



Management Support Unit (MSU)



Information Sheet 3:

Roles and responsibilities of officer bearers and general members of Board of Management of incorporated associations

Whilst it is commonly accepted in community organisations that paid staff should have job descriptions, the notion that honorary boards of management have agreed role descriptions is not so widespread. In order to encourage accountability and efficiency it is reasonable that the role of the committee should be set out in writing and discussed with the people concerned before new members take office.

All members must ensure that they:

1. Are aware of their responsibilities under the relevant incorporating legislation and common law
2. Put the interests of the organisation above all else
3. Act in all instances with due care
4. Are always honest
5. Avoid any conflict of interest by being up-front about likely conflicts and withdrawing from any discussion or decisions where this is an issue
6. Do not gain in a personal way from being a Board member
7. Do not divulge any confidential information outside of the appropriate forum

Board members are expected to:

1. Commit to the role of Board member
2. Regularly attend board meetings
3. Keep up to date by reading the minutes, reports and any other necessary meeting papers.
4. Try to be as active as possible in decision making
5. Understand how the organisation works, including the organisations services, their programs and their staff
6. Be familiar with the Constitution and the organisations responsibilities in regards to legislation and finances
7. Be active in planning for the future direction of the organisation
8. Be faithful and supportive of the organisation in the eyes of the public
9. Take responsibility for particular areas of work which may mean involvement in sub-committees
10. Regularly attend the organisations functions and represent your organisation at outside functions
11. Approve relevant documents including responsibility for approving the organisation's budget

The Chairperson/President is responsible for :

1. Ensuring regular Board meetings are organised
2. Ensuring that the Constitution and rules are adhered to including adherence to a quorum
3. Maintaining a neutral position during discussion and decision making including noting decisions or motions and asking the meeting to vote on these
4. Delivering a casting vote in the event of an equal vote
5. Preparing an agenda in consultation with the executive officer
6. Dealing with agenda items in order of importance, keeping discussion and decision making relevant and setting time limits if and when necessary
7. Ensuring all members have the opportunity to speak , addressing themselves “through the chair”
8. Preserving order throughout the meeting
9. If necessary suggest appropriate procedures to deal with any difficulties in getting through agenda items
10. Signing the minutes of the previous meeting after they have been confirmed as a true record
11. Representing the organisation at all levels of the community

The Vice President is responsible for:

Assisting the president with his/her duties and filling in as acting chair in **the absence of the Chairperson/President:**

The Secretary is responsible for :

1. Making sure all correspondence and official records of the organisation is up to date, accurate and in order (other than financial)
2. Assisting the Chair and Executive Officer to organise Board meetings
3. Ensuring the minutes of the meeting are taken, either by themselves or delegated to a minute taker
4. Ensuring that information for the Board and from the Board is dealt with in an efficient manner.
5. Ensuring that meeting papers (agenda, correspondence and previous minutes) have been distributed
6. working with the Chair/President to ensure the meeting runs smoothly
7. Knowing the rules of the organisation and taking responsibilities for all the legal requirements of incorporation.

The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. Overseeing the financial affairs of the organisation
2. Keeping the Board informed about the finances in a way that Board members can understand
3. Reviewing of the budget
4. Ensuring the financial records are current and in order
5. Providing financial and investment advice
6. Organising and presenting the annual balance sheet and accounts to members of the organisation at the AGM

The Public Officer is responsible for :

1. Notifying the Department of Fair Trading of any changes in the official affairs of the association and its financial position
2. For keeping a registrar of Board members
3. For providing and official Annual Statement

The Public Officer must reside in the State/Territory of registration (NSW).

(Source: G Kennedy, *The Management Committee: Overview* Ettinger House Inc; Conflict Resolution Network, *Meeting Procedures*)

Relevant resources available from the Management Support Unit (MSU)

- Community Child Care Co-operative *Effective Committee* 1999 (Loan)
- Fishel, D. *The Book of the Board Effective Governance for Non-Profit Organisations* 2003 Federation Press (Loan)
- Kennedy G. *The Management Committee: overview* 1995 Ettinger House (Loan)

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