



Tip Sheet 2

GOVERNANCE and Neighbourhood Houses

July 2017

In order to act on behalf of the whole community 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 (Appendix 1)
 - Engaging with your Network.
 - Employing a coordinator for a set number of hours
 - Being open for a set number of hours
 - Having an 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' (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 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.

Appendix 2 outlines the 'Governance role of committees of management'

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

- Good financial practices
- Bookkeeper / treasurer
- Financial policies eg.

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 TOIL 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? - the state wide peak employer body relevant to the Neighbourhood House sector.

Policy / Governance Manuals

Does your policy manual include:

- **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 Action Plan
 - 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, including:

- 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 and community engagement practices;

- How do your policies, procedures and practices meet the Sector principles? NHCP Guidelines P31
- 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:

Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Houses	5241 4810
Neighbourhood Houses Victoria	9602 1228
Jobs Australia	9349 3699
Department of Health and Human Services – Barwon	5226 4692