

Spotlight On GOVERNANCE FIRST STEPS

June 2026

Governance Spotlight On Series

This resource is part of our governance **Spotlight On** series. In each edition we focus on one aspect of governance, and offer supports to help develop a great governance experience.

Top Tip: Support committee recruitment with upfront information about the role, culture and practicalities of your committee. Use the **Committee Profile Template** from **Spotlight On Edition 1** to create a one page overview of your committee.

Got suggestions? Help us tailor **Spotlight On** via the feedback link below:

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Everyone starts somewhere...

Joining the Committee of Governance (CoG) of a Neighbourhood House is the beginning of a meaningful and rewarding journey.

You're stepping into a leadership role that is deeply rooted in the **principle of community ownership**—where local people shape local solutions.

As a CoG member, you are not just overseeing an organisation; you are stewarding a community asset, ensuring it thrives today and remains strong for future generations. This is a role of trust, care, and collaboration. It's about guiding the House with integrity, supporting its purpose, and protecting its place in the community.

Whether you're new to governance or bringing experience, your voice matters—and together, you'll help shape a vibrant future for your Neighbourhood House.

CELEBRATE STRENGTHS - BE CURIOUS, OPEN AND KIND - SMALL STEPS FORWARD

*Spotlight On is a shared
neighbourhood house networks
initiative*



So, how does this work?

- Every CoG member is **equally responsible** for the organisation's legal and financial obligations—regardless of role or title.
- Your organisation's Rules (or Constitution) define its **purpose, membership, and governance processes**. Read them early.
- The role of the Chair is to facilitate the committee. All decisions must be **made collectively** by the CoG.
- Your organisation holds a contract with the Victorian Government to deliver the **Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP)** – which funds your manager and includes a number of requirements.
- The **Deed of Delegation** outlines what the manager can do and what remains the CoG's responsibility. It's key to managing risk.
- You must understand the organisation's **financial position, and act to prevent insolvency**. Ask questions, seek support, and attend finance training if needed.
- The CoG sets the **strategic vision and policies**, and monitors their implementation to ensure the House meets community needs.
- You are responsible for ensuring the organisation **meets legal obligations**—employment law, OH&S, insurance, funding agreements.
- CoG members may be required to **sign contracts** on behalf of the organisation. Know what you're signing and why.
- The NHCP provides the House with **Insurance from the VMIA**, covering a number of insurance needs, including **Directors and Officer Liability**. Make sure you understand what this means.
- Outside of meetings, if CoG members are volunteering in a different capacity or participate in House programs they **fall under the manager's jurisdiction**. Committee members aren't under the jurisdiction of the Manager if they are performing their role outside of meetings, for example, representing the organisation at events or to government.

[**DOWNLOAD ACTIVITY 1**](#)

The Very Important Papers

[**CLICK HERE: GET THE LIST**](#)

Let's talk about your toolkit—the essential documents that help you steer the Neighbourhood House with confidence, clarity, and just the right amount of caffeine. These aren't just dusty files in a drawer or forgotten PDFs in your inbox—they're your survival kit. Your **Rules** (Constitution) are the map, the **Strategic Plan** is your compass, the **Deed of Delegation** is your “who does what” cheat sheet, and the **Financial Reports** are your fuel gauge. Add in **policies**, the **Annual Report**, and **contracts**, and you've got everything you need to lead with purpose and protect your House as a thriving community asset.

Whether you prefer paper or digital, make sure you know where these documents live—and don't be afraid to ask for them. Because good governance isn't about knowing everything—**it's about knowing where to look, and asking the right questions.**

Governance Red Flags

Committees are made up of people, and even with the best intentions, it's easy to slip into habits that aren't ideal for good governance.

Red flags aren't about blame — they're simply signs that something needs attention.

By understanding what to look for, and knowing how to respond early, committees can stay on track, make decisions with confidence, and keep their work healthy and transparent.

If you feel that something isn't right, use this Red Flag Action Plan to work out your concerns and how you can address them:

[DOWNLOAD ACTIVITY 2](#)

These are signs that something may not be working as it should:

- **Decisions made outside meetings** or without full CoG input.
- **Lack of transparency** in financial reporting or access to documents.
- **One person dominating discussions** or making unilateral decisions.
- **Conflicts of interest** not being declared or managed.
- **Poor record-keeping** or missing minutes and reports.
- **Unclear delegation** between CoG and Manager—blurred lines of authority.
- **Disrespectful behaviour** or lack of psychological safety in meetings.
- **Avoidance of difficult topics** like risk, complaints, or compliance.
- **No induction or access to key documents** for new members.
- **Not a signatory** to the bank account
- **No online access to statements** and bank balances

Join us for an evening chat

Spotlight On Chat is an online chat with committee members and Network Managers - an informal conversation where related governance ideas and issues can be shared and discussed.

The next **Spotlight On** Chat will be held on Tuesday July 14th, at 5:30pm. To be part of the chat, **[CLICK HERE to book a spot](#)** and we will send you a link to join.

If you are having issues with any of the links, please don't hesitate to contact your local Network Manager:

- EGNNH - Toni Baldwin - 0459 835 215 - network@egnnh.net.au
- RANCH - Renae Knight - 0437 859 874 - networker@ranch.net.au
- CHANH - Jane Grimwood - 0428 325 926 - networker@chanh.org.au

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands we live and work on, and honor the enduring connection that Aboriginal and Torres Strait people have to the land. We pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all First Nations People.