



Central Highlands Association
of Neighbourhood Houses

Good Governance TIP SHEET

Congratulations on your appointment to the Committee of Management for your Neighbourhood House!

In order to act on behalf of the whole community neighbourhood house organisations must meet specific governance demands.

The following list is an overview of requirements for you to meet your governance obligations as a Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP) funded organisation.

These are requirements, not discretionary activities:

- You will have signed a legally binding document in the form of a Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Funding and Service Agreement (NHCP Guidelines document, p9); this requires you to adhere to the responsibilities outlined in the NHCP Guidelines which include:
 - Operating within a community development framework to engage diverse community groups/individuals based on adopted Sector principles (NHCP Guidelines Appendix 1 p31)
 - Engaging with your Network
 - Employing a coordinator for a set number of hours
 - Being open for a set number of hours
 - Having a Strategic Plan and Annual plan
 - Showing a commitment to the NHCP Guidelines
- Accountability processes include participation in the newly developed 'Service Agreement Monitoring for Neighbourhood Houses' and participation in the annual survey and regular census.
- The Guidelines also document 'Failure to meet accountability requirements' (NHCP Guidelines p11) which may include suspension or withdrawal of funding.
- You must have a current Constitution compliant with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012. This requires you to have a list of members, annual report including financials, AGM, an elected COM, Statement of Purpose, Minutes, annual return to CAV.

(* alternatively you may be an auspiced group with particular requirements as outlined in the NHCP guidelines document P 7)

As outlined in the NHCP Guidelines all Neighbourhood Houses must have:

- A current Strategic Plan and Annual Business Plan – what you want to do and how you'll do it.
- An Annual Budget - how you'll fund the objectives of your Strategic Plan

The collective role of Committees of Management includes decision making, policy and direction setting, guarding the values, employing staff, strategic planning, compliance monitoring and financial accountability. It also includes delegating operational management of your organisation to paid staff. The role differentiation between the committee and the staff is important. The governing body should not be micro-managing the operations nor finances, but must delegate implementation of policy and plans and demand reporting which provides the information it requires to meet its accountability responsibilities.

To achieve good governance, the above practices must be supported by:

- Good financial practices
- Bookkeeper / treasurer
- Financial policies

Employment

Committees of Management must meet their legal employer responsibilities which include developing and using appropriate:

- Recruitment Policy - documenting a 'fair and transparent selection process' (NHCP Guidelines P.36)
- Position descriptions
- Employment Contracts
- Employment policies, such as Leave Policy
- Staff Timesheets
- Performance Appraisal Policy and Procedure

You must comply with:

- Current Awards / NHACE Collective Agreement
- Working with Children Checks
- Police Checks
- Long Service Leave provisions
- Superannuation
- Bullying and Harassment policies
- Privacy policy

Is your Neighbourhood House a member of Jobs Australia? Jobs Australia is state wide peak employer body relevant to the Neighbourhood House sector, and provides essential support to you in supporting and managing your responsibilities as an employer.

Policy / Governance Manuals

Does your policy manual include content to guide and protect your organisation in the areas of:

- Governance Policies & Procedures
 - Code of Conduct
 - Delegation of Authority
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Committee Induction
 - Organisation Structure
 - Strategy, Business and Risk
- Management Policies and Procedures
 - Confidentiality and Privacy
 - Feedback, Complaint and Grievance
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Community Access and Inclusion
 - Performance Management and Appraisal
 - Critical Incident Management
 - First Aid
 - Safe Workplace and OHS
- Financial Policies & Procedures
 - Banking & Investment
 - Receiving Payments
 - Purchasing
 - Budget Planning
 - Audit
- Staffing Policies & Procedures
 - Recruitment, Selection & Appointment
 - Volunteers
 - Flexi Time and Time Off In Lieu (TOIL)
 - Professional Development
 - Induction Manual
 - Staff Handbook
 - Working with Children Check
- Operational & Organisational Policies & Procedures
 - Disability Support
 - Student Handbook
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Appropriate Use of Technology

Government Legislation awareness

Committees of Management are not expected to have an intimate knowledge of the detailed provisions of all relevant legislation. However, they are expected to have a good working knowledge of some key pieces of legislation, which may include (as appropriate to your organisation):

- Association Incorporations Reform Act
- Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Act
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Copyright Act
- Food Handling Regulations

- Childcare Regulations
- Child Safe Standards
- Liquor Licencing
- Fundraising Legislation (eg for raffles)
- Privacy Acts

Good community development practices

- How do your policies, procedures and practices meet the Sector principles? (NHCP Guidelines P31)
- Identify the ways your house complies with the Neighbourhood House Community Development Model (NHCP Guidelines p16)
- Do you have a good knowledge of your local community demographics and are you able to demonstrate how you encourage and engage with local community?

Need assistance?

CHANH	0428 325 926
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria	03 9602 1228
Jobs Australia	03 9349 3699
Department of Health and Human Services	03 5333 6530