



Somerset  
REGIONAL COUNCIL

# RUNNING A COMMUNITY ORGANISATION

A toolkit to help community organisations succeed



## Finding good tools and information for community organisations can be a minefield.

As part of Somerset Regional Council's commitment to our community organisations, including local not-for-profits and sports clubs, we have done the work for you. Here is a list of some of the best web pages and information for community organisations, in particular incorporated associations in Queensland, to fine tune what you do, including information on governance, policies and procedures.



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## STARTING YOUR ORGANISATION

Most community organisations are set up as incorporated associations under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Act)*. If you are just starting your organisation, the [Incorporated Associations Smart Business Guide](#) will help you along.



**Incorporated  
Associations Smart  
Business Guide**

Becoming an incorporated association gives your organisation legal recognition as its own entity, separate from its members. This status provides protection for committee members by limiting personal liability and allows the organisation to own property, enter contracts and apply for funding in its own name. Incorporation can also offer financial advantages such as income tax exemptions and GST concessions, while making it easier to partner with governing bodies and qualify for grants.

There are also other legal structures available, such as public companies limited by guarantee. You can read more about the different legal structures [here](#).



**Different Legal  
Structures**

## CONSTITUTIONS

Your constitution sets out the rules for your organisation. To maintain the benefits of being an incorporated association, organisations must operate in line with the rules set out in their constitution.

When starting an incorporated association, you can choose to adopt the [Model Rules](#) or develop your own constitution – either way, it must be approved by the Office of Fair Trading.



**Incorporated  
Associations Model  
Rules**

It's important that you have read and are familiar with your constitution. You can refer to these resources on [understanding your constitution](#) and its [common terms](#).



**Constitution  
Resources**

It's recommended to revisit your constitution every 5 years. Your constitution may need to be updated to reflect changes in the *Associations Incorporation Act* or changes in your organisation.

If you wish to change your constitution, the resolution stating the change has to go to a general meeting and be adopted by at least 75% of the voters present. A Rule Amendment form needs to be completed and sent to the Office of Fair Trading to ensure it aligns with the Act and to be approved.

## POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

While the constitution outlines the process of how an organisation operates, it should not go into too much detail. That is because the detail of day-to-day operations are addressed in other documents, such as bylaws or an operations manual. [Read more](#) about the difference between a constitution, bylaws and your policies.



**Governance  
Document  
Hierarchy**

Compiling your organisation's policies and making them easily accessible is a must do for all organisations. Not only will this help ensure information is not lost when committees change, they are also an important induction tool for new committee members and volunteers.

Examples of essential documents for induction and good governance:

- Constitution and bylaws
- Policies and codes of conduct
- Position descriptions and contact numbers
- Authorities and delegations
- Meeting minutes
- Contracts, agreements and funding
- Strategic and recruitment plans
- Ongoing sponsorship or other obligations

This [Succession Planning Guide](#) provides a more detailed handover checklist to help ensure the smooth transition between outgoing and incoming committee members.



**Succession  
Planning Guide**

Other policies that your organisation may require include:

- Member Protection Policy
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Social Media Policy
- Interacting with Children Guidelines
- Volunteer Agreements
- Alcohol Policy
- Chaperone Policy
- Communication Policy
- Workplace, Health and Safety
- Picking up and Dropping off of Children

A Member Protection Policy is essential for best practice. The Member Protection Policy outlines how your organisation will meet its obligation to provide a safe environment and maintain responsible behaviour and fair decision-making.

[Play by the Rules](#) provides a suite of templates and resources relevant to member protection. Organisations working with vulnerable people should also consider relevant human rights, discrimination and safeguarding legislation.



**Play by the Rules**

## CLOUD DOCUMENT STORAGE

Cloud storage can keep your organisation's documents and information accessible and safe. There are several sites that offer the ability to store essential documents online. This offers better security for your information as it can't be stolen, lost or damaged.

Example cloud storage providers:

- onedrive.live.com
- google.com/drive
- dropbox.com

Not-for-profit organisations can access discounts to leading technology providers and products. See [Connecting Up](#) for more information.



Connecting Up

## MEETINGS

Your committee should hold general committee meetings as often as you need to enable you to fulfil the responsibilities of the committee (check your constitution for any mandatory requirements for general meetings).

Your organisation must hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year within six months of the end of your financial year.

Some decisions of an incorporated association must be made by members at a general meeting (Annual General Meeting or Special General Meeting). These are things like changing the organisation's name, updating the constitution, dissolving the organisation or merging with another organisation. If any of these decisions need to be made sooner than the next AGM, the management committee can call a Special General Meeting (SGM).

Read more about the different types of meetings on the [Queensland Government](#) website or running meetings in this [Meeting Guide](#).



Meeting Guides



## RUNNING AN AGM

The AGM is a formal meeting required under the Act. Start preparing for your AGM at least a month before, as you will need to include your financial statements and audit report. You can use [this guide](#) to help you prepare for your AGM.



**AGM Preparation Guide**

Read more about preparing for your AGM and access a suite of templates, including an AGM agenda [here](#).



**AGM templates**



Your AGM agenda will generally include:

- Meeting open
- Attendance and apologies
- Minutes of the previous Annual General Meeting
- Business arising from minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
- President's report
- Treasurer's report and financial statement
- Annual financial statement and audit (or verification) report
- Subcommittee and any other reports
- Disclosure of remuneration
- Disclosure of conflicts of interest
- Appointment of candidates to fill other designated positions
- Appointment of auditor (or accountant) for the present financial year
- Election of life members
- Special resolution/s
- Meeting Close

Read more about running a successful Annual General Meeting [here](#).



**AGM Steps**

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The management committee or board is a group of people elected to govern the organisation on behalf of all members. An incorporated association requires a minimum of 3 members, often the president, secretary and treasurer. Your organisation may have other general committee members or involve other non-committee volunteers or staff.

The committee should be where ideas are generated, strategic direction is set and decisions are made. While volunteers and staff help with the day-to-day tasks.

Read more about the roles and responsibilities of your committee [here](#). Your peak body, state or federal organisation may also provide position descriptions, such as those provided by [Swimming Australia](#).



**Committee  
Roles and  
Responsibilities**



## WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (BLUE CARDS)

Blue Cards are compulsory for committee members and anyone working with children (some exemptions apply, [see website for details](#)).

Organisations that fall within the Blue Card system are required to implement Child and Youth Risk Management Strategies.



**Blue Card Services**

## INSURANCE

Your organisation will need to ensure you have the appropriate insurance cover in place to protect volunteer staff and committee members.

Types of insurance:

- Public Liability Insurance
- Professional Indemnity Insurance
- Property and Contents Insurance
- Volunteer Workers Personal Accident Insurance

Find out more about insurance through the [Volunteering Queensland website](#).

If you are affiliated with a State Sporting Organisation (SSO) you will likely be covered for Public Liability Insurance, Professional Indemnity Insurance and some other forms of insurance. If you are unsure of your insurance cover through your SSO, you should contact them and clarify.



**Volunteering  
Queensland**



## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Planning does not have to be difficult.

Here are some high-level steps:

- Consider the organisation's purpose and goals
- Explore the organisation's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with a SWOT analysis
- Develop your wish list and actions
- Determine who is going to do what by when to achieve your goals
- Implement, update and report

To improve strategic planning, involve members and stakeholders to learn about their goals and wish list for the organisation.

Access a range of resources to support the strategic planning process [here](#).



**Strategic Planning Resources**

## FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Good financial management is the responsibility of the whole committee and not just the treasurer. All community members should be familiar with the basics of financial management.

Review these [resources](#) to gain an understanding on an incorporated association's financial reporting requirements and how to read financial statements.



**Financial Reporting Resources**

An incorporated association's financial statements must be audited or verified before the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The type of report (audited or verified) depends on your organisation's size and can be found on the [OFT website](#).



**Office of Fair Trading**

Monthly financial reports are a good measure of an organisation's financial health. Use a financial software system to keep track and produce regular reports.

The documents listed below will give the committee an accurate picture of where they are at financially.

- Profit and loss
- Year to date vs budget
- Balance sheet
- Outstanding debtors
- Outstanding creditors
- Bank reconciliation
- Cash flow

All organisations can benefit from preparing an annual budget. A budget can be very simple, based on actual income and expenditure in recent years, as well as known or likely changes for the coming year. Here is a short [guide to budgets](#).



**Guide to Budgets**

It's also important to protect your organisation's money from accidental loss, theft or fraud. Review this fact sheet on [financial safeguards](#).



**Financial Safeguards**

## SUCCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning is a key area that is often overlooked, but essential to an organisation's long-term survival and success. One or two people can't look after everything, they'll become burnt out and the next generation of leaders will be left unprepared to manage the organisation. Knowledge and experience are transferable assets that must be passed on to leaders of the future to continue growth.

By planning for the future, you will open the organisation and current leaders up to new opportunities. For example, a president/secretary that is currently performing the duties of the three roles can now focus on improving sponsorship or securing partnerships with local organisations.

This [succession plan template](#) guides you through the preparation of a succession plan.



**Succession Plan Template**



## GRANTS

There are a range of different community grants available to organisations. These grants can assist in upskilling volunteers, infrastructure upgrades, cultural inclusiveness, committee upskilling, equipment and other. Check out [fundingcentre.com.au](https://fundingcentre.com.au) for the top 10 tips for getting a grant, plus the grants and fundraising hub.



Funding Centre

Successful funding applications are based on good planning. If you have a well-planned project, grant money is a great way to get it accomplished. Start your project planning early to be ready for when the right grant comes along.

More information on planning for a project and securing grant finding is available [here](#).



Planning and Grant Resources

## FUNDRAISING AND SPONSORSHIP

Fundraising is a great way to make money for your organisation, as your greatest supporters are your members, their families, friends and the local community.

[Swimming Queensland](#) has some great ideas to get you started and important information to consider.



Swimming Queensland Fundraising Resources

Developing relationships and integrating into your local community is key to attracting sponsor investment.

[Club Help](#) has a useful online resource for acquiring and retaining sponsors. See the Queensland Government [Sponsorship Guide](#) for tips on creating effective partnerships with businesses.



Sponsorship Guides

### Example grant opportunities

- Gambling Community Benefit Fund from [justice.qld.gov.au/corporate](https://justice.qld.gov.au/corporate)
- Sport and recreation grants from [qld.gov.au/recreation](https://qld.gov.au/recreation)
- Community Grants Hub from [communitygrants.gov.au](https://communitygrants.gov.au)
- GrantConnect from [grants.gov.au](https://grants.gov.au)
- Somerset Regional Council Community Assistance Grants from [somerset.qld.gov.au](https://somerset.qld.gov.au)

## VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Volunteers are critical to community organisations and are the most valuable asset a community organisation can possess.

[Club Help](#) has a range of resources to aid you in finding, recruiting, developing, maintaining and acknowledging volunteers.



Club Help

Volunteering Queensland offers a [library of resources](#) including research, national standards and guides, such as the guide for [volunteer reward and recognition](#).



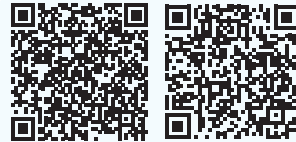
Volunteering Queensland

The Australian Sports Commission's [Volunteer Resource Hub](#) provides resources, tools and practical tips and tricks to assist in attracting, retaining and celebrating volunteers.



Volunteer Resource Hub

The [Queensland Government](#) provides resources on attracting volunteers and [Justice Connect](#) provides advice on managing volunteers, including your legal obligations.



Volunteer Management Resources

## RISK MANAGEMENT

Whilst community organisations are generally not-for-profit, it is also important that they remain not-for-loss. Managing risk is critical to ensure that an organisation does not fall into the red and that it looks after its volunteers and members. It is the responsibility of the committee to lead in this area.

Identifying risk and appropriate measures can seem like an all-consuming and overwhelming task to complete. A committee should look to manage risks collaboratively (one person cannot foresee and manage every issue) and practically. Risk management is not just about financial risk; a sound risk management policy is a must to protect your organisation and its members. It's important to remember that something is better than nothing when thinking of a risk management strategy. The process of drafting a strategy is always a rewarding process.

[Volunteering Australia](#) provides a guide on managing risks.



Volunteering Australia Risk Guide

[Business continuity planning](#) helps you respond to unexpected events and situations which can interrupt your operations. More information about preparing for disasters is available through the Queensland Government [here](#).



**Business  
Continuity  
Planning**

## EVENT MANAGEMENT

As a community organisation, you may focus your energy into one or two dedicated large-scale fundraising events. When done well, events can be a good way of raising significant cash to support strategic projects.

Download a planning and budget template from [ClubHelp](#).



**ClubHelp**

Another useful resource is the Our Community [Event Management Checklist](#).



**Our Community  
Event Management  
Checklist**

## FACILITIES

Depending on the type of land access agreement an organisation has, it may be required to manage and maintain its own facilities. An organisation's responsibilities will be outlined in a lease agreement, memorandum of understanding or user agreement.

In the instance that an organisation is responsible for managing its own facilities, it is important to manage facilities and plan for future growth and maintenance. The [Western Australian Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries](#) has created a useful resource to assist in managing a facility and planning for the future. The Queensland Government provides a guide on [facility planning](#).



**Facility  
Planning**

## EQUIPMENT AND ASSETS

It is important for an organisation to physically maintain and track the location of its equipment and assets.

An asset register will allow an organisation to monitor the lifecycle and location of its equipment.

The [Western Australian Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries](#) have created a resource to assist organisations in creating an asset management plan.



**Asset Management**

## NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Somerset Regional Council

07 5424 4000

[mail@somerset.qld.gov.au](mailto:mail@somerset.qld.gov.au)

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Set your club up with the right foundations  
and everyone's a winner!

The information presented in this guide:

- is current as of October 2025
- is general in nature and does not consider your organisation's specific situation
- is an information source only and should not be considered as legal advice