

Good Governance for Healthy Associations Checklist

Introduction

This set of questions is designed to be asked of the governing committee of an Incorporated Association as a guide to healthy governance. It is intended to generate discussion about what changes may be needed, how these can be made and who can help. It does not include every aspect of governance but provides a broad cover of the more important aspects of governance.

This checklist is currently being trialled with several community Associations in the Anangu Pitjanjatjara Yankunytjatjara lands and so may change as feedback is incorporated. Comments are welcome.

	Question	Yes	No	Comments	Note
General	Is a copy of the Constitution (also known as the Rules of the Association) available to the Committee?				If you don't have a copy, you may be able to download one from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs website www.cbs.sa.gov.au Or you can order one from the same website.
	Do the Objects of the Association (as written in the Constitution) match up with the current purpose and direction of the Association?				You may need to update these by holding a Special General Meeting and taking a vote to make sure most members agree with the changes.
	Are the rules you are using to manage the Association different from those in the Constitution?				Your rules are there to make sure the Committee is acting fairly. If the rules need changing, you will need to hold a Special General Meeting to change the rules formally. Then you must notify the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs so they have a current copy of your Rules
	Who is a member of your Association?				You may have a list of names of members or your constitution may determine who is a member by a set of conditions such as age and location of where they live. Both the Governing Committee and the members themselves should know they are members and have certain rights.

Governing Committee	What are the names of the Association Office Bearers? <i>Chair?</i> <i>Treasurer?</i> <i>Secretary?</i> <i>Public Officer?</i>				Each office bearer has a separate role with different responsibilities. If you want to know more about these, refer to the information on Office Bearers on this website.
	Were all the Office Bearers appointed in the way your constitution says?				Your constitution may say that they need to be voted in either at the Annual General Meeting or at a Special General Meeting (They should not be chosen at a normal committee meeting or by just one or two people).
	If your Public Officer has changed - have you notified the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs?				It is important that the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs knows who your Public Officer is as they are the chief contact person between them and your Association.

Meetings	Are meetings held at a place and time that is convenient for the Committee?				<p>If members are finding it difficult to attend meetings regularly, try and find out why. A different time or place may encourage people to attend.</p> <p>It is important that each role is carried out eg there must be someone taking the minutes each meeting.</p>
	Are all members notified of each meeting date well in advance (at least two weeks)?				<p>If you don't have set dates for the year, make sure you set a date for the next meeting at the end of the last one. A reminder that the next meeting is due is always helpful.</p>
	Are they held regularly? (for example once every two months)				<p>Try setting dates for all the meetings for the year so everyone knows well ahead.</p>
	Do you know the minimum number (quorum) of people for the meeting to be legal?				<p>Check your Constitution. It will tell you how many people are needed to hold a meeting.</p>
	Are decisions should be made by a vote in the way your constitution says?				<p>All decisions should be made in accordance with the rules of the constitution.</p>
	Is a financial statement presented at each meeting?				<p>The finance officer should present a financial report to each meeting to keep the Committee up to date on money going in and out and how much you have in the bank.</p>

Minutes	Are minutes recorded for each meeting?				It is essential that there is a record of each meeting, when it was held, who attended and what was discussed and decided.
	Are the previous meeting minutes confirmed as correct at the commencement of each meeting?				Members who were there at the previous meeting must be able to agree or make changes so that they are a true record
	After each meeting, are the minutes printed and copies sent to all the Committee members?				Members should have a chance to read the minutes - particularly if they couldn't attend so they know what happened.
	Is a signed copy of the minutes kept in a safe place at the place the meetings are usually held?				Once agreed they are a true record, the Chair should sign the minutes. They should be kept in a secure place so they can be referred to if requested.
	Are the minutes of meetings made available for any committee member to read?				Any community member should be able to get a copy of and read the minutes - even if they are old ones.

Finances	Are all moneys banked as soon as possible (preferably within a day) of being received?				If you can't get to bank then you may need to consider purchasing a small safe. The money that you deal with may not be cash and should be able to be transferred by Internet banking.
	Are all funds that come into the Association used in ways that are consistent with the Objects (purpose) of the Association?				All the members have responsibility to make sure the money is used only for the purpose the Association was set up for. When voting on something that will cost money ask <i>'How will this achieve our goals?'</i>
	Does the Treasurer keep accounts that show where and when money comes into the Association and how it is spent?				It is essential that the Treasurer keeps up-to-date and accurate records of money coming in and going out of the Association so that all members can see that the money is being used to achieve the goals (objects) of the Association.
	Are all payments authorised by at least two members of the Committee?				All money being paid out should be approved in writing by at least two Committee members. It is preferable that they aren't both from the same family.
	Is the total of the money coming into the Association more than \$500,000 a year?				If yes, then you need to let the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs know as soon as possible. They will tell you what you may need to do differently.
	<p><i>If you get more than \$500,000 a year -</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs been told? • Is a financial report prepared and audited each year? <p>Has a financial report been sent to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs for all the previous financial years?</p>				You should be a 'Prescribed Association'. This means you need to have a financial report prepared by an auditor. A copy of this report needs to be sent to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs.

Property	Does the committee have a list of the assets owned by the Association?				It is important that there is a current list of what valuable items (assets) the Association owns. This includes such things as cars, buildings, furniture and computers. This is needed so it is clear to the community what the Association owns. It is also needed when preparing financial reports.
	Does the list show the current value of each of the assets?				Many assets will go down in value the older they are. For example, a new car that is only a few months old will be worth a lot less two years later.
	Does the list show where the property is located?				This list should also list where these items are. No single person can 'own' the property of the Association. It belongs to all its members. However there may be a person or persons responsible for taking care of it. It is their job to make sure it is only used for the purpose of the Association.

Where to from here?

A copy of the responses to this checklist should be kept by the Committee and copies made available to each of the members.

At the following committee meeting the following could happen:

The Secretary make an Action list of things to do that came out of the discussion from the checklist.

The Committee work out who is going to do what task and put names to each.

The Secretary give each person a list of what they need to do with a date set for followup.

If the check shows your Association is very healthy, the Secretary should keep a copy of the completed checklist and the Committee agree on a date to review this in say, 12 months time.