

POW

Structure and decision-making

(revised February 2017)

POW Circus respectfully acknowledges the Wurundjeri People of the Kulin Nation as the traditional custodians of the land on which we perform.

Aim

POW's aim is to enable women aged over 40 to train, develop skills and perform in circus arts.

Objectives

To challenge ageism and ageist assumptions

To promote wellbeing and fitness for women aged 50 and over of any sexual orientation, ethnicity, class, experience and physical ability

To advance the status of women by embracing feminist perspectives and fostering lesbian visibility

To have fun and work safely

POW Structure

POW members together comprise the POW Collective, which has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the continued future of POW Circus.

The Collective may annually appoint a Steering Group. The roles and responsibilities of individual members, the Collective as a whole and the Steering Group are as follows:

Membership & Participation

POW is open to women aged over 40. The size of the membership is restricted by the number of places available in our training workshops. "Members" refers to those who have paid the membership fee for the current year, and who are therefore considered to have agreed to abide by the terms of the POW membership agreement set out below. "Associate members" who are under 40 can join if there is space and doesn't jeopardise women over 40 training. They will pay an associate membership fee and will not be eligible to perform or vote in collective meetings.

POW Circus intensives are open to non-members aged 40 and over.

New women who have not taken POW classes before are entitled to one free trial class before paying membership fee. The option of attending casually is available with the membership fee still being paid.

Women who join POW part way through a term will be able to pay pro-rata fees for the remainder of the term.

POW members who return to training but only take one class before having to stop training again will be given one class credit a year.

Other variations on membership will be discussed by the Steering Group and responded to on a case-by-case basis.

POW membership agreement

As a member of POW I agree:

To have fun

To work safely, within guidelines set by trainers

To respect and support other members of POW, POW trainers and show/gig directors
To take responsibility for being informed about meetings, decisions etc.
To attend collective meetings or to keep up-to-date with what happens at meetings I cannot attend
To have generosity of spirit to accept the majority's decision and to recognise the input of the minority
To support the objectives of POW
To pay the appropriate fee level and to respect POW's ethos of trust

POW Collective

The POW Collective (comprising POW members) will meet on a regular basis to discuss major decisions related to POW Circus. There will also be an annual planning meeting. Meetings will normally be held quarterly. However the Steering Group can also call extraordinary Collective meetings as considered necessary.

A Collective meeting will be considered quorate when 75% or more of members are present. No proxy votes will be accepted. Where a Collective meeting is not quorate but a decision is required, a vote of members present will be taken and the results noted. The issue to be decided will then be put to the whole POW membership (by post or email). Members will be given a fixed period in which to respond and at the end of this period, the results from both the Collective meeting and from the membership mail-out will be collated. The decision supported by the majority of those who have expressed an opinion will stand.

POW Steering Group

The Steering Group, comprising a maximum of 7 members elected at the annual Collective planning day, is responsible for ensuring that POW continues to run efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Steering Group membership will always include the POW Treasurer and POW Secretary.

Decisions on day-to-day issues can be made at Steering Group level, provided they do not contradict either the spirit of POW or this Structure and Decision Making document. These day-to-day decisions can also be put to the Collective if one or more of the Steering Group membership requires it. Decisions on broader issues—for example changes to fees or training arrangements - must be put to the membership (either via email/post or via a scheduled or extraordinary Collective meeting).

Steering Group members will meet regularly (preferably on a monthly basis) to discuss issues related to class management, show and funding opportunities and other issues as they arise. All members are able to attend Steering Group meetings, and to add issues to the Steering Group agenda.

Copies of Steering Group minutes will be emailed to all POW members who have email, and a hard copy given to those who do not have email access, as soon as reasonably possible after Steering Group meetings. The minutes will include the date and location of the next Steering Group meeting.

A Steering Group meeting will be considered quorate when 75 % of SG members are present.

Trainers and show/gig directors are responsible to the Collective through the Steering Group. The Steering Group will report on its activities to Collective meetings.

POW Circus has a bank account for receipt of fees. Two POW Steering Group members are signatories to the POW Bank account. Any cash or cheque withdrawals from the account require the signatures of one of the two POW Steering Group members, one of which should be the treasurer if possible.

Artistic Director

POW does not have a permanent Artistic Director. Where a performance is planned, the show/gig director may attend meetings of either the Collective or the Steering Group as appropriate.

Conflict resolution

POW supports the right of individual members of POW to hold different views and will endeavour to create a safe environment in which debate can take place.

The pathway to decision-making usually features differences between those involved. It is important that this is recognised along with an understanding that despite this, decisions need to be made and agreed to. They then need to be supported and followed through by all those involved. This includes those who may disagree with the decision. To do otherwise is to undermine the process.

POW actively encourages open communication. **The aim of open communication is to achieve the most positive outcome possible.** If you have a concern, bring it out into the open so it can be addressed.

But please think before you speak: How do I achieve a positive outcome? Is this the most appropriate time/context to raise a concern?

POW is created by all of us and it is important to take care of it by airing our concerns in a productive way and seeking solutions through the most appropriate channel.

If you have a concern regarding training, tell your trainer or take it to the Steering Group

If you have a concern about a show, tell the show/gig director or take it to the Steering Group

Bring concerns to the Steering Group as an agenda item, through one of the SG members in your training group, or by attending a Steering Group meeting

If an individual has a concern about the work or conduct of the show/gig director or a trainer that she has been unable to resolve with the person involved, this should be raised with the Steering Group

If you have an issue with another woman in POW, deal with it positively and openly.

Meet with the person involved and discuss your concerns with a view to resolving the issue.

If the outcome of the above is not satisfactory, or you do not feel comfortable doing this, ask another woman to act as an intermediary to facilitate a meeting and assist in reaching a resolution

If this is unsuccessful, or not appropriate, approach the Steering Group, either directly or through a Steering Group member, to assist with ideas, strategies for a suitable means of resolving the problem. The Steering Group may recommend further mediation, including the possibility of engaging a professional mediator

E-mail communication

We acknowledge electronic e-mail is a wonderful asset. It is not acceptable or productive to raise issues/concerns/conflicts or criticisms by e-mail. Raise issues face-to-face with the person concerned, or with a mediator or a Steering Group member. Group e-mails should be limited to essential information and organisational matters. Please be selective about sending e-mails to the whole group. Do all members, whether active or inactive, need to get this e-mail or should it go to one person or the Steering Group?