



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

Your committee has signed a legally binding document in the form of a Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Funding and Service Agreement (NHCP Guidelines document, p10);

- 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 p26)
 - 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
- The Guidelines also document 'Failure to meet accountability requirements' (NHCP Guidelines p12) which may include suspension or withdrawal of funding.
- You must have, and be familiar with, 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.

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

- A current Strategic Plan and Annual plans – 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 eg.

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.30)
- 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 or NHV Assist? These organisations provide essential employment 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
 - Decision Making
 - Deed of Delegation
 - Conflict of Interest
 - Confidentiality
 - Committee Induction
 - Decision by Email
- Financial Policies & Procedures
 - Banking & Investment
 - Petty Cash
 - Purchasing
 - Budget Planning
 - Audit

- Staffing Policies & Procedures
 - Recruitment, Selection & Appointment
 - Time in Lieu
 - Confidentiality and Privacy
 - Grievance
 - Induction Manual
 - Staff Handbook
 - Working with Children Check
- Operational & Organisational Policies & Procedures
 - Disability Support
 - Grievance Procedures
 - Student Handbook
 - Child Safe Standards
 - Continuous Improvement
 - Computer and Internet Use

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 (e.g. for raffles)
- Privacy Acts

Good community development and community engagement practices

- How do your policies, procedures and practices meet the Sector principles? (NHCP Guidelines p26)
- Identify the ways your house complies with the Neighbourhood House Community Development Model (NHCP Guidelines p15)
- 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?

Central Highlands Association on Neighbourhood Houses	0428 325 926
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria/ NHV Assist	03 9602 1228
Jobs Australia	03 9349 3699

Thank you to Neighbourhood Houses Barwon in the development of this document.