Spotlight On... YOUR STRATEGIC PLAN

November 2026



The Organisational Powerlifter

A strategic plan shouldn't be another document sitting in the governance folder. Used well, it's the powerlifter of your organisation.
A strategic plan helps leaders distinguish between:

"That's a good idea," *and*
"That's a good idea that moves us towards our goals."

That difference matters. Neighbourhood Houses are filled with opportunities, requests, partnerships, funding programs and community needs. Without a clear strategic direction, it's easy to over commit, or underperform. A strategic plan helps ensure you're busy with the right things. At its simplest your Strategic Plan asks:

"Where are we going, and why does it matter?"

That's a lot of lifting for one document.

A good Strategic Plan should influence priorities, funding decisions, annual planning and governance.

Check if your current plan is working for you.

DOWNLOAD: YOUR PLAN AT WORK

The Organisational Anchor

If your Strategic Plan guides where to go, every other document works on how to get there:



- Your **Annual Plan** translates strategic goals into actions for the next 12 months.
- Your **Budget** invests resources in the priorities that matter most.
- Your **Policies** ensure decisions and behaviours align with your values.
- Your **Risk Register** identifies obstacles that may get in the way of your goals.
- Your **Staff and Volunteer** position descriptions focus effort, energy and talent on the work that takes you where you want to go.
- Your **Evaluation and Reporting** help you understand whether you're actually making progress.



Katie Bugden Art, CANVA

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.

Starting With Why

Most Neighbourhood Houses know what they do: programs, activities, events, volunteering and bringing people together. Strategic planning asks you to step back and think about why you do it.

What does your House contribute to your community? What difference are you trying to make? If your House wasn't there, what would your community miss?

Understanding this helps you get clear about your purpose.

And that matters because a strategic plan should be fit for purpose. It doesn't need to be long, complicated or full of corporate language. It needs to reflect your House, your community and what you're trying to achieve, and give you a useful direction for the years ahead.

Start with your Why, then build a plan that works for you.

Where are you at?

A strategic plan should be fit for purpose - is yours?

Use the prompts in our 'Quick Check' activity to find out.

DOWNLOAD: THE QUICK CHECK

A pathway that suits you...

There's no one 'right' way to do strategic planning.

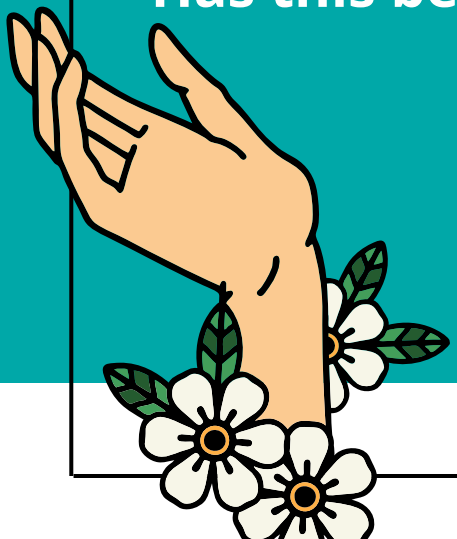
You might use a consultant, work with another House or your Network, tap into local expertise, or tackle it yourselves with your Committee, staff and volunteers.

However you get there, the important thing is that your plan feels like your organisation and reflects your shared direction and values.

For Houses keen to have a go themselves, the *Spotlight On* team is developing practical, self-guided resources that build on your strengths, connections and community assets. From there, you can explore opportunities and use what you discover to help shape your future direction.

Sound like something your House could use? Have a chat with your Network Manager to find out more.

Has this been useful? Lets talk about it.



If this edition of ***Spotlight On*** has got you thinking, talk about it!

- In your next Committee meeting
- With your Neighbourhood House Network or other NHs
- In this feedback link!

Spotlight On is a shared neighbourhood house networks initiative created by CHANH, RANCH and EGNNH. Previous editions can be found on chanh.org.au/spotlight-on/

East Gippsland Network of Neighbourhood Houses

RANCH

Central Highlands Association of Neighbourhood Houses

Neighbourhood Houses The Heart of Our Community