



# Strathbogie Shire Council

## Community Planning Guidelines for Community Action Groups

January 2013

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## 1 Introduction

This guideline applies to Community Action Groups only. The Strathbogie Shire Council understands that each of its communities is in a good position to contribute to improving the quality of life for residents who live and work in their area. With the introduction of community planning to the municipality, Council acknowledges that promoting a more inclusive community ensures actions that are more responsive to local needs and encourage diversity.

The introduction of community planning may challenge local groups who have provided volunteer services for many years. Community planning is about bringing people together, and through cooperation, groups can achieve better results by developing projects with broader benefits to their group and the community generally.

Adjusting to a new role is part of the challenge for community groups and Council. Changes must be implemented in a transparent, inclusive and democratic way.

To achieve a strong relationship between Council and its communities, guidelines are essential. They assist Community Action Groups and Council to work together by addressing issues in a collective and cooperative way.

In developing these guidelines, Strathbogie Shire Council acknowledges the huge number of hours given to each community by many volunteers and understands that community planning can be challenging and sometimes difficult.

These guidelines aim to provide community members with a better understanding of their role in community planning. They set clear goals, boundaries and procedures. The guidelines aim to:

- recognise and promote residents' contributions to the future of their community
- clarify and improve the accountability of decision-makers in the community process
- ensure that the roles of community planning are clear, and improve the quality of life for community members
- provide better opportunities for genuine participation and consultation about decisions in community planning

Community planning brings changes to the way community activities are developed and managed. Previously this was characterised by:

- a single issue group advocating to Council to fund a project or initiative
- Council managing the project which included some consultation with the group
- once commenced, the group had little input into the development and control of the project
- Council was expected to manage and finalise the project and no capacity building took place

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Under the community development model community planning is characterised by:

- public consultation to identify high priority projects determined democratically at a whole community meeting
- groups/individuals with interest and/or expertise through the formation of working groups are able to develop the project, and seek broader community input to ensure community expectations are met
- working groups can identify funding sources and work with Council in developing the project
- responsibility for project completion rests with the community, and for joint community/Council projects, responsibility is shared
- Council provides support and advice

## 2 The Importance of Community Planning

Community planning is a vital corporate tool that helps Council to establish its future direction. It helps Council guide and support communities to achieve their aspirations through partnerships with Council, government and non-government agencies.

One of the benefits of community planning is to provide a mechanism for interface between residents, Council and other levels of government.

Council acknowledges that strong partnerships between Council and community are built from open and transparent community planning processes.

Community planning in the Strathbogie Shire is therefore a tool used for future planning to address initiatives and activities that affect all local residents, social groups and businesses.

The initiatives identified in the community plan provide a basis for all discussions, actions and developments that occur in the succeeding period. The benefits of preparing a community plan are:

- developing a better understanding of the needs of communities
- identifying appropriate strategies to respond to community needs
- identifying services, facilities and activities needed in each community
- advocating on behalf of the community to other government agencies for appropriate funding for initiatives identified by communities
- monitoring changes to community needs
- providing improved facilities, services and initiatives that take into account stakeholder needs
- contributing to improved quality of life for each community

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## 2.1 Essential Components of a Community Plan

Council supports community plans and action plans that:

- include information that is supported by data and research
- demonstrate a high degree of input from the community and its groups/organisations
- actively encourages inclusion from diverse groups in the community, including people with disabilities, indigenous people, young people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- demonstrate cooperation between community members and groups

## 2.2 Realistic Expectations

Council encourages community plans to develop a range of projects including large-scale and more complex projects that may be staged over a longer period of time. The key is for Council and the community to work together on those that require strategic planning and/or significant funding.

Developing these projects may take longer but they are critical for the long term success of the community. A process of consultation with a broad range of residents and community groups should be undertaken to support the conceptual development of the project prior to seeking Council support and assistance.

Concept plans should be clear and outline expectations for Council and the wider community. Council will consider its response to community projects in the context of the Council Plan, budget and other strategic plans.

Council is responsible for ensuring that projects are equitably distributed across the Shire, according to prioritised need. Budget limitations and competing priorities may result in a longer time-frame than is ideal. Community awareness of these limitations will ensure their expectations of Council support and the time-frames involved are realistic.

## 2.3 Community Planning Principles

Community planning will be undertaken by Community Action Groups. Principles underpinning the community planning program have been developed to ensure that the program meets Council and community expectations. These principles are:

- community plans should be adhered to and inform decision-making on strategies and actions
- actions and initiatives may evolve to allow new or alternative outcomes providing they are clearly linked to the community plan
- development of a community plan provides clarity of purpose for discussions with Council about issues the community has identified
- community plans are submitted to Council for endorsement, and these provide information to Council when developing its strategic plans

## Strathbogie Shire Council Community Planning Guidelines

- Community Action Groups must be appointed a Committee of Management under a Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1989. The committees must comply with the provisions of the Section 86 Act and Regulations. (Violet Town Community Action Group is an incorporated entity and was established prior to the introduction of Council's community planning program and is therefore exempt from this requirement.)
- Community Action Groups represent the community through a democratic process of open, community planning sessions

The following issues are not considered part of community planning:

- issues that arise after community plans are finalised
- projects that do not go through a proper consultation process to determine if the project is a priority for the community

### 2.4 Access and Inclusion Principles

Strathbogie Shire comprises people from diverse backgrounds, abilities, interests and needs. Community planning should be based on principles of access and inclusion for all residents.

These principles include:

- recognition of the rights of individuals and groups to participate in community planning initiatives; or to choose not to be involved
- encouragement for active involvement of residents, community groups, businesses, Councils, and other government or non-government agencies in the planning process
- promotion of fair, transparent and open participatory decision making processes that rely on the direction of participating residents and groups from the community at large
- awareness of discriminatory practices that may mean residents or groups within the community are unable to have input, and taking action to eliminate these practices from the planning process
- action to encourage participation from community members who are generally not connected to their community
- respect for diversity – people's diverse backgrounds, needs, opinions, abilities, relationships, gender, religions, cultures and so forth
- recognition that it is appropriate for communities to contribute their own resources in the development of initiatives

### 2.5 Community Plan Reviews

Strathbogie Shire Council has determined that every community plan should span a four to five year period, with Action Schedules developed every 12 months.

It is important that Community Action Groups consider aligning their reviews with the financial budget and planning cycles of the Strathbogie Shire Council. The Council Plan is developed within 6 months of a Council election and reviewed annually. The next Council Plan is due by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2013. The Council budget planning commences in November each year and is



required to be finalised by the end of August each year. However Council aims to have its budget adopted by the end of June each year.

Where projects are not completed by the time the review has been undertaken, the projects should be carried forward into the new version of the plan to ensure continuity.

The community plans are referred to as Community Action Plans. They should be developed through wide consultation with the community. Engagement techniques could include community dinners, written and electronic surveys, small school projects to engage young people and their parents, consultation with Council youth committees and activities at markets and community events.

### 3 Council Contribution

The Council has an understanding that the implementation of community planning requires a significant contribution from Council.

#### 3.1 Council Commitment

Council acknowledges the important contribution community members make to community plans and Council's strategic planning. In this way, community members are also contributing to Council reaching its corporate goals. Council has undertaken the following commitments to:

- support local communities through a partnership approach to developing major initiatives
- contribute funding to community planning initiatives directly through Council's community planning grants and through Council's budgetary process
- establish Section 86 Committees of Management to provide the formal structure of the committees, hold funds and provide Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance
- provide Community Action Groups with direct access to Council to discuss issues of concern at least twice per year, or as agreed provide direct assistance with planning for projects that demonstrate broad community benefits
- assist Community Action Groups to obtain grants funding from a range of sources
- provide preferential support for projects that demonstrate broad community engagement and benefit
- facilitate combined Community Action Group meetings at least once per year or as agreed, to share best practice, ideas and discuss issues relevant to community planning
- provide relevant training to Community Action Group members and volunteers if requested, within available resources

#### 3.2 Continuity of Community Action Groups

Council elections are held every four years. Councils develop the Council Plan in accordance with the Local Government Act 1989. The Council Plan outlines the key strategic priorities for Council for the following four years. Council will consider recommendations from Community Action Groups in the development of its strategic goals and objectives for the Shire.

Whilst Council's commitment to Community Action Groups is clear from the implementation of this program, it is possible that future Councils may identify other priorities or changes to Council policy that result in significant changes to the community planning program. In the event that such change is likely, Council will engage in a community consultation process.

The community planning program is reviewed annually and incremental changes are to be expected as part of a continual improvement approach to Council programs. Community Action Groups will be consulted and their input sought to ensure that the program continues to meet the needs of the community.

### 3.3 Allocation of Funds

Council will assess its level of support for community projects in accordance with its funding priorities. Projects not identified in the community plan will not be funded.

## 4 Community Contribution

The Council has a clear expectation that the implementation of community planning requires a significant contribution from residents, community groups and other organisations.

This contribution is expected in the following areas:

- development of the initial concept by way of a basic project summary or plan, which may include research, data, community consultation
- evidence of community support and consideration of community concerns
- implementation and, where applicable, ongoing maintenance of the project
- demonstrated community participation and agreement to the project
- financial via in-kind and cash

## 5 Applying for Funds for Community Planning Initiatives

### 5.1 Who Can Apply?

To receive funds from the Council Community Grants program, Action Groups need to:

- have a Council endorsed and supported community plan for that community
- undertake a project that is detailed or prioritised within the community plan
- undertake the allocation of funds to projects within the boundaries of the Shire of Strathbogie

### 5.2 How May the Grants be Used?

Council Community Grants for Action Groups may be used for the following:

- undertaking a prioritised project or initiative from the current Community Action Plan
- up to \$1,000 per annum for administration costs
- up to \$1,000 per annum for township Christmas decorations

- funds may also be used for the community engagement activities undertaken when reviewing the Community Action Plan
- allocations may be used as seed funding for State and Federal Government grants and may be held by the Action Group for a maximum period of two years
- funds cannot be used for any other organisation's ongoing maintenance expenses, including salaries, telephone, electricity etc

### 5.3 Application Criteria

- meets an established need
- contains clear aims and objectives
- demonstrates innovation
- is equitable
- demonstrates clear community participation, when applicable
- provides a flow on to community benefits
- demonstrates a cooperative approach between community groups, if applicable
- must provide a budget for the project / s

### 5.4 Communication of Allocation

- allocation to Action Groups will be based on population
- Action Groups will be individually notified of their proposed allocation when Council has drafted their budget
- final notification will be made individually to each Action Group once the budget has been approved and adopted by Council

### 5.5 Submission Process

- an information kit including Submission Form and FAQ will be issued to all Action Groups
- submissions for funding must be on the prescribed Submission Form, be signed by the appropriate parties and include all attachments requested
- submissions must be received by Council by the specified date in the notification letter
- acquittals for larger projects spanning more than one financial year can be negotiated with Council prior to commencement

### 5.6 Evaluation Process

Submissions will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- projects must be in line with the Action Group's Community Action Plan, with the exception of Christmas decorations and administrative costs
- must be accessible to members of the community, where possible
- contacted Council regarding building / planning permit, risk management or OHS requirements, where applicable

- compliance with the requirements of the Submission Form – for example all signatures and attachments
- compliance with these Guidelines
- compliance with previous year's Action Group Funding Terms and Conditions
- project has not received funding for the same project previously, unless there is prior approval of Council
- project has not commenced or been completed unless extenuating circumstances exist and has received Council's approval

### 5.7 Approval Process

- once submissions have been assessed and approved, the Action Group will receive Funding Terms and Conditions and an Acquittal Report template from Council
- Funding Terms and Conditions will specify which projects / purchases have been approved by Council. Action Group Chairperson / Secretary will be required to return a signed copy of the Terms and Conditions, together with a tax invoice (inclusive of GST) for their allocation within 30 days of receipt of notification letter
- payment of grant allocation is normally paid directly into the group's bank account within 30 days of receipt of tax invoice or retained by Council if it is being used as seed funding for state and federal government grants lodged by Council
- subject to the size of the project, Council may require the Action Group to provide progress reports in relation to the project outcomes

### 5.8 Acquittals Process

- projects/purchases must be satisfactorily completed and acquitted by 31 May of the next financial year in which the monies were received, unless prior written approval is granted by Council
- Action Groups are required to complete an Acquittal Report showing the project/s have been completed in accordance with the Funding Terms and Conditions, including photos and budget information
- acquittals for larger projects spanning more than one financial year can be negotiated with Council prior to commencement
- allocations being used as seed funding for state or federal government grants may be held by the Action Group for a maximum period of two years; larger projects may warrant an exemption
- any portion of the allocation that is not expended by the acquittal date is to be re-paid to Council by the 30 June of the acquittal year unless otherwise approved by Council to be retained

### 5.9 General Conditions

The following general conditions should apply:

- any funding allocated specifically to a project or initiative cannot be used for any other project or purpose without prior consultation and agreement from Council
- an evaluation report at the conclusion of the project may be required as part of the acquittal of the project

- any recipient who fails to provide the acquittal or evaluation report (if requested) may not be eligible for future funding
- any funding payments made to the Action Group may be suspended if funding conditions are not met, or, if in the opinion of Council, the aims or satisfactory progress of the project have not been achieved
- all funds are to be expended in the financial year of their approval, unless stated in the funding application that the project will roll over into the succeeding financial year; applications should be made to Council for any variation to this condition
- any organisation receiving funds through the Community Action Plan Grants Program should be able to account for the expenditure of those funds separately within their own organisation's accounts
- funds will not be allocated to any project that has commenced or has been undertaken unless prior approval has been received from Council
- funds cannot be used for any other organisation's ongoing maintenance or administration expenses, including salaries, telephone, electricity etc.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

The following documents provide further information:

- Community Action Group Funding Program Submission Form
- Community Action Group Funding Program Terms and Conditions
- Community Action Group Funding Program Acquittal Report
- Community Action Groups Frequently Asked Questions

All enquiries or requests for above documents should be addressed to:

Community Development Officer  
Strathbogie Shire Council  
PO Box 177  
EUROA VIC 3666  
Phone: 03 5795 0000  
Free Call 1800 065 993  
Fax: 03 5795 3550  
Email: [info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au](mailto:info@strathbogie.vic.gov.au)

## 6 Powers and Responsibilities

### 6.1 Section 86 Committees of Management

Under Section 86 of the Local Government Act 1989, Council has the power to establish special committees that are commonly known as Section 86 Committees of Management. These committees can be established to implement community action plans.

The Local Government Act provides for the establishment of special committees of Council, comprising:

- (a) Councillors;
- (b) Council staff;
- (c) Other persons;

- (d) Any combination of the above.

Council may appoint members to a Committee of Management and may at any time remove a member from a Committee of Management.

Except for some specific powers, a Council may, by Instrument of Delegation, delegate any of its functions, duties and powers under the Local Government Act, or any other Act, to a special committee.

Specific powers a Council cannot delegate to a committee are:

- (a) This power of delegation;
- (b) To declare a rate or charge;
- (c) To borrow money;
- (d) Entering into contracts for an amount exceeding an amount previously determined by Council;
- (e) To incur any expenditure exceeding an amount previously determined by Council;
- (f) Any prescribed power.

Council will require a Committee of Management to report to the Council at intervals determined by the Council.

As Council is a separate legal entity at law and as such cannot delegate to another separate legal entity, a Section 86 Committee of Management cannot be an incorporated entity.

Council requires a community action group to be a Section 86 Committee of Management.

### **6.1.1 Composition of Committees**

All S86 Committees are required to enter into an agreement with Council called an Instrument of Delegation.

### **6.1.2 Size of Committees**

In accordance with the Instrument of Delegation's Terms and Conditions, the Committee of Management shall comprise of no less than five (5).

As required by Clause 5 of the Instrument of Delegation, it is the responsibility of the committee to submit to Council the names and contact details of its committee members within seven (7) days of appointment.

Under the Act, Council is required to formally appoint all members of committees and Council will formally advise the committee when members are appointed.

### **6.1.3 Appointing Committee Members**

Committee members are appointed for a one (1) year term or another term as approved by Council, with all positions up for re-election at its expiry.

Outgoing committee members are encouraged to nominate for reappointment.

### **6.1.4 Termination of a Committee**

There are some circumstances under which a committee may wish, or be requested, to relinquish its management responsibility.

Council may revoke a committee's appointment at any time and either assume direct responsibility for the implementation of the community action plan or appoint a new committee.

### 6.1.5 Council Representation

As a general rule, no members of Section 86 Committees of Management will be required to be a nominated Councillor but Council has the option to appoint one or more non-voting ex-officio members.

## 6.2 Agreements

Prior to operating as a Committee of Management, an Instrument of Delegation must be entered into before the committee is appointed by Council.

The Agreements clearly set out the terms and conditions for Committees of Management and include:

- the name of the committee
- the commencement date
- powers, duties and functions
- composition, proceedings and meetings of the committee
- conflict of interest
- limitations of powers

## 6.3 Sub-Committees

Committees may establish sub-committees as deemed necessary. To avoid creating excessive quorum requirements, it is recommended that the members of sub-committees be appointed volunteers by the committee. The following process will apply:

- sub-committee members to complete "Council Volunteer Registration Form"
- committee formally appoints volunteers at their general meetings and names are recorded in the minutes of the meeting

Whilst acting as volunteers of a Section 86 Committee of Management, they will be covered under Council's Public Liability and Personal Accident Policy.

## 6.4 Handing Over to a New Committee

A committee must ensure that it meets its responsibilities in handing over to the incoming committee.

The outgoing **treasurer** must:

- balance the books and have them audited if end of financial year
- provide copies of financial reports prepared over the committee's term
- advise of any committed funds
- organise changeover of bank account details
- hand over the books to the incoming committee

The outgoing **secretary** must:

- handover all correspondence, including minute books/files, Instrument of Delegation
- handover the Operations and Risk Management Manual



- brief the incoming committee on their responsibilities and obligations in accordance with their agreement with Council and this manual
- provide copies of any management / business plans prepared by the committee

## 7 Office Bearers and Responsibilities

### 7.1 Office Bearers

There are basic procedures to follow that provide solid structures for operations; large or small. Many of these procedures are common to all kinds of committees throughout the community, not just Action Group Committees of Management.

Committees of Management are made up of various positions held by elected members who undertake the role and assume its responsibilities. At its first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the committee should elect a Chairperson. Office bearers should also be elected and all appointments recorded in the minutes.

Each committee requires a:

- Chairperson
- Vice-Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- General Members

Committees may also need an Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer; smaller committees may combine the Secretary and Treasurer roles. It is good practice for the role of Chairperson and Treasurer to be held by different committee members from an audit viewpoint.

The Instrument of Delegation sets out the committee structure requirements and term of office. Council will consider formal requests from the committee to alter the committee structure or term of office.

No person (or a person in absentia) can be elected as an office bearer if that person is knowingly not going to be present at a meeting for a period of more than 4 months.

#### 7.1.1 Chairperson

Every Committee of Management must have an appointed member as Chairperson. The key responsibility of a Chairperson is facilitating the operations of the committee.

In general, the Chairperson coordinates things to ensure that all members of the committee have the chance to play an active part in the committee and that everyone feels informed and included. The duties of the Chairperson include:

- providing coordination, guidance and leadership to ensure the successful functioning of the committee
- representing the committee in the public domain
- responsibility for ensuring administrative and other tasks from meetings are carried out



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During meetings the Chairperson is responsible for ensuring:

- meetings are correctly convened
- a quorum is present for all decisions
- meeting decisions are properly recorded in the minutes
- the maintenance of order
- the discussion remains focussed on the business of the meeting
- clarification of points and members' understanding of the decisions being considered
- minutes of meetings are signed

The Deputy Chairperson will chair the meeting if the Chairperson is absent. If there is no Deputy Chairperson, the committee may temporarily appoint another of its members as the Chairperson.

The Chairperson may vote on any motion considered by the meeting.

### 7.1.2 Secretary

The key responsibility of a Secretary is the administration of the committee.

The Secretary's duties include:

- all administration of the committee and maintaining all records
- receiving all incoming correspondence, bringing it to the attention of the committee and writing and dispatching all outwards correspondence required by the committee
- providing a report listing all incoming and outgoing correspondence
- presenting progress reports on any works being done to committee meetings
- keeping committee members properly informed by sending them notices of meetings, copies of agendas, correspondence, reports, etc. as required
- taking and recording minutes of all meetings and distributing copies to committee members
- liaising with the Chairperson between meetings so that the business of the committee is attended to and, in consultation with the Chairperson, to call extraordinary meetings as required

### 7.1.3 Treasurer

The Treasurer is responsible for keeping the committee's financial records in good order.

The Treasurer's duties include:

- maintaining a bank account in the name of the committee. Signatories to the account should be (with any two to sign):
  1. Chairperson
  2. Secretary
  3. Treasurer

- 
- banking money received within fourteen (14) days of receipt and recording detail
  - paying accounts as authorised by the committee
  - keeping all invoices, receipts, cheque butts, bank statements etc. for audit purposes
  - reporting at each committee meeting by presenting a simple Financial Report and Bank Reconciliation Statement which provides current details on bank balances, transactions since the previous report, the committee's current financial position and any other information that the committee may require
  - Prepare and present an annual financial report detailing the Statement of Financial Position and Operating Statement to the Annual General Meeting

### 7.1.4 General Members

Non-office bearing members' duties include:

- actively participating in committee activities and business
- managing the facility, including preparation and implementation of management plans, financial plans and business plans, and subsequent reporting against those plans
- attending all committee meetings and participating in decision making
- bringing to the committee's attention any identified problems or issues

### 7.1.5 Non-members as Office Bearers

Committees may establish sub-committees as deemed necessary - refer Power and Responsibilities for details.

Committees of Management may also find it useful to appoint someone on a voluntary basis who is not a committee member, but has relevant skills, to undertake particular tasks such as bookkeeping and secretarial work.

## 7.2 Dealing with Resignations

There are two common types of resignations: a resignation of an office bearer who will remain on the committee; and a resignation of a member who will leave the committee.

Members who decide to resign and leave the committee should aim to give reasonable notice so that a new member can be recruited, if necessary.

To resign from any office bearer position, but not from the committee, a written resignation must be submitted to the committee, which must accept and record the resignation in the Minutes and then elect another member to fill that position.

In all cases, a resigning member must hand over all committee records to the Committee of Management.

## 7.3 Filling a Casual Vacancy

A casual vacancy on a committee should be filled if:

- the committee can no longer function or perform its duties, e.g. the committee has less than five people or a quorum no longer exists
- the committee wishes to fill the vacancy

- 
- Council wishes to fill the vacancy

The candidate who fills the vacancy is appointed only for the remaining period of the original member's term.

The committee is required to advise Council of a new committee member. New members are required to be formally appointed by Council.

### 7.4 Removing a Committee Member

Committee positions can become vacant for any of these reasons:

- a committee member is absent for three (3) consecutive meetings without the committee's approval
- a committee member is convicted of a serious offence
- a committee member becomes incapable of performing committee duties (for example, chronic illness)
- a committee member is in breach of the Instrument of Delegation

#### 7.4.1 Removal for Non-performance

It is a difficult and subjective judgment to make that a fellow committee member is not performing i.e. not carrying out their committee duties satisfactorily.

If this issue arises, the first step should be for the Chairperson or whole committee to discuss the matter with the member concerned. Often this will resolve the issue, with the member accepting that more is required of him/her or the member resigns.

If the poor performance continues and the member is reluctant to resign, the other committee members should seek appropriate advice from Council.

## 8 Meeting Procedures

The aim is to meet as often as is necessary for good management and it is recommended that meetings should be held every month; at least six monthly in accordance with the Instrument of Delegation. Each committee is free to decide its meeting times, agendas and styles.

The business that a committee deals with at a regular meeting will be largely determined by its level of activity. As a guide, the basics that need to be covered include reports from the:

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Sub-committees (if appointed)

A committee can decide its meeting schedule at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting or determine at the end of each meeting when and where the next one will be held.

A good way to remind committee members about a coming meeting is to circulate the minutes of the last meeting, plus agenda and any other papers, at least two weeks before the meeting date.

Section 86 Committee meetings are to be open to members of the public because the committee is representing the community in implementing their Community Action Plan. They can take part in discussions only at the invitation of the Chairperson, and cannot propose motions or vote.

The committee is allowed to exclude visitors from confidential issues it must discuss, such as personal matters, contractual matters etc. Such items can be grouped together for 'in camera' (private) discussion before or after all other business has been covered.

### 8.1 Notice of Meeting

A notice of meeting, typically incorporated with the agenda, is circulated to committee members at least two days, and preferably two weeks before the meeting.

### 8.2 Agenda

Prior to any meeting an agenda is prepared. The agenda is a short document that sets out the business to be dealt with at the meeting. Usually the Secretary, in consultation with the Chairperson, prepares the agenda, but all committee members can nominate items of business to be included on the meeting agenda.

A typical agenda includes some or all of the following:

- details of time and place of meeting (Notice of Meeting)
- apologies
- minutes of the previous meeting and any business arising from the minutes
- correspondence inwards and outwards
- reports from Secretary, Treasurer, Sub-committees
- general business

When circulating the agenda, the minutes of the previous meeting and any reports to be considered at the meeting are usually attached.

At the start of the meeting the Chairperson usually asks:

- for other items of business that any member wishes to be added to the agenda, and
- if any member wishes to change the order of the agenda

The addition of new items at the meeting is generally acceptable, but if those items are contentious and/or some members are absent from the meeting, the Chairperson may decide to refer such items to a subsequent meeting of the committee.

### 8.3 Meeting Attendance

Committee members are expected to attend all meetings, but illness, family matters or other reasons may result in absences. The Chairperson, Secretary or other office bearer should be contacted to tender apologies, which will be recorded in the minutes. It is important that apologies are tendered and accepted by the committee.

### 8.4 Quorums

The quorum for an ordinary meeting of the committee consists of a majority of the members in office. The quorum for the Section 86 Committees of Management Annual General meetings shall be ten (10) persons.

If, 30 minutes (or some other time generally agreed by the committee as appropriate) after the start of the meeting a quorum has not been obtained, the Chairperson will decide to:

- postpone the meeting; or

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- conduct the scheduled business of the committee, but refer all decisions and motions to a subsequent meeting when a quorum is present for reconsideration and/or ratification

If, at any time during the meeting a quorum cannot be maintained, the Chairperson will decide to:

- close the meeting and refer any unfinished business to a subsequent meeting; or
- continue to conduct the scheduled business of the committee, but refer all decisions and motions made with no quorum present to a subsequent meeting when a quorum is present for reconsideration and/or ratification

### 8.5 Voting

Each member of the meeting is entitled to vote. One method for voting is a show of hands.

### 8.6 Addressing the Meeting

Committee members addressing the meeting should direct their remarks through the Chairperson. A committee member addressing the meeting shall not be interrupted by any other member, except that the Chairperson has the right to provide any direction to the member regarding the conduct of that address (appropriate language, length of time taken, etc.).

### 8.7 Making Decisions / Motions

Each decision of the committee should be made by a formal vote, even if everyone agrees, and recorded in the minutes.

Decisions are made by passing motions. Any committee member may move a motion and the Chairperson accepts the motion for consideration.

The minutes will record the wording of the motion, the name of the person who moved it, who seconded it and whether it was passed or defeated.

Committees may have motions that are more complicated and contentious arising from their discussions. In such cases, it may be useful for the motion to be written down and read out or circulated prior to voting, so that everyone is clear about what is being decided.

In the event of a tied vote the Chairperson can generally exercise a casting vote.

A committee can only make decisions (i.e. move and pass motions) if a quorum of its membership is at the meeting.

### 8.8 Public Participation

All Section 86 Committee meetings are open to the public. The form of public participation at any committee meeting may range from simply allowing the public to witness the committee's proceedings, to actively encouraging input into the discussion of items of general business.

Suggestions on managing public participation include:

- allowing question time during the meeting
- accepting questions in writing for consideration either at the start of the meeting or as part of general business
- encouraging deputations and petitions

A Committee that regularly attracts public interest may develop and circulate publicly some simple rules on how members of the public are expected to conduct themselves in committee meetings. These rules can detail any limits on participation such as limiting questions to two

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per person, giving the Chairperson the right to eject any person disrupting the meeting. Members of the public cannot vote on any matter before the committee.

### 8.9 Managing Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is when a person has to make a decision on an issue in which they have, or are perceived to have, a personal interest or benefit in a specific outcome. The conflicts can often be based around financial matters (pecuniary interest) such as contracts or the terms and conditions of a rental.

For example, a local builder on a Committee of Management would have a pecuniary interest in any building contracts let by the committee for which he or she had tendered.

The key factors in dealing with conflicts of interest are to:

- acknowledge that they exist; and
- be open and transparent in managing them both within and outside the committee

#### 8.9.1 Keeping Good Conflict of Interest Records

Keeping good public records is crucial to ensure a committee is regarded as open and transparent in managing conflicts of interest.

The committee minutes must record how conflicts of interest were handled. For example, a committee member who is a builder declares he has a conflict of interest on the next agenda item, a building contract to be discussed. The minutes must record:

- what the conflict was
- if the committee member left the room (at what time he/she left/returned and at what stage of the discussion)
- the result of the discussion and the decision made

Private interests should not be confused with specialist knowledge, which is not a conflict of interest. For example, a member who is a builder, but who is not tendering for a job, would have useful specialist knowledge for the committee.

All members of Section 86 Committees of Management who are not Councillors are exempt from the Register of Interests provisions of the Local Government Act 1989.

### 8.10 Minutes

Minutes are a formal, written record of a meeting and must be kept for all meetings of the committee. They should record decisions, rather than who said what. At a minimum, the minutes should record:

- the time the meeting started and finished
- the place of the meeting
- the names of the committee members present
- the names of the committee members not present / apologies
- the time of any arrivals and departures of members during the meeting
- ratification of previous meeting minutes
- a list of all items of business considered

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- the exact wording of any motions moved, including the name of the mover and seconder, and the mover and seconder of any amendments to the motion
  - a record of any or all of the members who supported or opposed the motion if requested by any member (division)
  - the results of consideration of any motions – carried, lost, withdrawn, lapsed, amended
  - details of any questions taken on notice
  - details of any deputations made to the committee, or any guest speakers
  - disclosure of any pecuniary interest or conflict of interest of any member

The minutes should enable a committee member not present at the meeting to be informed of all actions and decisions arising, and the reasons for those actions and decisions. Every page of the minutes should be numbered and bear the date of the meeting.

Minutes are a permanent record of the committee's decisions and proceedings. The Secretary should keep a minutes file (or book) that will be passed onto the incoming Secretary. In the longer term, the minute files must be stored and archived in accordance with the Public Records Act.

The minutes of a meeting should be endorsed at the following meeting as being a true and accurate record. The motion endorsing the minutes of a previous meeting should only be moved and seconded by members who actually attended.

Upon ratification of the previous meeting's minutes, the Chairperson is to sign the minutes. Once endorsed by the signing of the Chairperson, they must never be altered.

Copies of the signed minutes of meetings of ordinary and extraordinary and annual general meetings of committees are required to be provided to Council within 30 days of the meeting being held.

### 8.11 The Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM is a public meeting where the committee reports to its community.

The AGM includes:

- ratification of the minutes of the previous AGM
- a report, presented by the Chairperson, on the committee's activities of the past 12 months
- presentation of audited financial statements by the Treasurer or Secretary
- an outline of the committee's proposed activities for the next 12 months
- If applicable, elections of persons for appointment as members of the committee for the ensuing years

The AGM is required to be held in July each year for the purpose of confirming the minutes of the last AGM and presenting annual reports and financial statements.

The AGM is to be advertised in advance in local newspapers, on public notice boards and via a mail out to users of the facility at least 14 days prior to the AGM. Committee members should receive the agenda, reports, and minutes from the last AGM at least one week before the meeting. Public notification of an AGM should be made at least fourteen (14) days prior to the meeting.



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Council is to be advised of the date of the AGM as soon as it is set.

Attendees can ask questions of the committee (only in the time set aside in the meeting to do so), but it is not a forum for taking motions from the floor or voting on proposals. These actions can only be undertaken by committee members and any such business should be held over to the next regular meeting.

## 9 Succession Planning

### 9.1 What Is Succession Planning?

Succession Planning can be defined as a process for identifying and developing internal people with the potential to fill key business leadership positions in a company.

If we think of our communities as the company and the committees as the leadership positions (there are of course many non-committee community leadership roles as well) we can define succession planning as a process of ensuring continuity in community leadership roles.

In the community context, there are two kinds of strategies needed; direct and indirect. A general understanding of why people volunteer is also important.

People volunteer for many reasons, the main ones being:

- make new friends/spend time with existing friends
- develop new skills
- contribute to their community/make a difference
- build up their resume`
- share their skills
- make or have input into decisions about their community
- have fun
- build business and community networks
- public acknowledgment
- to feel valued
- because someone asked them (when asked, this is the number one reason why people say they volunteer)

It is also important to understand what puts people off volunteering:

- seems too time consuming
- bad meetings – too long, too boring, too detailed, no structure, dominated by a vocal few, poor behaviour...
- not welcoming/exclusive
- committee doesn't actually do much/too few outcomes/doesn't make a difference
- no recognition



- bad image – many people have negative associations with committees, in part because the members may complain and rarely rave about their roles
- badly behaved members
- lack of leadership/professionalism
- can't see how they might learn new skills
- transport/financial reasons
- no one asked them (for some reason people often need a direct, personal invitation)

### 9.2 Self-reflection for Committees

How do your current members talk about their role, are they mostly positive or mostly negative? Some questions to guide self-reflection include:

- does your committee think about how it can develop the skills of its members
- how does your committee acknowledge the contributions of its members
- how do you promote the benefit of being on the committee
- how could you tell if your committee is welcoming to new people
- are committee members able to bring their skills to the roles
- are there people on your committee whose behaviour is off-putting for others i.e. does most of the talking, interrupts others, doesn't listen to the ideas of others, swears a lot, gossips about people not present, makes idle threats or other aggressive statements
- does your committee achieve enough for the work it puts in
- are your meetings well run i.e. an agenda circulated before the meeting, good facilitation to keep things on track, stick to agreed times, are minutes always taken
- is the atmosphere at meetings enjoyable, or stifled
- do people enjoy themselves at the meeting
- do the members know what the core purpose of the committee is
- do the activities of the committee link well to the core purposes
- does the committee make a clear contribution to the community
- do all committee members contribute their opinions and chip in to do tasks
- if you were like an all-powered god, what are the two things you would change about your committee

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### 9.3 Indirect Strategies

Committees in general sometimes have a bad reputation in communities. This is partly due to people having negative experiences when involved in committees, but also because of what committee members actually say about being on their committee. Some of the comments committee members make about their involvement are negative, so it is no surprise that finding people to join committees is difficult.

So one very simple but powerful indirect succession planning strategy is to promote committee life through the way you talk about it. Talking about the various personal benefits you get out of being a committee member will plant seeds of positivity and curiosity in those you speak with. It needn't be a formal public speech; in fact it is best if it isn't. Brief comments in everyday conversations work best for changing the attitudes of a community.

Be specific though, it is not enough to say "I love being on this committee". Specific and personal work best; "Joining this committee is one of the best things I've done, I've learnt so much about...OR...I didn't know many people when I moved here and joining the committee has helped me make some great new friends...OR...our group achieves a lot and that makes me feel really good, like I have something to offer and can make a difference..." (the ideas are endless, you just have to think about what you have gained personally and find opportunities to share it).

Another indirect strategy is to build the leadership skills of others. There are only a small number of people who are naturally drawn to leadership positions and feel comfortable there; the vast majority of people are not comfortable or keen to take the reins. Often this is just because of a lack of experience in these kinds of roles and therefore a lack of confidence. It is much easier to put your hand up for something you feel capable of doing.

So how can we build each other's skills and confidence? There is an almost infinite number of ways we can do this, so here are just a few ideas:

- have every executive role in your committee supported by an assistant role; this of course needs to be more than just on-paper; the person in the executive role has to actively include the assistant in the tasks of that role
- have members attend training events relevant to the committee; if the committee has available funds they could pay for members to attend training occasionally, otherwise look for free training opportunities; remember, don't just send the same old, long-serving members, take a risk and invest in newer members
- offering to pay the costs for members to attend training doesn't just improve skills, it makes members feel valued; also people often don't like to go to these things on their own, so go in pairs if possible
- delegate, delegate, delegate! - many committees have the same few people doing all the work, claiming "If we/I don't do it, no one will"; this is rarely true. Often it is a risk worth taking; many members who don't take on tasks don't think they need to as others always do it all, but if it looks like things won't get done it can be surprising who will step forward
- when committee members come up with bright ideas make sure the implementation doesn't get passed onto others, the responsibility for making things happen should at least in part (if not wholly) stay with the person who came up with the idea

- just simply thanking people for the tasks they do, no matter how small; positive acknowledgement reinforces that people are valuable and capable and will help people see themselves as having something to offer
- make leadership and skill development a core part of your group's business and promote this in the community
- rotate roles – the President doesn't have to chair each meeting and nor does the Secretary need to take the minutes each time. You could rotate these roles but make sure you don't throw people in the deep end, explain what is required first, and don't put people on the spot – plan ahead

### 9.4 Direct Strategies

One direct strategy is to simply ask people to join the committee; but saying something like:

"Hey you should join the committee, we're really struggling to get members"

is not likely to be successful (it is too general and indicates that the committee is dysfunctional). The request needs to be specific and needs to highlight skills/qualities you have noticed in the person you are asking.

Consider this request:

"I have noticed that you are really well organised (ask really insightful questions/are really financially literate) and while our committee does pretty well in this area, I really think with you on board we could take it to another level. Would you be interested in coming along to a meeting and seeing what you think?"

This request shows you have noticed the person; you have identified that they have something valuable to offer (they may not even recognize this in themselves); that the committee is doing well but is eager to do even better; it doesn't ask them to join without knowing what they are getting into.

This request is much more likely to get a 'yes' response, as you are only really asking them to come to one meeting to see what they think. In this way you have also asked them to be like a consultant who shares their expertise – it's hard for anyone to say no to this as we all like to feel like we have something useful to offer others.

Once the person gets to the meeting, make sure they are made to feel welcome, part of the group, and actively seek their opinions and participation. If your committee is able to do all this, it is highly likely the person will want to join.

Another strategy is formal succession planning. This works best in the business world and is not completely transferable to the community context, but may be useful for some committees.

Following is a simple succession plan template with the following sections:

**Position** – what role are you planning for? i.e. Secretary

**Strategy** – this refers to whether you are hoping to recruit someone already in the committee to the role, or to recruit from the community i.e. internal or external.

**Candidate** – who are you thinking to ask and why? Take some time to think about the qualities the person has that would make them suitable for the role and note them here. i.e. really well organised and computer literate.

**Date Ready** – if applicable, write when the person should be ready to take the role. This is mostly only relevant if you have a development plan in mind for the person.



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**Development Plan** – how will you support the person to develop the skills needed for the role? i.e. teach them how to take minutes; have them assist the current secretary; invite them along to meetings (if they are not already on the committee).

By increasing your committee's understanding of succession planning; why people volunteer and the types of strategies you can put in place to encourage new blood into your committee, your committee will continue successfully into the future.

Committees are the life-blood of communities and your involvement and support is extremely important, and highly valued by Strathbogie Shire Council.

We thank you!