

Use of Roberts as an authority for parliamentary procedure in Australia.

Robert's Rules of Order is the authority used by Toastmasters International for parliamentary procedure, including for all their educational material concerning parliamentary procedure. However, this does not cover the use of Roberts in Australia, where the subject is known as meeting procedure and for which Toastmasters produced their Westminster version of meeting procedure training (based on the training workshops available from this website).

From the Toastmasters District Administrative Bylaws, Article XIII: Rules of Order

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall be the final authority on parliamentary procedure insofar as Robert's Rules do not conflict with any provision of these administrative bylaws, the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws of Toastmasters International, Policies set by the Toastmasters International Board of Directors, or applicable law. If the District is located in a jurisdiction where Robert's Rules are not a recognized authority on parliamentary procedure, the District may use the recognized authority in the jurisdiction where the District is located in place of Robert's Rules.

The key word in this bylaw is **jurisdiction**.

Jurisdiction exercised by Australian courts is either federal jurisdiction or state or territory jurisdiction. Federal jurisdiction is the authority to exercise the judicial power of the Commonwealth. State or territory jurisdiction is the authority to exercise the judicial power of a State or Territory.

Robert's Rules are not a recognised authority in these jurisdictions where meeting procedure is based on Australian common law. In practice, some of the procedures in Roberts are in direct conflict with law in Australia. The recognised authority in our jurisdiction is "The Law and Procedure at Meetings in Australia", originally published in 1938 by Justice Joske of the Supreme Court and since updated by others to the current 12th edition. As Australian legal entities, Toastmasters clubs and districts are not only permitted by Toastmasters to use the authority in our jurisdiction but are also legally obliged to do so under common law.

Joske's Law and Procedure at Meetings in Australia, 12th Edition explores the various sources of law that govern meetings in Australia: common law, the Corporations Act 2001 and statutory law governing meetings of unit title and strata title companies in all Australian jurisdictions. Thus, it is the accepted legal authority covering the running of meetings in Australia's jurisdictions.

Renton never set out to be the Australian authority on the subject. Rather his books have been seen as a more friendly and a less legal guide to the running of meetings, plus in the past being a cheaper alternative to Joske. Toastmasters International have said that it is not even necessary for Districts in Australia to define the fact that they are using a particular authority in their jurisdiction, this being implied in the Bylaw and by Australian common law. Renton has been nominated as the local authority since Toastmasters Districts were first formed in Australia only because of a need to have members working from a common source.

There are several alternatives to Joske and Renton, although like Renton some options such as Bentley and Puregger are also out of print. The needs for those running meetings here though are fully covered by The Australasian Chairman as available through this website.