union and the organisation.

SEQUR organises on the occupied lands of the Kabi Kabi, Yugambeh Jagera, Yugara, Yugarapul, and Turrbal Nations. We pay our respects to elders past and present. Sovereignty was never ceded.

## 1. Article 1: Principles of the Union

1.1.1. The South East Queensland Union of Renters (SEQUR) is an organisation of tenants and their allies who believe that the balance of forces currently sits too far in the favour of landlords and the real estate industry. For renters to counter this, we must organise ourselves together in a union, to leverage our collective strength. Our collective strength is our best defence in the face of evictions, rising rents, and unjust real estate practices.
1.1.2. $\quad$ SEQUR organises across the breadth of South East Queensland across a variety of First Nations countries. SEQUR acknowledges that it organises upon stolen land and that sovereignty was never ceded, and seeks to build relationships of solidarity between First Nations struggles, and the struggles for secure and safe housing. This solidarity extends to all struggles of the oppressed and exploited. Solidarity between struggles provides us with our greatest strength and must be actively encouraged.
1.1.3. SEQUR as an organisation believes in direct struggle: we reject trying to achieve change through elections, or the actions of a politician or party. Instead, we seek to build the power of renters at the level of their communities, and to directly struggle against landlords and real estates on our own terms. We support reforms in the realm of housing and renting, but believe that reforms will occur through the expansion of direct struggle first.
1.1.4. SEQUR is a directly democratic and participatory organisation. To facilitate this, SEQUR is a dues-paying organisation and requires members to participate in leading their own struggles, and showing solidarity in the struggles of their fellow members. Our strength is in our numbers and our capacity for collective action, meaning all members are encouraged to actively participate in the life of the union as much as their capacity allows.
1.1.5. SEQUR seeks to create a space in which we can come together to defend and enforce our right to dignified housing. We believe housing is a human right and, as a human right, it should not be a commodity. From this, SEQUR fights for an end to homelessness and for community control of housing.

## 2. Article 2: Membership

2.1.1. $\quad$ SEQUR is a mass organisation democratically run by its membership.
2.1.2. Full membership of SEQUR is restricted to those who rent, live in homes that are rented, or who are currently homeless. Full membership stipulates voting rights and the right to hold elected positions.
2.1.3. Full members are defined as individuals who have voluntarily joined the union and completed the onboarding process facilitated by a branch steward.
2.1.4. Membership will be considered lapsed after one year of either inactivity, which is defined as a lack of attendance at union meetings, actions, or events, or failure to pay dues during this period. Branch stewards are expected to contact lapsed members and offer support for continued membership or the option to leave.
2.1.5. Renters who have applied to join the union but have not been onboarded, or whose full membership has lapsed may choose to remain on a non-full member email list at their discretion.
2.1.6. Homeowners may hold solidarity membership, granting them a voice in the organisation but without voting rights or the eligibility to hold elected positions. Solidarity membership will lapse in the same manner as full membership.
2.1.7. Individuals involved in facilitating the exploitation of renters, including landlords, property managers, real estate agents, and their employees, are prohibited from becoming members of the union.
2.1.8. Individuals who contribute to the eviction of or act against the interests of renters, or the aims of the tenant union, are also ineligible for membership. This prohibition encompasses police officers and those employed to suppress and surveil political organisations.
2.1.9. SEQUR is a dues-paying organisation, as membership dues allow the union to maintain an independent income stream. Dues provide the union with the financial means to support its operations without relying on donations from governments, political parties, or donors that may influence the union away from its stated goals. Decisions on how these dues are utilised are determined through the union's democratic structures.
2.1.10. $\quad$ SEQUR's dues structure operates on a sliding scale, where members with higher incomes contribute more than those with lower incomes. Each member is expected to contribute dues based on their after tax income equal to:

- \$1 per month for those who make under \$2,000 per month.
- $\$ 2$ per month for those who make between $\$ 2,000$ to $\$ 2500$ per month.
- $\$ 5$ per month for those who make between $\$ 2500$ to $\$ 3000$ per month
- $\$ 10$ per month for those who make between $\$ 3,000$ and $\$ 3,500$ per month.
- $\$ 15$ per month for those who make between $\$ 3,500$ and $\$ 4,000$ per month
- \$20 per month for those who make over $\$ 4,000$ per month
2.1.11. Fundraising activities may be organised separately from dues.
2.1.12. A member's dues can be waived at the discretion of the General Treasurer for up to six months at a time. The General Treasurer may also approve lower dues rates as required.
2.1.13. Dues may be submitted in cash or online, and each member may pay as far in advance as they wish.
2.1.14. Good standing in the union is maintained by having paid dues within the most recent three-month period.
2.1.15. If a member falls out of good standing for up to twelve months, they may still maintain their membership in SEQUR but will forfeit voting rights until good standing is regained through the resumption of dues payment. All delegate positions require maintaining good standing.
2.1.16. All members are strongly encouraged to actively participate in the life of SEQUR and its decision-making processes. A union is only truly democratic when the mass of its members are active in its life.


## 3. Article 3: The Union's Structure at a Glance

3.1.1. SEQUR's structure is based on the principles of federalism, an organisational model that allocates power and decision-making to members at the base level, specifically within the branches of the organisation. Responsibility within the union is rooted in branch membership, and any responsibilities delegated to higher bodies or committees are held under the control and accountability of the union's base. This organisational model fosters members' democracy by empowering them to actively contribute to and participate in decision-making processes within their respective branches, which fundamentally shape the overall direction of the union.
3.1.2. Delegates are vital for fostering effective communication and coordination within a union while ensuring that the fundamental decision-making power still resides with the wider membership. They are elected members assigned specific roles, acting as messengers or coordinators to carry out the will of the membership. Each delegate operates under a set of clear instructions and responsibilities known as a mandate, provided by the members who elected them. Delegates regularly update the members on their actions, and if necessary, members have the option to replace them with someone else.

A distinction is made between general delegates, congress delegates, and branch delegates. General delegates, elected by the entire membership, are accountable to all members and responsible for activities spanning the entire union. In contrast, branch and congress delegates are elected by members within each branch and are accountable to the membership of that particular branch.
3.1.3. Branches within SEQUR are federated and united by solidarity, shared principles, and a common strategy. These branches serve as the fundamental units of the union, forming the basis for member engagement and decision-making. At this level, the day-to-day activities of the union are planned and executed.
3.1.4. While the union's decision-making is primarily grounded in its branches, the larger organisation, referred to as the general union, is responsible for a wide range of tasks. Delegates serving on this level, such as the general secretary, treasurer, and communications officer, are referred to as general delegates.
The general union's primary role is to continue to work in accordance with the union's values and strategy, with the ultimate goal of increasing tenant power. As work together towards this common objective, the general union must support and develop its individual branches.At the same time, each branch is responsible for contributing to the overall success of the organisation.
3.1.5. The General Coordinating Committee oversees branch coordination with a primary focus on facilitating and organising work relevant to the entire union, such as union-wide campaigns, publicity efforts, and training initiatives. Committee meetings are held monthly, and decision-making must align with the mandates provided by branches to their respective delegates. The committee is composed of a steward and the secretary from each branch. General delegates also participate in the committee but do not have voting rights, as the authority to vote originates from the branches themselves.
3.1.6. Congress serves as the highest decision-making body of the union, providing a platform for branches to collectively determine the direction of SEQUR for the upcoming year and make decisions influencing its long-term trajectory. This body holds the authority to amend the union's constitution, principles, and general strategy. Congress convenes at least once annually.

Each branch will elect multiple delegates to attend the congress, with the number proportionate to their count of good-standing
members. These delegates are expected to vote in alignment with the mandate provided by their respective branches.
3.1.7. The union may sometimes establish local committees to function as both a short-term mechanism for members in areas lacking nearby branches to initiate collective organisation, and as a vehicle for the emergence of new branches. The formation of a local committee requires a minimum of two members, and its establishment is subject to ratification by the General Coordinating Committee.

## 4. Article 4: Branches

### 4.1. Branch Guidelines

4.1.1. Branches serve as the foundational building blocks of the entire union, meaning the union essentially constitutes a federation of its branches, bound together by shared principles, strategy, and solidarity.
4.1.2. Branches coordinate on a union-wide level through the General Coordinating Committee.
4.1.3. Any higher bodies within SEQUR will only act within the parameters established by the branches' collective decisions and will answer fully to them.
4.1.4. Each branch must be able to operate both independently and as a component of the larger collective union. In order to accomplish this, the following prerequisites for branch establishment must be fulfilled:

- A current local committee meeting with a minimum of seven members in good standing who have voted (with supporting documentation included in the minutes) in favour of applying for branch status, along with two members who will serve in the delegate positions of branch secretary and branch steward,
- A commitment to maintaining the union's principles and to act in line with its collective strategy.
4.1.5. Applications for branch status will be ratified on the basis of the proposed branch's viability and the strategic expansion of branches in areas where the union is not as active or influential.


### 4.2. Branch Delegates

4.2.1. The Branch Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the branch's communications are up to date, that meetings are held as required, and that they are well-organised and democratic.

### 4.2.2. Branch Stewards: Each branch can elect as many Branch Stewards as it needs. Stewards are responsible for contacting and onboarding new members, in addition to providing assistance with their integration into the union. It is the responsibility of stewards to facilitate the participation and activity of members within their branch.

4.2.3. Each branch's stewards and secretary shall constitute a standing Branch Membership Committee tasked with the development, growth and participation of their branch's membership.
4.2.4. The Branch Secretary and one nominated Branch Steward will also serve as the branch's delegates on the General Coordinating Committee. However, these delegates will not automatically act as delegates for the purpose of a congress. Such positions would be open to a vote for each branch.
4.2.5. Branch delegate elections:

- Shall be held once per year at a meeting of the branch.
- Each branch shall nominate a returning officer tasked with counting the election votes.
- Every nominee is granted an opportunity to speak in favour of their nomination. Following their statement, nominees will exit the room, enabling members to voice opinions both in favour and against each nomination. These discussions will not be documented in the minutes to ensure members can freely express their views.
- Voting shall then occur by secret ballot.
4.2.6. If a branch delegate is recalled or voluntarily steps down, the branch will conduct an election for a temporary replacement during the next branch meeting. If the temporary replacement serves for a duration of less than six months, the interim period will not be counted towards the union-mandated term limits..


### 4.3. Branch Responsibilities

4.3.1. The following outlines the responsibilities of each branch. Failure to fulfil these responsibilities may lead to the union censuring the responsible party and taking additional actions, including, but not limited to, disaffiliation from the union or revocation of voting rights for Congress or General Coordinating Committee.The general union has the right to request branch minutes if there is a reasonable concern that the below responsibilities are not being met. Branches are expected to:
4.3.2. Act consistently with the union's constitution, principles, and strategy.
4.3.3. Maintain a minimum of five members in good standing.
4.3.4. Conduct branch meetings monthly.
4.3.5. At the branch level, meeting quorum is defined as follows: A minimum of five members or $10 \%$ of the total branch membership, whichever is higher, must be present for branches with fewer than 100 active members. A quorum of at least ten members or $10 \%$ of the total branch membership, whichever is higher, must be present for branches with more than 100 members in good standing.
4.3.6. Ensure regular attendance of branch delegates at General Coordinating Committee meetings, where updates on branch activities are to be provided.
4.3.7. Participate in and contribute to the overall life and development of the general union. This includes involvement in regular training, discussions, union-wide committees, and campaigns.
4.3.8. Maintain accurate records related to finance, membership, and meeting minutes. Finance and membership records must be submitted to the General Coordinating Committee every three months.

### 4.4. Branch Rights

4.4.1. Branch rights encompass:
4.4.2. Decision-making regarding the day-to-day activity of the branch, up to and including the development of independent local campaigns if considered within the branch's capacity. Each branch has the authority to operate autonomously, provided its activities adhere to the established parameters of the union's democratically agreed-upon constitution, principles, and strategy.
4.4.3. The right to elect branch delegates.
4.4.4. The right to maintain a social media presence for their specific branch if they wish. If a branch chooses to establish specific social media accounts, they must elect a branch communications delegate.
4.4.5. The right to form and dissolve committees relevant to the branch.
4.4.6. The right to develop and distribute independent promotional material within the remit of the union's agreed-upon principles.
4.4.7. The right to contribute delegates to both the General Coordinating Committee and Congress, thereby empowering the branch to contribute to union-wide decision-making.
4.4.8. Each branch has the right to disaffiliate with the union if it becomes misaligned with the union's constitution, principles, and strategy. . A motion to disaffiliate requires one month's notice to all the branch's members and a vote of at least 60\% in favour.

### 4.5. Members Without A Nearby Branch

4.5.1. As branches serve as the basic building block of the union each member will be placed in the branch nearest to their geographical area.
4.5.2. We recognise that this may be impractical for many members. Members residing in areas without existing branches should receive assistance in establishing local committees (see Article 5).
4.6. $\quad$ The Structure Of The Union When Functioning With A Single Branch
4.6.1. If the union is functioning with only one branch, it shall be considered the general union.
4.6.2. While there is a single branch acting as the general union the General Coordinating Committee shall be dissolved. The monthly meeting of the general union shall replace the Congress as its highest decision-making body.
4.6.3. $\quad$ All delegates shall be elected on the basis of acting for the union as a whole.
4.6.4. While there is only one branch, all proposals that change the union's principles, constitution or general strategy shall require two-week notice to the membership.

## 5. Article 5: Local Committees

5.1.1. In the short term, the primary purpose of local committees is to strengthen engagement with the union and facilitate organising among members in areas without a nearby branch. The ultimate long-term goal is to establish a new branch originating from the local committee.
5.1.2. A local committee may be formed by at least two good-standing members within a shared locality.
5.1.3. Like a branch, the formation of a local committee must be ratified by the general union within either a Congress or a meeting of the General Coordinating Committee.
5.1.4. This local committee would then be tasked with organising in their geographical areas with the aim of forming a new branch. This work should be supported by the general union, particularly its delegates . Nearby members are encouraged to join existing local committees to contribute to furthering this work. The general union, through the General Coordinating Committee, has the authority to mandate the merger of local committees in nearby areas, facilitating the formation of branches.
5.1.5. Local Committee responsibilities include the following:

- Organising locally and working towards the requirements for a branch formation
- Providing reports to the general union (either through the General Coordinating Committee or General Secretary) regarding its activities and progress every month.
- Local Committees would not be empowered to elect delegates outside of a single local committee member who is delegated the responsibility of regularly liaising with the general union through the General Coordinating Committee.
5.1.6. A key point of difference between branches and local committees is that branches possess distinct rights and responsibilities, while local committees have limited rights. Members of local committees are required to be members of their nearest branch, allowing them to participate in the union's democratic decision-making process
through that branch.


## 6. Article 6. The General Union

### 6.1. Purpose

6.1.1. The greatest responsibility of the general union is to continue to work in line with the union's principles and strategy, working toward the overarching objective of building tenant power.
6.1.2. The general union has the responsibility to support and develop its branches in the pursuit of our common goal. Simultaneously, each branch holds the responsibility of contributing to the fullest development of the overall union.

### 6.2. General delegates and elections

6.2.1. While the union's decision-making is based on the branches, the union as a whole, referred to as the general union, will continue to hold a range of rights and responsibilities.
6.2.2. The general union shall elect union-wide level delegates, referred to as general delegates to serve a number of roles and responsibilities. This includes a General Secretary, Treasurer and Communications Officer.
6.2.3. The General Secretary is responsible for ensuring that the overall union's communications are up to date, that meetings are held as required, and that they are well-organised and democratic.
6.2.4. The General Treasurer is responsible for managing the union's finances, which includes tracking income and expenses, recording membership dues, and maintaining records of members in good standing.
6.2.5. The General Communications Officer oversees the communications committee, ensuring that union communications align with our principles and strategy..
6.2.6. Elections at the union-wide/general level will occur once a year prior to the Congress.
6.2.7. Nominations shall be distributed one month prior to voting, with each vote being collected at the branch level through branch returning officers.
6.2.8. $\quad$ These votes will then be forwarded to the General Coordinating Committee, and the results for general delegate positions will be announced at the Congress.
6.2.9. In the event that a general delegate is recalled or voluntarily steps down, the General Coordinating Committee may nominate a temporary replacement, who can serve for a maximum of two months. Subsequently, a long-term replacement will be elected following the usual general election procedures, with the results compiled and announced by the General Coordinating Committee.

### 6.3. Finances

6.3.1. The union's finances and dues will be collected centrally and distributed by the General Coordinating Committee based on each branch's needs.
6.3.2. The financial records will be managed by the General Treasurer. .
6.3.3. The General Treasurer may approve expenditure of up to $\$ 500$ a month at their discretion. They shall be expected to explain and justify all approved expenditure to the membership through monthly reports provided to the General Coordinating Committee and distributed to the membership.

## 7. Article 7: General Coordinating Committee

### 7.1. Purpose and Functions

7.1.1. To serve as a platform for branches to communicate and share updates on their activities, current membership, and financial status.
7.1.2. To coordinate collaborative union-wide projects, campaigns, tasks, and resource allocation, including publicity and training initiatives.
7.1.3. To facilitate union-wide spending.
7.1.4. To enable union-wide decision-making outside of congresses - for example, the adoption of a union-wide campaign.
7.1.5. To ratify the formation of new branches and local committees

### 7.2. Composition and Structure

7.2.1. $\quad$ The General Coordinating Committee is required to meet at least once per month.
7.2.2. The General Coordinating Committee consists of the Branch Secretary and one Branch steward from each branch. Voting rights on the committee are restricted to these delegates alone. As these delegates are elected at the branch level, they are expected to serve based on a mandate provided by their branch members.
7.2.3. General delegates such as the General Secretary, Treasurer, Communications Officer, etc. also sit on this committee, but they do not possess voting rights, as the authority to vote originates from the branches themselves.
7.2.4. Meetings of the General Coordinating Committee are open to all members to attend; however, only the delegates specified in point 7.2.1. hold voting rights during these meetings.
7.2.5. The quorum for a General Coordinating Committee meeting is set at $50 \%$ of all committee members.
7.2.6. This effectively means that branches should be notified first of any motions or pertinent branch-related information that is presented to this committee. Decisions are then made at the branch level, with mandates for voting in General Coordinating Committee meetings given to their respective delegates.
7.2.7. Branches may provide their delegates with standing mandates concerning specific positions or decisions.
7.2.8. Branch mandates should normally allow delegates to engage in negotiations and reach compromises with other branches.
Delegates should be explicitly informed if a mandate is considered rigid or uncompromising by their branch..
7.2.9. If a significant decision is made without a previous mandate, then that decision must be ratified at the branch level before taking effect.
7.2.10. Wherever independent action or decision-making is taken by the General Coordinating Committee, it shall always remain accountable to the base of the organisation.
7.2.11. Each branch will receive regular reports on the activities of the Coordinating Committee and its delegates.
7.2.12. Tied votes within the General Coordinating Committee are deemed to be failed. In such cases, the expectation is that discussions will continue at both the branch and General Coordinating Committee levels until a majority vote can be reached.

## 8. Article 8. Other General Committees

8.1.1. The union shall also hold the right to create union-wide general committees outside of the General Coordinating Committee.
8.1.2. The union shall maintain a standing General Communications Committee responsible for managing the union's social media presence, promotional and informational materials, and media releases.
8.1.3. The General Secretary, General Treasurer, and Branch Stewards will form a standing General Membership Committee. This committee is responsible for meeting at least once every three months to address the overall growth and well-being of SEQUR and its branches, and to coordinate efforts in supporting further growth.
8.1.4. The formation of further general committees shall require a vote by the General Coordinating Committee or Congress.

## 9. Article 9. The Union Congress

9.1.1. The purpose of the Congress is to determine the long-term trajectory of the union.
9.1.2. This congress holds the authority to amend the union's constitution, principles, and strategy.
9.1.3. Congress acts as the highest decision-making body of the union, in which the branches can come together to decide on the direction of the union over the next year.
9.1.4. Each branch will elect delegates to the congress, proportionate to their number of good-standing members. Branches with fewer than fifty good-standing members are entitled to elect three Congress
delegates. Branches with over fifty good-standing members may elect four congress delegates. Additionally, for every one hundred members in good-standing beyond fifty, a branch can elect one extra delegate.
9.1.5. These Congress delegates will vote in accordance with the mandate given by their respective branches.
9.1.6. The agenda, any significant proposals, and any proposals amending the union strategy or constitution will be distributed to the branches before the event, enabling each branch to formulate their collective positions. Congress delegates from each branch will be responsible for representing and applying these positions during the Congress.
9.1.7. While all union members have the right to attend the Congress, only elected Congress delegates possess voting rights in this body.
9.1.8. The quorum for Congress is defined as $85 \%$ of the total elected Congress delegates.
9.1.9. Congresses may incorporate training and educational sessions, which are open to all members.

## 10. Article 10: Committees and working groups

10.1.1. Committees and working-groups may be established and dissolved at the general level by the General Coordinating Committee, and at the individual branch level during monthly branch meetings. Committees and working groups must have clear mandates outlining their role and function.
10.1.2. Working groups are created for specific short-term objectives or tasks and should not be regarded as long-term union bodies. The expected duration of a working group is under three months.
10.1.3. The membership of committees and working groups can be either open, allowing any member to join, or closed, where a vote is necessary to add members.
10.1.4. Committees and working groups will be dissolved after three months of inactivity, upon the completion of their objective, or by a decision of the originating branch or General Coordinating Committee.
10.1.5. Working groups and committees are accountable to the membership and are required to provide their originating branch or Coordinating Committee with monthly reports that detail their activities in order to justify their continued existence.

## 11. Article 11: Decision-Making

11.1.1. Decision-making at all levels of the union operates on the principle of striving for consensus, but decisions are ultimately reached through a majority vote. Before making any decisions, thorough discussions should be held and all concerns should be considered.
11.1.2. A vote is deemed passed if it secures $50 \%$ plus 1 at the branch and general levels. At the congress level, a vote requires a 60\% majority to be considered passed.
11.1.3. If a member believes that there was insufficient time to make a decision, they can propose a motion to delay the vote. This motion to delay is considered a new motion and will follow the above decision-making processes.
11.1.4. All decision-making bodies of the union require the recording of accurate minutes. Meetings are to be facilitated by a meeting chair, whose responsibility is to ensure that all members have the opportunity to speak and that the meeting proceeds smoothly and democratically. To promote skill development, minute-taking and chairing roles should be rotated throughout the membership.

## 12. Article 12: Delegates

### 12.1. Purpose and Guidelines

12.1.1. Delegates are members who have been delegated to fulfil a specific role and responsibility. Each delegate is expected to align their actions with the mandate provided by the members who elected them. Delegates are required to provide regular reports detailing their activities to the members whose mandate they represent.
12.1.2. A distinction is made between general delegates, congress delegates, and branch delegates. General delegates are elected by the entire membership, are accountable to all members, and are responsible for activities spanning the entire union. On the other hand, branch and congress delegates are elected by members within each branch, are accountable to the membership of that particular branch, and are responsible for congress or branch-specific activities.
12.1.3. Delegates will not be paid. They are volunteer positions where members contribute their time and abilities to further the union's purpose.
12.1.4. Terms for delegates are one year, with a term limit of two for all positions. Upon reaching this limit, a delegate is ineligible to run for the same position again for a minimum of one term. If a temporary replacement delegate serves for less than six months, this temporary term does not count toward the term limits imposed by the union.

### 12.2. The Right of Recall

12.2.1. Given that all authority originates from the membership, acting within their branches, members possess the right to hold delegates accountable and to remove them if deemed necessary. Whether at the branch, general or congress level, if the membership believes
that a delegate is acting inappropriately, failing to fulfil their responsibilities, or deviating from their mandate, the membership may recall them from their position..
12.2.2. To recall branch or congress delegates, any member may propose a motion for recall through a simple motion, which needs to be seconded by another branch member. The proposed motion for recall should be submitted in writing at least two weeks before a branch meeting. Delegates have the right to receive prior notice of any recall motion and are entitled to present a defence if they wish to. Branches may only recall their own Congress delegate.
12.2.3. To recall general delegates, any member may submit their motion of recall to the General Coordinating Committee. This motion must be presented in writing and seconded by another union member. The motion for recall, along with any defence offered by the delegate, will be distributed to all branches for consideration. Votes will be gathered at the next branch meetings, with each branch secretary tasked with compiling the votes of branch members and reporting the results to the General Coordinating Committee.
12.2.4. For both branch, congress and general levels, a motion to recall vote is determined by a simple majority.

