

Form No:	IMS-F-027	Version No:	V20190629
Issued: 20130627	Reviewed: 20190629	Authorised By:	Director Communication & Marketing

INTRODUCTION

This Guideline provides information and recommendations for managing a club, from both a legal and an operational perspective, and the roles and responsibilities of a club's committee and office bearers.

There is a wealth of information about managing clubs available on the Australian Institute of Sports Commission's website at – https://origin.sportaus.gov.au/club_development/governance

ATHRA acknowledges this site as the source for some of the information in this Guideline.

1. INCORPORATION

Although there is no legal requirement for a sport or recreation club to become incorporated, ATHRA strongly recommends that affiliate clubs do so. Any not-for-profit group with five or more members should consider the benefits of becoming incorporated. These include:

- having club members protected, to a certain extent, from being sued individually if someone is injured while involved in activities run by your club;
- improving your club's fundraising ability and eligibility for grants. Some governments and local councils insist on it before allocating funds; and
- making it easier to enter into leases and to open and operate bank accounts.

Not-for-profit sport and recreation clubs generally incorporate under State or Territory legislation known as the Associations Incorporation Act. The Acts are not identical in each State or Territory, so you should refer to the relevant legislation in your particular State or Territory. Information on the relevant legislation is usually available from Departments of Fair Trading or their equivalents in each State and Territory.

To become incorporated a club must, among other things, lodge a constitution with their State or Territory Department of Fair Trading.

There is also a requirement for incorporated clubs to report certain financial information annually to the relevant Department of Fair Trading or Consumer Affairs.

2. CONSTITUTION (sometimes called Rules of Association)

All clubs, except the most informal, should set out their basic structure and methods of operating in writing. The product of this process is called a constitution. A club's constitution should:

- outline the club's purpose;
- list all of the rules of operation; and
- set out the members' rights and responsibilities.

The Department of Fair Trading websites provide so-called "Model Rules" based on the particular State or Territory legislation and these can be used as a starting point for your club's constitution.

Part of the incorporation process requires your new constitution to be approved by the relevant State or Territory authority. Although a club may alter or add to the Model Rules to suit its specific needs, it should be noted that Model Rules contain all that is necessary under the law; if a club's proposed constitution, as submitted for approval, conflicts with the Model Rules or does not meet the minimum legal requirements, then it will not be approved. Your local authority can provide guidance to ensure your draft constitution meets these requirements.

3. ROLES WITHIN THE COMMITTEE

There is no standardised description of the roles within a committee that can be applied universally to all Clubs. Some clubs combine some roles (such as the Secretary and Treasurer), or take some duties normally associated with one role and assign them to another.

What is important however is the need to ensure that the persons assigned or elected to each of the roles have the skills necessary to properly perform their duties. For example, if your club has its financial information set up on a computer, the Treasurer needs to have an appropriate level of computer literacy in order to access and manage that information.

For this reason, the club should consider 'tailoring' each of the committee roles to fit with the individuals' skill sets and experience. This might mean that the duties of the Secretary, for instance, may be different from one year to the next.

The traditional committee structure includes the formalised tasks and roles of the President, Treasurer and Secretary. A club's constitution will define the 'executive' positions for its committee, and they will typically include these three key positions.

Some clubs include additional committee positions such as Vice President, Ride Coordinator, Membership Officer, Newsletter Editor, Public Relations Officer, and so on.

Whatever committee positions your club decides on, it is recommended that there should be an odd (as opposed to an even) number of committee members. In the event of a vote at a committee meeting, this will ensure there will always be a definitive outcome and a tied vote will be avoided.

3.1. PRESIDENT

The club President is the principal leader and has overall responsibility for the club's administration. From a strategic perspective, the President should set the overall annual committee 'agenda' (consistent with the views of members), help the committee prioritise its goals and then try to keep the committee on track by working within that overall framework.

The committee members should have a sense of what they are trying to achieve throughout the year rather than just 'muddling through' from one committee meeting to the next. At the operational level, the major function of the President is to facilitate effective management committee meetings.

The President should:

- be well informed of all club activities;
- be aware of the future directions and plans of members;

- have a good working knowledge of the constitution, rules and the duties of all office holders and subcommittees;
- manage committee meetings;
- manage the annual general meeting;
- represent the club at local, regional and national levels;
- be a supportive leader for all club members;
- act as a facilitator for the club's activities; and
- ensure that planning and budgeting for the future is carried out in accordance with the wishes of the members.

3.2. VICE PRESIDENT

The appointment of a Vice President will largely depend on the size of the club and the scope and nature of the club's activities. A Vice President can be a valuable resource to support and assist the President to carry out his/her duties.

Some clubs, at their AGM, appoint their outgoing President to the VP position so that the committee has ongoing access to his/her recent experience and knowledge about the club.

3.3. SECRETARY

The Secretary is the 'chief administration officer' of the club. This person provides the coordinating link between members, the management committee and outside agencies (ATHRA for example).

The volume and nature of the Secretary's work will depend on the size of the club and the activities in which the club is involved, but invariably the role is a key pivot point for all the club's activities and can be critical to the successful management of any club.

Ideally an effective Secretary is someone who can:

- communicate effectively;
- think clearly and positively;
- be organised, detail-minded and disciplined with regard to preserving the accuracy and completeness of the club's administration records; and
- maintain confidentiality on relevant matters.

A typical Secretary's job description would be to:

- deal with the day to day running of the club including all correspondence (both internally and externally);
- organise committee meetings and AGMs, preparing agendas, taking minutes, and distributing and communicating these as appropriate; and
- Approve new member applications via the 'Club Members' link on the clubs page on the ATHRA website

For Annual General Meetings:

- send notice of the AGM to all financial members in line with club rules;
- collect reports from club officers;
- receive nominations for club positions; and
- minute the meeting and distribute the minutes to members.

For managing the club's affiliation and relationship with ATHRA:

- prepare and submit ATHRA club affiliation application this form includes the annual club report
- Club Executive Advice to be completed anytime the executive office bearers change

For meeting the club's legal obligations as an incorporated association:

- Submit relevant financial and other information annually to the Department of Fair Trading (DFT) in accordance with the Annual Return reporting requirements of the DFT in your State or Territory.

3.4. TREASURER

The Treasurer is the 'chief financial management officer' for the club. The Treasurer's tasks include preparing the annual budget, planning for the club's financial future, regularly monitoring revenue and expenditure and helping other committee functional areas with financial matters.

The volume and nature of the Treasurer's work will depend on the size of the club and the activities in which the club is involved.

An effective Treasurer needs to be:

- good with numbers (obviously!);
- well organised;
- able to allocate regular time periods to maintain the books;
- able to keep good records;
- able to work in a logical orderly manner; and
- aware of information needing to be kept for the annual audit.

A typical Treasurer's job description would be to:

- Ensure that adequate accounts and records exist regarding the club's financial transactions;
- Coordinate the preparation of budgets for the forthcoming year describing potential sources of income and expenditure;
- Issue receipts and promptly deposit all monies received in the club's bank account;
- Make all approved payments promptly;
- Keep accurate and up-to-date records of all income and expenditure;
- Act as the signatory on the club's bank accounts (with at least one other committee member);
- Manage the club's cash flow;
- Be accountable for the club's petty cash;
- Prepare regular bank account reconciliation statements for presentation to the committee; and
- Be fully informed about the financial position of the club at all times.

3.5. RIDE COORDINATOR

The role of a Ride Coordinator may include:

- Obtaining club permission to conduct a Ride;
- Listing the ride in the club's event listing or ride calendar;
- Contacting and obtaining property owner permission if travelling through private property;
- Determining ride start and finish times;

- Determining the ride start point;
- Ensuring map and/or location details are advised to participants;
- Managing signage if required;
- Managing the Ride Attendance Register and collecting fees, if any;
- Managing the Pre-Ride Checklist;
- ensuring the Post Ride Summary is completed;
- ensuring any Incident Reports are completed; and
- Ensuring all paperwork (Ride Visitor forms, Pre-Ride Checklist, Post Ride Summary, Ride Attendance Register and Incident Report) is collected and presented to the club Secretary for safe keeping.

Keep in mind that the Ride Coordinator does not necessarily need to be the same person as the Ride Leader.

4. CREATING A SUPPORTIVE VOLUNTEER CULTURE

Without doubt, clubs cannot survive without volunteers.

They are the people who put their hand up for positions on the committee, organize rides and events, make fund raisers happen, commit their personal time to become accredited as Trail Bosses and Stewards, accept members into their homes for monthly meetings, organize club newsletters (even write newsletter articles!), and so much more - all so that the other club members have rides to go on and good times to enjoy.

There are few clubs that haven't experienced at some time or other a deathly silence at an AGM when no-one has stepped forward to take on the jobs necessary for the club to keep going. It is arguably the single biggest problem the club will face.

There is no simple solution for this, however there are things a club can do to increase the likelihood of more people volunteering or improving the lot of those who are currently volunteering.

4.1. REWARD AND RECOGNITION

Reward and recognise your volunteers for their contributions. Do it publicly so other club members can see that volunteers are valued by the club -

Reward may be in the form of free or reduced membership, a shirt or clothing or gifts ranging in value according to the level of contribution the volunteer has made to the club. It can even be as easy as just saying 'thank you' every now and then.

Recognition may be honour boards/life memberships, special mention in the newsletters or on the club's website page, or an end-of-year celebration especially to acknowledge the work of the volunteers.

To reduce the possibility of criticism for awarding volunteers with gifts of a perceived value it is important to be open about how you came to decide on that reward (according to required criteria), open communication, honesty, fairness and equity.

As with any selections, you can't please all the people all the time, however, applying a planned and transparent process will minimise the critics.

Planning Your Recognition Program – A planned recognition and reward program allows you to identify what volunteer numbers are needed to deliver the club's services, as well as what critical personnel may be needed and what resource options are needed to afford the implementation of the reward and recognition program.

The steps required to ensure your strategies encourage volunteer participation are:

- Identify the various volunteer roles in the club (and remember that anyone who does anything without pay is a volunteer);
- Categorise them according to the level of contribution;
- Establish criteria that must be met to receive certain levels of recognition;
- Promote the various recognition and rewards programs and awards to all; and
- Present recognition items to the recipients in an appropriate manner.

The planning process will need to consider:

- the varying levels of contributions the volunteers will be providing;
- how you plan to reward them;
- when reward is required (immediately, end of season, end of task);
- what the actual cost of your program will be;
- how you plan to resource the initiative (perhaps higher fees for those who don't participate); and
- how and when you will publicise the program and the values associated with volunteering.

Throw in a sense of humour to your program and you'll have a team that is highly motivated and proud of their personal successes, their team's successes and consequently those of the club overall.

4.2. SHARE THE LOAD

Consider the 'high workload' positions in your club. Look at appointing one or more 'assistants' who can take on some of the smaller parts of someone else's job to ease their burden. Just because a role has always included a set list of duties doesn't mean it has to continue to include them.

You may have difficulty in finding volunteers to replace a retiring committee member because a potential replacement person may think the job is just too big, but you might be more successful in finding several volunteers each prepared to take on a portion of the whole.

Some assistant duties that could be taken on by others might include: a website manager to maintain the club's page on ATHRA's website; club newsletter editor; and a property officer to keep track of club assets such as BBQ's roadside signs etc.

Of course, the availability of assistants will obviously depend on the size of the club.

4.3. HAVE A SUCCESSION PLAN

One of the biggest risks a club can face occurs when a long-standing committee member retires from the position, particularly when that person has been doing the job for many years.

It can be a reason why others don't want to take on the position because no-one else has been exposed to the role, and what the role actually involves remains a mystery to all.

Don't wait for someone to retire or give the job away before you start thinking about their replacement.

Identify the key positions in the club that require particular skills (for example, Presidents need leadership capabilities; Treasurers need to be comfortable with numbers; Secretaries should be organized and efficient). Look for candidates among the club membership who might be capable of taking on one of these key positions in the future, having first been mentored or trained by the incumbent.

Look outside your club for candidates as well. Capable committee members don't necessarily have to be a member of the club before they can be considered. In fact, some clubs have committee members whose 'primary' club is a different one.

Also consider including in the club's constitution a requirement that the key committee positions of President, Secretary and Treasurer should have maximum periods of tenure (say, three or four years), thereby mandating a requirement for individuals to step down after that time in the role. It may force members to rethink the notion that if they don't volunteer to take over, the current position holder will just keep doing it.

(Rule 19 of ATHRA's constitution describes this 'tenure period limit' in more detail.)

5. SUPPORT FROM ATHRA

The club committee members, and particularly the Secretary, are urged to become familiar with the information in ATHRA's Guideline document *IMS-GU-002 Forms and Procedures*. It is a manual for club committee members aimed at taking out the guesswork of 'doing business' with ATHRA.

Forms and Procedures summarises the things a club needs to do and be aware of as part of its relationship with the Association. It can be viewed and downloaded at www.athra.com.au > *Forms&Info*.