

Volunteering in the 21st Century



Committee of Management roles and responsibilities

Understanding the roles, responsibilities and processes required to govern a community group or an organisation is crucial. A well-governed organisation is an organisation that has a clear idea of not simply what it wants to achieve but how it will achieve it.

Membership on an effective and efficient committee isn't just about turning up to meetings and filling a seat. A good committee has a wide range of diverse skills, committed and passionate members, and a dedicated leadership team. Committee members are required to make fair, informed decisions and represent the interests of the entire organisation, not just a subsector. Committee members need to be willing to donate time, learn about the organisation, work cooperatively, make informed decisions and ask hard questions.

Chairperson / President

Strong leadership qualities are required to be a Chair. This involves a willingness to take a lead – to be the first to offer a suggestion, to take responsibility, to allocate responsibility, to speak up, and to make tough decisions when necessary. The Chair should facilitate debate and remove obstacles, broker compromises and postpone or limit confrontations. A Chair who is committed to this will use the time available most effectively and earn the respect and trust of the members.

It is up to the Chair to lead by example. The Chair is responsible for helping clarify and communicate the group's values to other Committee members, funding bodies and the general community.

The Chair has responsibility for ensuring that the Committee of Management attends to the business it needs to, that meetings are conducted properly and authorising records of meetings held.

General role

- Chair Management Committee meetings and facilitate discussion and decision making
- Ensure Management Committee members understand and carry out their roles
- Represent the organisation and act on behalf of the Committee
- Know the Constitution and correct meeting procedure
- Attend meetings regularly and punctually
- Direct meetings so that all in attendance are heard fairly, all business is attended to, and all necessary decisions are made
- May delegate responsibilities to other committee members
- Follow up reports or suggestions on issues

- Stay in touch with the organisation and with other committee members to follow up Committee decisions and note items for future agendas
- Ensure that the group is fulfilling all its responsibilities (legal, financial, planning, evaluation, staff selection)
- Coordinate and manage work of subcommittees and working groups

Secretary

The Secretary has special responsibility for preparing an agenda, documenting the meetings, decisions and appointments of members, and for ensuring that the minutes are sent out. The Secretary may also record the minutes of the meeting, but this can also be done by a minute taker and checked by the Secretary. Depending on the size of the organisation the Secretary may also attend to inward and outward correspondence or may delegate this or other duties to other members or staff.

General role

- Ensure full and correct minutes of all decisions and proceedings of all Committee Meetings and General Meetings including the names of those in attendance
- Ensure a record is kept of the names and addresses of all general members (for sending out notices, voting rights, etc.)
- Ensure a file of inward and outward correspondence is kept and correspondence is attended to
- Keep in close contact with the Chairperson and other office bearers
- Ensure notice of meetings is given as set out in the Constitution
- Attend meetings regularly

- Assist the Chairperson with running the meetings
- Keep appropriate records in a safe place
 - Copy of Constitution*
 - Membership register
 - Correspondence file
 - Minute book*
 - Reports file
 - Policy manual*
 - Common Seal (for legal documents and contracts)
- * For ease of access and reference, it is recommended that these documents are taken to all meetings.
- Compile the Annual Report in collaboration with the Chairperson
- Be able to delegate
- Perform such other duties as the Committee may prescribe

Treasurer

The Treasurer has special responsibility for the finances, and must make sure that payments due to, or by, the organisation, are paid, that the financial records are kept correctly, and that the organisation is working within an agreed financial plan. The Treasurer prepares the financial statements, and must ensure that financial reports presented to the meetings are in a format that can be understood. If committee members do not understand the financial position, the risk is that they will make wrong decisions.

General Role

- Be responsible for handling the finances of the organisation (but not for raising funds)
- Keep regular, true and accurate records (or see that they are kept)
- Keep records and original documents (accounts, receipts and reports) in a safe place
- Liaise with the Secretary (e.g. over membership fees and accounts)
- Write receipts for all money received
- Bank all moneys promptly
- Pay all accounts
- Ensure all cheques are signed in accordance with authority given in the constitution
- Write up all income and payments on computer program or cash book
- Maintain and record the petty cash float
- Keep the committee regularly informed of the financial position of the organisation
- Pay and record any wages
- Make any other payments necessary on behalf of workers – taxation, superannuation, work cover

- Reconcile computer/register/cashbook with bank statement once per month
- Prepare financial report for each meeting
- Prepare an annual statement of Income and Expenditure for the previous financial year for the Public Officer to submit to Consumer Affairs Victoria

Role of general committee members

- Know all your responsibilities as a Committee Member: legal, financial, planning, evaluation
- Be aware of your importance as a member of the team that guides the work of the organisation
- Attend Committee meetings regularly and read committee information before meetings
- Be involved in and informed about decisions at meetings (whether able to attend or not)
- Become involved in special tasks, as an individual or as a subcommittee member
- Ensure that the office bearers carry out their job
- Know about the activities and programs being run by the organisation
- Attend and contribute to annual planning sessions and other functions as required
- Avoid any semblance of personal profit or financial gain and declare any conflicts of interest if they arise
- Act in the best interests of the organisation and support decisions that have been made
- Keep general members informed, and involve others where possible
- Act as an ambassador for the group
- Report to the meeting on any tasks that have been assigned to you

Changes to the role of Public Officer

Under the new *Associations Incorporation Reform Act (2012)*, the term “public officer” is replaced with the term “secretary”. This role assumes the responsibility for reporting to and communicating with Consumer Affairs on behalf of the incorporated association.

There is a slight difference between the Act’s use of the word “secretary” – known as the Act Secretary - and that which we use in respect to a Committee’s Secretary – now known as the Rules Secretary (because this role is prescribed in the Model Rules). They are not in fact the same role, but for ease and convenience the Committee’s Secretary may fill the role of Act Secretary and carry out the tasks previously filled by the public officer.

A separate Act Secretary can be appointed by the Committee but does not have to hold a position on the Committee.