Neighbourhood House Coordination Program

Guidelines and sector information

To receive this publication in an accessible format, please email Community Participation and Volunteering nhcp@dffh.vic.gov.au

In this document, 'Aboriginal' refers to both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. 'Indigenous' or 'Koori/Koorie' is retained when part of the title of a report, program or quotation.

Contents

How to use these guidelines

The document is divided into four sections:

Section 1: The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program

Section 1 provides essential information to better understand the Victorian Government's Neighbourhood House Coordination Program (NHCP).

This section is an important resource if you are new to the sector, on a committee of management, an employee of a neighbourhood house, an auspice body or wish to increase your knowledge of the NHCP.

Section 2: The neighbourhood house sector information

This section provides an overview of the neighbourhood house sector, including a guide to the delivery of community-strengthening programs and activities, and the community development practice of neighbourhood houses.

Further information about the neighbourhood house sector is available through Neighbourhood Houses Victoria http://www.nhvic.org.au.

Section 3: Relationships and support

This section covers the way relationships with (and resources from other sources within) the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and other State and Commonwealth Government departments and local government complement Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding and increase the capacity of neighbourhood houses to provide services in their communities.

Appendices

Additional information including the neighbourhood house sector principles, notes on governance for committees of management, useful contacts, references, and websites.

A glossary of terms and list of abbreviations are also provided.

Section 1: The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program

Through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, the Victorian Government provides recurrent funding to eligible neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood house networks and the peak body, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria to support the coordination of a service that provides community development activities consistent with the aims of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.

Recurrent funding allocations are made to eligible organisations in accordance with Victorian Government priorities. Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding is managed under individual service agreements between government and these organisations.

Program aims

The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program provides funding to neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood house networks and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria to:

- support the provision of community development programs and activities that lead to community-strengthening outcomes by:
  - supporting diversity and promoting community participation and inclusion
  - facilitating community development and capacity building in support of individuals and groups within communities
  - supporting lifelong learning opportunities for people to improve their access to training and employment pathways
- undertake community development processes to address locally identified priorities and needs through:
  - community consultation
  - development of agreed community responses to identified priorities and needs
  - identification of partners and funding sources
  - facilitating and evaluating responses to identified needs and priorities.

The neighbourhood house good practice guide is a sector-developed guide to support quality standards in neighbourhood houses. Access the guide from Neighbourhood Houses Victoria https://www.nhvic.org.au/sector-specific-resources.

Program requirements

Neighbourhood houses

Funding to neighbourhood houses is allocated on the basis of hours of coordination (as identified in each service agreement). Funding assists with employing a coordinator and related costs to:

- provide a balanced mix of community development planning and activities that achieve each of the program aims
- promote participation in the neighbourhood house program and activities by diverse community groups and individuals
- be open for at least as many hours as the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program provides coordination funding

- provide at least twice as many activity hours as the number of coordination hours funded by the NHCP. Activities may be provided concurrently.

It is expected that the planning, development and delivery of these program requirements will be based on a documented annual plan.

All neighbourhood houses funded through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program should participate in the governance, management, and activities of their neighbourhood house network.

Participation can include:

- representation on the committee of management
- attendance at network events and professional development opportunities
- engagement with the network for management and governance support, program development and strengthening regional linkages.

Neighbourhood house networks

Neighbourhood house networks are funded to provide services and support to all neighbourhood houses funded through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.

Funding is provided towards the employment of a networker and related costs to deliver services and supports to funded neighbourhood houses within the regional boundaries of the network. A committee drawn from the membership in each network directs the activities of the network to meet the requirements of their service agreement with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (the department) and their obligations as an employer.

Neighbourhood house networks play an important role in supporting neighbourhood houses experiencing difficulty. Their role includes identifying houses at risk and providing support at the earliest possible opportunity.

Networks are funded in accordance with these agreements to provide the following services to neighbourhood houses within their network:

- governance and management support to committees and staff
- advice on programs and activity development
- training and training resources
- capacity building and links, with and between neighbourhood houses and other community
- organisations at the local and regional level including state and local government
- an annual plan developed in consultation and collaboration with all houses in the network, showing:
  - activities consistent with the program requirements
  - details of how network members will be involved in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan.

The neighbourhood house networks good practice guide is developed by the combined networks in consultation with network members. It is a guide to support quality standards in neighbourhood house networking. The guide is available from Neighbourhood Houses Victoria https://www.nhvic.org.au/sector-specific-resources.

Funding to networks is determined by the number of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funded houses within each particular network's area.

Membership of any network is determined by location according to the department's provisional boundaries, with exceptions being approved by the department only on a demonstrated geographical or community relationship basis and agreed to by the networks involved.

To avoid real or perceived conflict of interest, it is recommended that paid employees of a network are not also paid employees of any neighbourhood house belonging to that network.

In exceptional circumstances – where a networker is an employee of a neighbourhood house – staff and committee of management members of that house should not be members of the network committee of management.

See Section 2 for further information on neighbourhood house networks.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

The Victorian Government provides funding to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria as the peak body for the neighbourhood house sector to:

- support program delivery and activity development in neighbourhood houses
- promote and develop sector linkages and coordination
- facilitate the implementation of improved strategies in the neighbourhood house sector
- provide or facilitate training for the sector to identify sector management issues.

It is expected that these outcomes will be planned and documented in an annual plan.

For more information on the role of the peak body, refer to Section 2: The neighbourhood house sector information.

Funding requirements

General requirements

Neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood house networks and the peak body in receipt of Neighbourhood House Coordination Program funding must:

- be an incorporated entity, for example, under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012*, or operate under the auspice of local government or another incorporated not-for-profit, non-government organisation
- be able to demonstrate provision of activity hours that are consistent with the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program aims and requirements
- have an annual plan for coordinating and delivering programs and activities that are consistent with the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program aims
- have an independent committee of management (or other similar governance structure such as a collective or cooperative that is agreed with the department) that
- is accountable and responsive to its community
- includes representation from its community
- not operate for the financial gain of the management, participants, employees or volunteers – this excludes wage payments, cost reimbursements and the generation of funds for the house within the rules of the Act under which the house is incorporated (refer to Section 2 and Appendix 2 for more information about roles and responsibilities of committees of management)

- have a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the goals and aims of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program as outlined in the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program guide.

Alternative governance requirements and auspice bodies

Neighbourhood houses or neighbourhood house networks can have alternative governance arrangements outside of an incorporated committee of management.

These can include:

- being under the auspice of a legally constituted body that is an incorporated, not-for-profit, non-government organisation or local government authority
- an alternative committee structure that supports voluntary clustering of neighbourhood houses or a neighbourhood house co-located with other not-for-profit organisations.

This can occur where it is not viable for an incorporated locally-based committee of management to be formed or when an existing committee of management dissolves or ceases to be incorporated.

It is essential that alternative governance arrangements facilitate and support strong community development practice at neighbourhood houses, as outlined in the neighbourhood house community development model. Where houses are in an auspice, cluster or alternative committee of management arrangement, a community advisory group or other similar mechanism is required to support the involvement of the local community in activity and resource planning to meet the needs of the community.

A change to a house governance structure that involves auspice arrangements will require approval by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing. It is preferred that this be an interim or short-term arrangement. In exceptional circumstances, it may be an ongoing one.

An auspice agency, in signing a service agreement for the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program on behalf of a neighbourhood house:

- takes on the legal and financial responsibility of the neighbourhood house
- supports the program aims of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program
- supports and recognises a neighbourhood house community-based committee or reference group, ensuring that
  - a community-based committee or reference group independent of the auspice body is responsible for overseeing the neighbourhood house program and the functions of the house
  - the neighbourhood house program maintains its integrity, identity and autonomy separate from the auspice body
  - professional support and training is available for the coordinator of the neighbourhood house
  - mechanisms and procedures are in place that allow the dissolution of the arrangement by either party.

The funded agency must also give the department a copy of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) or deed of delegation between the auspicing body or alternative committee structure and the auspiced neighbourhood house or neighbourhood house network that:

- demonstrates that the community-based committee of management or advisory group of the neighbourhood house or neighbourhood house network is responsible for overseeing the business and functions of the neighbourhood house or network
- specifies responsibility for managing programs and services and acquitting funds and deliverables

- acknowledges the auspicing body's or alternative committee structure's legal and financial responsibility (including employer responsibilities) for the neighbourhood house or neighbourhood house network
- specifies the roles and responsibilities of the auspicing body or alternative committee structure and the neighbourhood house or neighbourhood house network, including:
  - timely reporting against contracted outcomes
  - lines of reporting between the neighbourhood house or neighbourhood house network committee of management, neighbourhood house coordinator or networker and the auspice organisation or alternative committee structure
- guarantees transparency of funding, that the funds received through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program are able to be discretely identified, accounted and reported as prescribed in the service agreement.

Service agreements for neighbourhood houses or neighbourhood house networks that operate under an auspice arrangement will be made between the department and the auspicing body in accordance with the service agreement terms and conditions.

Insurance

Neighbourhood Houses that receive funding through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program are eligible to receive insurance coverage under the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority's (VMIA) Community Service Organisation Program. Visit Victorian Managed Insurance Authority http://www.vmia.vic.gov.au.

It is the funded agency's responsibility to ensure insurance coverage is suitable for their operational activities and governance arrangements.

Funding – provision, accountability, and transparency

Service agreements

Organisations receiving funding under the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program must enter into a service agreement with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing prior to receiving funding. The agreement identifies the responsibilities of the relevant neighbourhood house, neighbourhood house network or Neighbourhood Houses Victoria and the department.

The service agreement sets out the key obligations, objectives, rights, and responsibilities of the organisations delivering services and the department providing funding to the organisation.

The Department is responsible for the development and implementation of the *Funded Organisations Performance Monitoring Framework 2015*, which is a critical part of the quality assurance approach to ensure that participants receive services that meet appropriate standards and community expectations. Visit Funded Agency Channel https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/service-agreement.

Funded Agency Channel (FAC)

Funded Agency Channel (FAC) is a website that supports the partnership relationship between the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and the Department of Education and the organisations they fund. The majority of information displayed on FAC is available to the general public, including users from both funded and non-funded organisations. FAC also provides an

additional secure area only accessible to registered users within funded organisations (called MY Agency).

Email the Funded Agency Channel Helpdesk fac@dfffh.vic.gov.au.

My Agency

My Agency is the secure area of Funded Agency Channel (FAC) only accessible to registered users within funded organisations. It provides users with information specific to their service agreements with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing or the Department of Education. Access My Agency https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/my-agency.

Funding

Funding is provided by the department on a financial year basis (1 July to 30 June) and is paid quarterly in advance at the commencement of each quarter (first Tuesday in July, October, January and April).

Funding is recurrent, subject to satisfactory performance against the service agreement.

Reporting requirements

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Neighbourhood houses are required to report to the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing via the secure My Agency portal on Funded Agency Channel. Organisations are required to submit a copy of their annual report and complete an online Risk Management Attestation as part of this process. You can visit My Agency https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/my-agency.

Email the Funded Agency Channel Helpdesk fac@dffh.vic.gov.au.

Annual neighbourhood house survey

Neighbourhood houses are required to collect data that demonstrates their outputs and the outcomes they facilitate for their communities. Data reporting requirements relate primarily to program and activity delivery, partnerships and the place-making role neighbourhood house play in creating stronger communities.

Activity hours reported comprise community development planning and the delivery of community development programs and activities.

Data will be reported through an annual online survey administered on behalf of the department by Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

Neighbourhood house participant data

Neighbourhood houses may be required to conduct a participant census. This will require neighbourhood houses to collect information about their participants for one week in a given year. Organisations will receive advance notice of an upcoming survey.

Data collected through this process is designed to provide a sophisticated understanding of who the participants of neighbourhood houses are.

Neighbourhood house networks survey

Neighbourhood house networks are required to provide reporting that documents their activities, challenges and achievements through the annual neighbourhood house network survey, administered by the department.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria reporting

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria is required to provide six-monthly reporting that documents its activities, challenges and achievements.

A reporting template will be provided for this purpose by the department.

Failure to meet accountability requirements

If funded neighbourhood houses, neighbourhood house networks or Neighbourhood Houses Victoria are identified as failing to meet funding, program or reporting requirements, they will be contacted by the department to negotiate a plan and process for meeting these requirements.

The plan will include an agreed timeframe of up to 12 months for meeting the requirements.

If after this process organisations fail to meet the requirements, funding may be suspended or withdrawn as outlined in the service agreement.

In addition, if an organisation fails to meet its statutory and legal obligations, funding under the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program may be suspended immediately. Find further information for funded agencies in the 'Tools and resources' https://fac.dffh.vic.gov.au/tools-and-resources.

Department of Families, Fairness and Housing roles and responsibilities

The department works in partnership with the neighbourhood house sector to create strong and resilient communities through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.

The department is responsible for ensuring that funds are paid accurately and on time, subject to financial and program requirements being met.

The department has responsibility for program development, strategic planning and future program directions.

Section 2: The neighbourhood house sector information

Neighbourhood houses

Neighbourhood houses and learning centres were first established in Victoria in the early 1970s. The movement arose out of local community need, particularly the isolation of women in the community, with a vision to bring people together and enhance the opportunities for people and communities. Another initial emphasis was to provide an informal, non-threatening and nurturing environment that supported individualised learning.

The organisations are named by a variety of terms, reflecting their varied historical beginnings, including community houses, community centres, living and learning centres, neighbourhood centres and learning centres.

The common thread is that they are all not-for-profit organisations where available funds are combined with strong volunteer input to ensure maximum benefit to each diverse community. Each house or centre is a legal entity in its own right, or auspiced by a legal entity, and has a formal (and, in some cases, financial) membership base. The community is defined primarily, but not exclusively, by the geographical neighbourhood in which the houses are located.

Neighbourhood houses and learning centres are community-owned generalist services; they are unequalled in their ability to provide a continuity of service to people through their changing life stages. The activities and programs provided have developed in response to the needs of the neighbourhood, other community infrastructure and resource constraints.

The neighbourhood house sector in Australia includes more than 1,000 organisations. Its continued success is assured as individuals and communities discover the potential to connect and bring together divergent parts of each community.

Neighbourhood houses – strengthening the community through a community development process

Community strengthening is a sustained effort to increase involvement and partnership among members of a community to achieve common objectives. It is a direct outcome of community development processes. These processes, embraced by the neighbourhood house sector, involve a style of practice that is facilitative, developmental and relies on strong and inclusive relationships within the house and with the wider community. It involves local people, community organisations, government, business and philanthropic organisations working together to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental objectives. The principles underpinning these community-strengthening processes are outlined in the neighbourhood house sector principles (see Appendix 1). As a result of this 'practice', the activities associated with neighbourhood houses are very dynamic, leading to a diverse and evolving range of community-strengthening outcomes.

Neighbourhood house community development practice

Facilitative

The neighbourhood house style of practice is facilitative; it involves constant listening, linking, and making connections not only between people but also between the issues, needs and ideas or

initiatives that community members express. The facilitation role is the practical underpinning of effective program delivery.

Developmental

The neighbourhood house style of practice is developmental at a number of levels within the house and the community.

First, it is developmental for individuals because it emphasises participation and provides opportunities for individuals to learn from the experience of being part of a group and collaboratively addressing community needs, issues or initiatives. People can also learn by being involved in programs or services developed to address needs; such involvement can be a pathway to wider involvement in house activities, operations or governance.

Second, it is developmental for the organisation itself. The style of practice has the potential to strengthen relationships, build or enhance trust and strengthen internal organisational processes.

Third, it is developmental for the community. Responses developed by houses to particular issues, needs or initiatives can transform the nature of the need or the issue within the community, leading to further initiatives being developed. They can also change community attitudes or even community behaviour.

Inclusive

A facilitative and developmental style of practice in a neighbourhood house is impossible without fundamentally strong and inclusive relationships – between participants, volunteers, paid staff and the committee of management. Indeed, effective practice is influenced, driven and directed by these relationships.

Dynamic

The facilitative and developmental style, combined with strong and inclusive relationships, means that practice in neighbourhood houses is dynamic: it is open and is responsive to people and their changing needs. Neighbourhood house outcomes should not be expected to be static but to be constantly changing and moving forward as the community changes and evolves.

To achieve this dynamic style of practice requires a mix of:

- people in the community who participate in or who are interested in the house, including voluntary committees of management
- professional staff who have knowledge and skills in community, social and political structures
- a complex web of connections and interactions with individuals and groups in the community
- involvement by different levels of government.

The neighbourhood house community development style of practice is effective when it is practised consistently: with all individuals and groups within the organisation; in the administration, operation and governance of the house; in the delivery of programs and services; and when house staff or volunteers interact with the wider community, government and funding bodies.

Neighbourhood houses contribute in a number of ways to strengthening their local communities, with the nature and type of activities they undertake varying according to local needs. They provide an important contribution to achieving the government's objective of building stronger communities through delivering community-strengthening programs and activities, planning and development.

The neighbourhood house community development model

The model of neighbourhood house community development practice can be described in six simple and generic steps. These steps enable houses to have a key role in local area planning to meet the needs of their local communities. They are:

1. involving the community and encouraging participation and inclusion, and valuing diversity and difference at all levels of neighbourhood house operation

2. identifying community needs and aspirations

3. determining appropriate community programs, activities and services in response to those needs, ensuring that diversity and difference are valued

4. partnering with community organisations, businesses, government and philanthropic organisations to secure appropriate funding and support

5. delivering quality programs, activities and services

6. evaluating the effectiveness of all aspects of neighbourhood house operations, including programs, practice and governance.

Community strengthening – planning and development

Community strengthening (planning and development) work comprises steps 1– 4 and step 6 of the neighbourhood house community development model. The cumulative outcome of this developmental work can be seen in step 5 – the delivery of programs and activities by neighbourhood houses that provide community-strengthening outcomes.

The work involved in community strengthening will vary from place to place and from time to time, with different approaches being preferred by and suited to different communities.

All planning and development work is directed and guided by governance undertaken by a volunteer committee of management, collective or board made up of elected members who live, work or participate in the local community.

Administration and management of the neighbourhood house is not separately described in this guide. Every aspect of the community development model needs to be underpinned by strong management and administrative systems. These management and administrative systems are assumed to be developed and implemented by the coordinator in response to the annual and strategic plan of the neighbourhood house in partnership with other paid staff and volunteers as part of the work described.

Step 1: *Involving* the community and encouraging participation and inclusion, and valuing diversity and difference at all levels of neighbourhood house operation

Neighbourhood houses support the participation and inclusion of the diverse individuals and groups that make up their local community.

Participants in programs and activities and other community members should be involved in planning, providing and evaluating services (such as planning workshops and committee of management membership).

Neighbourhood houses can demonstrate value and respect in the community by ensuring programs are responsive, culturally sensitive and accessible to all community members. They may also have

an active role in establishing links with, and across, diverse cultural and Aboriginal groups in their local community. Houses achieve these by:

- developing a sense of belonging to the house through membership and membership activities, and encouraging participants from the local community to become members
- encouraging community members and members of the house to join the committee of management
- working with the committee of management to develop skills, knowledge and leadership capacity – neighbourhood houses provide opportunities for people to participate and develop leadership roles in the operation of the house
- working with the committee of management to develop and refine strategic or organisational plans
- promoting the house and its activities in public forums to encourage involvement.

Step 2: *Identifying* community needs and aspirations

Neighbourhood houses use a range of formal and informal methods to identify the needs of the local community. These involve constant listening, linking and making connections – not only between people but also between the issues, needs and ideas or initiatives that community members express. It may also include processes such as:

- formal surveys
- interviews
- demographic research
- meetings with other community organisations and with various levels of government.

In identifying community need, neighbourhood houses also take into account the potential needs of specific groups in the community including:

- people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds
- people on low incomes
- single parents
- young people
- children
- women
- men
- people who are unemployed
- people who are socially or geographically isolated
- Aboriginal people
- people with disabilities
- senior Victorians
- other groups.

Step 3: *Determining* appropriate community programs, activities and services in response to community needs, ensuring that diversity and difference are valued

To determine the response to a specific community issue or need, the coordinator or manager facilitates a range of processes within the neighbourhood house to establish how the identified need might be addressed and what support the house may offer. These processes will consider:

- how other individuals or organisations might have responded to similar issues
- what way(s) their particular organisation could respond

- what resources might be needed
- who needs to be involved
- what partnerships might be possible, necessary and beneficial
- how adequate resources might be harnessed
- issues of access and equity.

The process within the neighbourhood house and with the wider community is based on both formal and informal interactions. The process enables connections to be made that might not necessarily be immediately obvious and that often rely on the strength of relationships. The process is dynamic, needing time for discussion, reflection and development. It also requires a positive, solutions-oriented outlook that asks, 'How might we…?'

Members of the committee of management (who are volunteers) play a crucial role in providing a local community filter that tests the perceived needs or issue and its relationship to the value base of the neighbourhood house, its significance and priority for the community. This process enables the house to bring together all the information gathered and the connections made as the basis for developing a planned response that may then be implemented, if resources are available.

Step 4 *Partnering* with community organisations, businesses, government and philanthropic organisations to secure appropriate funding and support

Neighbourhood houses explore how identified community needs might be addressed and whether this is a unique local issue or part of a wider emerging need by partnering with other community organisations and the various levels of government, local businesses and philanthropic organisations.

Neighbourhood houses are a focal point for community activities. They work in partnership with other sectors to respond to the needs of the community. Neighbourhood houses support and maintain relationships (for example, with other service providers) and may also be involved in getting partnerships off the ground to develop new initiatives.

The following are some examples of activities that would involve the house entering a range of partnership arrangements to secure the resources, equipment and facilities to address community need:

- Collaborating with government, local agencies and businesses. Neighbourhood houses may establish or develop partnerships to respond to particular issues that emerge in the local community.
- Using networks effectively. Neighbourhood houses are involved in existing network models that link houses, such as neighbourhood house networks, clusters and local government networks. They provide opportunities to share expertise and management, coordination and service delivery.
- Securing funding to deliver services or programs and activities. Where unmet community needs are identified, neighbourhood houses have an active role in accessing and securing funding from a range of sources. This may involve preparing funding submissions and meeting with potential funding bodies.
- Providing community infrastructure and resources. Neighbourhood houses may help other community groups by providing resources such as skills, technology, information and use of facilities.
- Mobilising high-level support from community leaders. Neighbourhood houses may be involved in seeking the support of a range of leaders in the local community (such as in relation to

activities and resources). These leaders may be from government, Aboriginal and ethnic communities or from community agencies.

- Linking neighbourhood houses using information communications technology (ICT). Neighbourhood houses have the ICT infrastructure to support communication across neighbourhood houses and with other services, particularly those in isolated and rural areas, and to access information to support their activities.

Step 5: *Delivering* quality programs, activities and services

Neighbourhood houses provide universal services that are available to all community members and reflect the needs of the local community. Service activities also provide opportunities for members of the community to contribute time and skills to support or provide activities within the house.

Neighbourhood houses deliver programs and activities that are based on identified needs of the local community and inclusive of community members. The programs and activities they offer are determined and evaluated through the community development practice model (steps 1–4 and 6).

The programs and activities that may be delivered (step 5) include:

- Self-help or mutual support and social support such as:
  - groups or activities that are managed by members of the group themselves (without a formal, paid tutor or facilitator)
  - groups or activities including social support and social support-like recreational activities (such as community lunches and outings) that are managed by someone other than a group member.
- Skills development such as:
  - programs or classes with a skills or learning focus (such as general community education not funded by Adult Community and Further Education) that are designed to increase the personal skills of participants including life skills, personal interest skills and work-related skills
  - pathways for clients – through education and training programs and lifelong learning opportunities providing improved community participation and community involvement.
- Childcare includes hours provided for:
  - casual childcare
  - long day care
  - out-of-school hours care
  - specialist childcare.
- Children's activities include activities specifically for children aged 0–12 years that are not 'childcare', such as:
  - playgroups
  - three-year-old activity groups
  - movement and music
  - art classes
  - homework groups.
- Health promotion includes activities promoting health and wellbeing, which may be:
  - delivered on behalf of, or in conjunction with other organisations or promoting/supporting such services
  - largely recreational in nature, such as tennis/golf lessons
  - aimed at delivering health and wellbeing benefits, such as tai chi or exercise classes, or

- related to improvement or knowledge of a particular health or wellbeing issue, such as asthma, arthritis, depression or addiction.
- Providing support, information and referral services. Neighbourhood houses are a key access point for people, particularly those who have difficulty accessing mainstream services. A very important aspect of neighbourhood houses is that they are accessible, provide a welcoming and informal atmosphere and respond to community diversity. Activities can include:
  - providing a contact point for communities to obtain information and advice
  - offering non-threatening, supportive information and informal referral services
  - supporting the use of ICT to access information and to communicate.
- Special activities and programs. Neighbourhood houses may actively support and foster a range of locally driven community projects. Neighbourhood houses may be involved in promoting their role at local, regional and state levels. These activities typically involve bringing together individuals, interested groups in the community and other services. They may include:
  - hours of activities or programs that are 'one-off' or a short series of activities focused on community building and do not fit the above categories such as open days, 'come and try' days, community festivals, leadership programs, art and craft exhibitions, partnership activities and Neighbourhood House Week activities
  - using opportunities for marketing such as Neighbourhood House Week and other appropriate activities such as volunteer, adult learners and community safety weeks.
- Contracted programs, for example:
  - Adult Community and Further Education
  - the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program
  - the No Interest Loans Scheme
  - the Australian Migrant Education Program.

Step 6: *Evaluating* the effectiveness of all aspects of neighbourhood house operations, including programs, practice and governance

Neighbourhood houses review the effectiveness of their programs and activities to ensure planned outcomes are met and that they meet community need (such as planning activities, user satisfaction feedback and data collection).

Neighbourhood house networks

Neighbourhood house networks link houses and local communities to other houses and communities at a regional level, to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, and to local and state governments. The neighbourhood house networks provide management and operational support, as well as resources, to their member houses. In addition, they provide direct support to committees of management, staff and volunteers.

Neighbourhood house networks also play a strategic consultative role. As a result of their extensive knowledge of houses in their regions, the neighbourhood house networks are able to come together with Neighbourhood Houses Victoria to work collaboratively on developmental strategies for the whole sector. Networks are also able to draw on opportunities and local information by connecting with local government, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing local area staff and the Department of Education.

Neighbourhood house networks draw their membership from the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program-funded houses and other relevant organisations within their regional boundary. Neighbourhood house networks are community managed organisations governed by an

elected committee of management. They receive funding from the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program to facilitate the network activities and seek grants and project funding for collaborative work that is undertaken by the neighbourhood house network.

Neighbourhood house networks are the central link within the neighbourhood houses and learning centres sector structure; their practice is underpinned by the sector principles and is facilitative, developmental and relies on strong inclusive relationships with its member houses and with the wider local and regional communities.

Neighbourhood house networks facilitate:

- individual support and resourcing to the membership
- early identification and support of neighbourhood houses experiencing difficulty
- regional collaboration on issues, needs and projects among the membership
- representation and advocacy on regional issues and needs to Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, and local and state governments.

The range and priority of services undertaken by the neighbourhood house network is directed by the membership and includes:

- service and program planning and development
- community development practice
- governance and management
- resources and training
- community education.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria is the peak body of the neighbourhood house and learning centre sector. It is managed by a board that is elected by the full membership of neighbourhood houses and neighbourhood house networks.

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria has five important roles:

- representing the sector and community views to federal, state and local government departments, relevant statutory and regulatory bodies and other community organisations – this advocacy and networking role is achieved through Neighbourhood Houses Victoria's participation in various government strategic planning committees and reference groups, most notably those organised by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing
- providing support to houses and neighbourhood house networks for service delivery and development, including advice on relevant government policy and programs
- promoting the development of sector linkages, with members of Neighbourhood Houses Victoria automatically receiving membership to the national collective of neighbourhood houses and community learning centres, the Australian Neighbourhood Houses and Centres Association
- coordinating and responding to issues raised by the various neighbourhood house networks that exist at the community and municipal levels
- providing training relevant to neighbourhood houses and neighbourhood house networks.

Committees of management

Neighbourhood houses are governed by community-based committees of management. They are autonomous and take responsibility for their own good governance. Developing good committee of management skills is a central community-strengthening activity of neighbourhood houses.

The committee of management (or other similar management structure, such as a collective or cooperative) is:

- responsible for good governance
- responsible for strategic planning
- accountable for funds received.

The role of the committee of management is to:

- determine direction and policies for the house
- determine programs, practices and processes that encourage participation by a wide range of individuals from the community
- develop and implement policy regarding the selection and management of all paid staff
- enter into an employment contract with all staff paid by the neighbourhood house and ensure the legal and commonly accepted responsibilities of an employer are carried out
- determine clear arrangements for the accountability, management and support of staff and volunteers
- ensure the neighbourhood house meets its legal obligations under any applicable Acts, such as the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* and the *Information Privacy Act 2000* (refer to the department's funding agreement terms and conditions for further information)
- ensure the neighbourhood house meets the accountability requirements of funding bodies
- ensure appropriate policies and practices are in place for complaints, grievances and dispute resolution
- ensure the neighbourhood house has appropriate insurance.

See Appendix 2 for more information about the roles and responsibilities for committees of management.

Neighbourhood house coordinators

Coordinators report to the committee of management or the auspicing body through predetermined lines of accountability. They are responsible for implementing the organisation's direction and policy.

Committees of management determine the role of the coordinator (or staff undertaking the coordination function). This should be clearly outlined in a position description that is reviewed with the coordinator each year. Specific conditions of employment should be outlined in a contract of employment. Committees of management should refer to Appendix 2 for more information.

The key expectations of the coordination function may include:

1. Supporting committees of management in their governance role:

- evaluating programs to ensure quality and diversity
- providing regular reports on house programs and services to the committee
- undertaking community engagement and community development activities

- keeping the committee of management abreast of trends and directions relevant to the house at a local, regional, state and national level
- ensuring that delegations of the committee of management concerning the day-to-day operations of the neighbourhood house are effectively coordinated
- developing policies, procedures, annual plans and strategic plans
- ensuring accountability and reporting is in accordance with service agreements and relevant legislation.

2. Managing the daily operations of the neighbourhood house on behalf of the committee of management:

- managing assets, developing procedures, participating in recruitment processes and managing and coordinating staff and volunteers
- developing and implementing programs to meet local needs
- coordinating activities and the use of the house by others
- creating an informal, friendly, accessible environment for house users
- providing information referral and general support to house users and members of the community
- interpreting and implementing policy set by the committee of management for house users, staff and volunteers
- ensuring quality service delivery is planned and provided according to goals
- facilitating opportunities for participation in community development
- marketing and promoting the house to the local community
- liaising with other service providers and the community through networking, linking and planning
- identifying and attracting additional revenue
- liaising with other neighbourhood houses and attending network meetings and training sessions
- encouraging volunteer participation in house activities and the governance of the house.

Justice Connect can provide important advice and support to committees of management. For more information, visit Justice Connect http://www.justiceconnect.org.au.

Volunteers

Strong communities often feature high levels of voluntary participation. Volunteers play an integral role in a neighbourhood house and can be: a building block to strengthening communities; an important expression of community spirit; and a way of creating and maintaining networks of support among community members. The roles and importance of volunteers within the organisation should be clearly delineated. This could be done in role statements in a similar way to paid staff. The lines of accountability for volunteers should be clearly outlined by the committee of management.

Neighbourhood houses provide a range of opportunities for local people to voluntarily contribute time and skills in return for:

- support for social, learning, cultural, employment and economic opportunities
- personal experience and satisfaction gained through improving community environments, resources and infrastructure
- increased skills and confidence
- leadership opportunities
- support to move on to study and paid employment.

The Volunteering Portal is an online community and information resource for Victorian volunteers and volunteering organisations. Visit Volunteering Portal http://www.volunteer.vic.gov.au.

Section 3: Relationships and support

Local government

The interactive relationship between councils and neighbourhood houses is actively encouraged as a partnership aimed at achieving a coordinated response to community need. Many councils provide support to neighbourhood houses and have assisted houses through, for example, providing premises on low or nominal rent, operating grants, training and support, access to local demographic and other information, or letters of support for funding applications.

Local governments are key facilitators of community-strengthening and community-planning activity. Alongside the state, local government has joint governance responsibility to integrate planning for localities and maximise coordination and integration of service delivery and community-strengthening initiatives.

Many councils across Victoria are strong supporters of neighbourhood houses and recognise the role houses play in:

- facilitating citizen participation in community life
- taking social action to improve quality of life and wellbeing
- facilitating the capacity of community members to support each other.

The community strengthening (planning and development) work of neighbourhood houses is closely aligned with the role of local governments in local area planning. Neighbourhood houses also provide an effective focal point for community development.

Some councils also have dedicated staff who act as a liaison and community support person that neighbourhood houses can access.

Adult Community and Further Education (ACFE)

The Adult, Community and Further Education (ACFE) Board is a statutory authority under the *Education and Training Reform Act* 2006. Its role is to plan and promote adult learning, allocate resources, develop policies and advise the Minister for Training and Skills on matters related to adult education in Victoria.

Through the Board, the Victorian Government provides funding to community-based organisations, known as Learn Local organisations, and two adult education institutions, the Centre of Adult Education (CAE) and AMES, for delivery of education and training programs to a broad range of Victorians over compulsory school-leaving age – young people, older people, people with special needs, people from diverse cultural backgrounds – with a special focus on people who have had limited prior access to education.

Adult Community and Further Education Board allocated funds are primarily available to support pre-accredited training. Pre-accredited programs are designed to be flexible to meet learners' needs and support them to return to study, improve their literacy and numeracy skills, gain a qualification, broaden their employment options and learn new skills. As part of the wider Vocational Education and Training sector, Learn Local organisations deliver programs in a range of industry sectors and across the spectrum of qualification levels.

Learn Local organisations provide a unique, community-based context for learning. They have a genuine focus on the individual needs of learners and the flexibility to meet their learning requirements. For this reason, Learn Local is particularly suited to meeting the needs of adult

learners of all ages who wish to undertake programs that assist them to gain qualifications and employment.

The community basis and diversity of the organisations is one of the great strengths of Learn Local. There are more than 300 Learn Local organisations spread across Victoria. These organisations are often the only place for adults to access learning in their area, particularly in rural and remote parts of the state. More than half these organisations are Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres.

For information, or to explore opportunities to work with organisations in receipt of funding, visit Adult, Community and Further Education http://www.learnlocal.org.au.

Appendix 1: Neighbourhood Houses Victoria sector principles

Community ownership

To set, manage and control the direction, resources, decision making and processes of the neighbourhood house or centre in order that local volunteer members have a sense of ownership and intrinsic belonging.

Community participation

To recognise that everyone has a valuable contribution to make and to facilitate community members to join in at any level. Volunteers and community members are integral to the decision making, evaluation, provision, participation and direction setting at all levels of the organisation.

Empowerment

To put into practice a process that respects, values and enhances people's ability to have control of their lives. This process encourages people to meet their needs and aspirations in a self-aware and informed way that takes advantage of their skills, experience and potential.

Access and equity

To ensure fair and equitable access for all people. Striving to make meaningful opportunities, programs, activities and services accessible to individuals, groups and the community. To promote a fairer distribution of economic resources and power between people.

Lifelong learning

To build and support the personal skills, knowledge, abilities and resilience of people. To develop the health, wellbeing and connection of people and their families through formal and informal pathways in education, employment and self-development.

Inclusion

To value the diverse contributions that people make and to be sensitive to their individual needs.

Networking

To link, form alliances, collaborate and work with individuals, groups, other agencies, government and business.

Advocacy

To act with and on behalf of community members to endeavour that their individual or group needs are met.

Self-help

To come together in a supportive group environment to share information, knowledge, skills and life experience in order that each participant can reach their own personal goals.

Social action

To analyse internal and external factors that have an impact on the local community, and to transform relationships between individuals, groups and organisations and within the community through collective action.

The neighbourhood house and learning centre sector works in a community development framework with a membership-based governance model. This builds social connections and networks that are based on trust, respect and reciprocal interaction – known as social capital.

Appendix 2: The governance role of committees of management

The following information is provided as a guide to committees of management in their governance role. Neighbourhood house networks can provide support and advice in relation to governance and governance issues for committees of management.

Departmental Local Connections teams can provide advice on where to obtain support for the governance role of non-government organisations including neighbourhood houses.

Guide for committees of management

Most neighbourhood houses are incorporated

Consumer Affairs Victoria, under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act* 2012, recognises the constitutions of incorporated organisations as legal documents. Consumer Affairs Victoria provides a model set of rules as a basis for constitutions but accepts a wide range of local variations. However, an elected committee of management is a requirement. Houses that are auspiced by a larger organisation or are part of a cluster of organisations with a shared constitution, contract or MoU also need a local committee or designated subcommittee to oversee the running of the neighbourhood house.

Incorporated neighbourhood houses are democratic

Incorporated neighbourhood houses are made up of their members. Membership is defined in the constitution. The membership of a neighbourhood house should reflect the diversity and size of the local community in which it is based. Members must hold an annual general meeting where they receive annual reports, including financial reports and elect a committee of management to make decisions on their behalf in the year ahead.

Neighbourhood house committees of management should conduct their meetings democratically to ensure all committee members are given an opportunity to participate in discussion and decision-

making processes, and that all decisions are voted on and minuted in accordance with correct meeting procedure.

Committees of management are representative

A committee of management works best when its members represent the diversity of their community (however defined). Considerations may include balancing gender, educational achievement, cultural background and socioeconomic status. Committees often have elected positions specified for users, paid staff and volunteers, to make sure that key interest groups are represented in, and help shape, decisions. In some cases, conflicts of interest arise for members of committees of management. The potential for conflicts of interest may be avoided through having the coordinator or manager attend in an ex-officio role only and not having members of the same family in more than one key position.

Committees of management decide on directions

Committee of management decisions deal mainly with planning and policy. By and large, plans describe what will be done and policies describe how things will be done. The committee of

management can only make these decisions when they are formally 'in session' and their decisions are recorded in minutes. The committee of management needs to request reports at each meeting to make sure their decisions are grounded in knowledge and understanding of the neighbourhood house.

Committees of management delegate the power to act between meetings

A committee meeting is usually no more than two hours every month. Between meetings, all authority to act for the organisation is delegated (usually to the coordinator) so that the day-to-day operation of the neighbourhood house continues.

There is the potential for difficulties to arise if a committee member without a delegation tries to take over a delegated role, such as one delegated to the coordinator. If the coordinator or manager is delegated to manage the operations of the house then, between meetings, the chair and the elected staff member, for example, are under the manager's authority in all day-to-day operational matters.

Paid staff, volunteers, activity leaders, office bearers of the committee of management, working parties and subcommittees all need written statements that set out their authority to act. There is the potential for verbal understandings to lead to misunderstandings. Some examples of delegations are:

- any agreed planning document
- all policies decided on by the committee
- a section of the committee of management's minutes that, for example, appoints a subcommittee to run a selection process for a new manager or coordinator
- the employment policy that selection committees follow
- the manager or coordinator's job description
- the statement, sometimes known as a deed of delegation, that sets out how much the manager can spend without asking the committee to approve expenditure
- job descriptions of other staff and volunteers
- position descriptions for committee of management office bearers.

Committees of management endorse policy

Committees usually delegate the task of drafting policies to a subcommittee or a worker. Then they discuss each draft policy, amend it if necessary, and adopt it with a motion recorded in the minutes. The constitution is the most basic policy document. It sets out:

- aims and purposes
- membership rules
- general meetings and annual general meetings
- committee of management structure
- and rules
- financial structure
- grievance procedures.

Additionally, there should be policies and procedures about such issues as:

- consultation with members and the wider community through forums and other means – a form of participatory democracy
- employment principles and practices
- pathways into the community and community development practices

- financial management and risk management
- conflict of interest
- training and participation of volunteers and committee members
- equal opportunity
- succession planning
- partnerships with other organisations
- management of records and information services, including privacy
- quality control.

There are many model policies that can be adapted to the neighbourhood house circumstances, such as through Neighbourhood Houses Victoria.

Committees of management guard values and ethics

In general, neighbourhood houses: take a holistic approach to community development; create local meeting places that are safe, friendly and nurturing; are community owned and managed; follow democratic and consultative processes; appreciate their partnership with government; and generate activities that are locally relevant, flexible and enjoyable. Integrity, fairness, honesty, kindness and inclusiveness are other examples of values that houses espouse. Each committee has a responsibility to identify and maintain the particular set of values and ethics that they want to use to frame their work.

Committees of management are employers

All paid staff of the neighbourhood house are employees. Volunteers may contribute in-kind unpaid work and this should be considered in the development of policy for volunteers. No matter what employment arrangements are used, policies and delegations that make for good working relationships and fair working conditions for staff are the ultimate responsibility of the committee of management.

The committee of management must choose their paid coordinator or manager through a transparent and fair selection process. Then they delegate implementation tasks to the manager. The manager implements the committee's policy and plans. The committee undertakes a performance appraisal of the coordinator/manager, whether it is informal or formal. As a general rule, the larger the organisation the more practical it is for the manager to manage other staff, as well as the process to appoint them.

Committees of management are succession planners

No one has a permanent place on the committee of management. People and circumstances move on. A good committee of management plans how it will hand over to others. This means the committee is always actively preparing for the future leadership of the house. Committee succession planning is the responsibility of the committee of management.

Committees of management are financially accountable

Committees are accountable for the expenditure of funds in accordance with good financial management practices and any service agreements. Incorporation requires that an annual report, including a financial report, is received at an annual general meeting and submitted to the Office of Fair Trading by the public officer. Tax laws require high standards of book keeping, and the expenditure of public funds requires that high standards of financial risk management are

documented and implemented. Any committee member (or ex-officio person in attendance) who may benefit financially from a decision must clearly stand aside from the decision, usually by leaving the meeting while the decision is taken and having that action recorded in the minutes.

Committees of management monitor compliance with government legislation

Legislation sets standards and regulations that neighbourhood house committees of management have a legal obligation to meet. For example, legislation relevant to neighbourhood houses covers financial management, provision of education and training programs, childcare, food preparation, public liability, insurance, taxation, incorporation, privacy, human rights and occupational health and safety. The committee of management needs to be aware of its obligations and alert to any changes to legislation that affects the neighbourhood house.

Most committees will delegate responsibility for ensuring they are compliant with legislation. For example, they may have an occupational health and safety subcommittee. However, the final responsibility rests with the committee of management, which must be vigilant, particularly when it listens to reports and approves delegations, because it is responsible for compliance. The committee of management must ask questions when it needs information about compliance issues.

The strategic planning role of committees of management

Each house needs a plan, developed by those with a stake in what will happen, and endorsed by the committee of management. Most neighbourhood houses have plans that set general directions for three years. This plan (or strategic plan) will guide the annual work plans of paid and voluntary staff, working parties and subcommittees. The work plans are generally brief and assist in providing clarity about what is expected of staff.

Strategic planning is an important component of community-strengthening planning. Houses should focus on planning to provide programs and activities that are relevant to the identified needs of the local community, relationship building and local area planning, and that will strengthen communities.

Most neighbourhood houses develop relationships with other houses and community organisations within their local area to ensure their role is well understood, and that they are viewed as an integral contributor to community strengthening, such as through contributing to planning processes for their local community, or working in partnership to improve service delivery to the community.

The following four questions are important for committees of management to consider when commencing development of a strategic plan.

1. What do we value?

2. What are our strengths and weaknesses?

3. What sort of plan will work best over the next one to three years?

4. How will we agree on and implement the plan?

Justice Connect can provide important advice and support to committees of management. Visit Justice Connect http://www.justiceconnect.org.au.

Consumer Affairs Victoria provides information regarding the obligations of committees of management under the *Associations Incorporations Act*. Visit Consumer Affairs Victoria https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/clubs-and-fundraising.

Appendix 3: Further information and contacts

Neighbourhood house networks

Contact Neighbourhood Houses Victoria for further details of the 16 networks listed below by region across Victoria.

Network	Local government areas covered by each network	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing area
Barwon Network of Neighbourhood Centres	Greater Geelong, Surf Coast, Colac Otway, Queenscliff	Barwon area
South West Network of Neighbourhood Houses	Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool	Western District area
Network of Inner East Community Houses (NIECH)	Boroondara, Monash, Whitehorse, Manningham (only houses in Bulleen, Templestowe and Warrandyte)	Inner Eastern Melbourne area
Community Houses Association of the (Eastern) Suburbs (CHAOS)	Maroondah, Knox, Yarra Ranges, Manningham (only houses in Donvale, Park Orchards and Wonga Park)	Outer Eastern Melbourne area
East Gippsland Network of Neighbourhood Houses	East Gippsland, Wellington (part only)	Outer Gippsland area
Gippsland Regional Neighbourhood Houses Group (GRNHG)	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Latrobe, South Gippsland, Wellington (part only)	Inner Gippsland area
Central Highlands Community House Network	Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool, Pyrenees	Central Highlands area
Wimmera West Grampians Neighbourhood House Network	Ararat, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack	Western District area
Goulburn North Eastern Association of Community Centres (GNEACC)	Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie	Goulburn area
Upper Murray Regional Neighbourhood House Network	Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Mansfield	Ovens Murray area
Mallee Neighbourhood House Network	Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Swan Hill	Mallee area
Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses (RANCH)	Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander	Loddon area
Network West	Wyndham, Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley Melton, Brimbank	Western Melbourne area Brimbank Melton area

Network	Local government areas covered by each network	Department of Families, Fairness and Housing area
North East Neighbourhood House Network	Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Darebin, Banyule, Yarra	North Eastern Melbourne area
Northwest Neighbourhood House Network	Hume, Moreland	Hume Moreland area
Community House Network – Southern Region	Bayside, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong	Bayside Peninsula area Southern Melbourne area

Peak and industry bodies

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria http://www.nhvic.org.au/

Adult and Community Education Victoria Inc. http://www.acevic.org.au/

Jobs Australia http://www.ja.com.au/

WorkSafe Victoria http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/

Useful government websites

Department of Family Fairness and Housing https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/

State Government Victoria http://www.vic.gov.au/

Consumer Affairs Victoria http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/

Justice Connect (formerly Public Interest Law Clearing House) http://www.justiceconnect.org.au/

Adult Community and Further Education Board http://www.learnlocal.org.au/

Better Health Channel http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/

Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions https://djsir.vic.gov.au/

Australian Tax Office http://www.ato.gov.au/

Human Rights Commission http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/

Working with Children Check https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/

Victoria Police http://www.police.vic.gov.au/

For other useful references, contact your local neighbourhood house network.

Appendix 4: Glossary of terms

Terms	Definitions
Activity hour	counted as community strengthening (planning and development) and the delivery of community-strengthening programs and activities
Auspice body	an agency that takes on legal and financial responsibilities for another organisation (such as a neighbourhood house) in situations where it is not viable for an incorporated locally-based committee of management to be formed or when an existing committee of management dissolves or ceases to be incorporated, or chooses to operate under the auspice of another organisation
Community	people from the same geographic location (a locality, town or suburb) and people with common needs (for example, people with a disability or Indigenous Australians)
Community strengthening	a sustained effort to increase involvement and partnership among members of a community to achieve common objectives. It involves local people, community organisations, government, business and philanthropic organisations working together to achieve agreed social, economic and environmental outcomes
Community development	a process in which people within an identified community participate to increase their life opportunities, choices and skills. The process involves the active participation and fullest possible reliance on the initiative of the members of the community and is intended to increase the independence and interdependence of individuals and communities
Memorandum of understanding	a written statement between parties that formalises an understanding between them. Honouring an MoU is a 'moral' rather than a legal obligation
Outcomes	desired or intended effects on the community
Outputs	products and services produced or delivered by a department or agency for external customers
Outreach	planned strategies to increase the participation of people and groups in an organisation or service activity. It requires an awareness of the barriers to access that exist in any given location or community. Barriers may include distance, lack of transport, illiteracy, cost, agoraphobia, a sense that the organisation is not for them, and language barriers
Performance measures	measures of quantity, quality, timeliness and cost used to assess the production and delivery of outputs
Self-help	activities designed by a group of people to help themselves rather than seek the assistance of professionals

Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Full term
ACFE	Adult Community and Further Education
AEI	Adult Education Institution
NHV	Neighbourhood Houses Victoria
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
ICT	Information Communications Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NHCP	Neighbourhood House Coordination Program

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