

The Puckapunyal & District Neighbourhood Centre

PRESIDENT

The president of a not-for-profit organisation has overall responsibility for all aspects of the incorporation's business. The Vice President is responsible for assisting the President with their duties and filling in as for the President in their absence.

The President is responsible for:

- ✦ Ensure in partnership with the committee, that the organisations purpose (mission) of the organisation is being followed;
- ✦ Ensure the organisation adheres to its Constitution and rules (policies & procedures are relevant and up to date);
- ✦ Sign documents on behalf of the organisation;
- ✦ Act as the link between staff and the committee;
- ✦ Resolve disputes and grievances;
- ✦ Evaluate performance of programs, events and staff; and
- ✦ Ensure all relevant information is made available to committee members.

Planning

- ✦ Produce in partnership with the committee a strategic plan for the organisation;
- ✦ Initiate projects;
- ✦ Oversee activities and projects; and
- ✦ Ensure monitoring and evaluation plans are established.

Meetings

- ✦ Chair all meetings (committee, AGM, general, special);
- ✦ Ensure regular committee meetings are organised;
- ✦ Prepare an agenda for the meeting in consultation with the Secretary ensuring sufficient information is available to all committee members;
- ✦ Determine a quorum is present in order to commence a meeting;
- ✦ Ensure all members have the opportunity to speak;
- ✦ Maintain a neutral position during discussion and decision making including forming decisions or motions and asking the meeting to vote on them;
- ✦ Keep discussion and decision making relevant and on time;
- ✦ Deliver the casting vote in the event of an equal vote (depending on the Constitution);
- ✦ Suggest appropriate procedures to deal with any difficulties in getting through agenda items if necessary; and
- ✦ Sign minutes of the previous meeting after they have been confirmed as a true record.

Financial Management

- ✦ Oversee the organisation's budget and finances;
- ✦ Oversee fundraising operations and act as the primary spokesperson for the organisation, securing sponsorships and attending fundraising functions.

✦ Personal Attributes

- ✦ Have the right motivations – clear focus on promoting and furthering the mission of the organisation
- ✦ Commitment and Engagement – devote time and energy to the role, connect with a range of staff, invest in keeping the committee abreast of developments and cultivate meaningful external relationships and networks
- ✦ Strong leadership skills with the ability to inspire people to action through influence.

Governance

- ✦ Provide leadership for the organisation;
- ✦ Represent the organisation at all levels of the community including external meetings and events;

The President

The president serves as the committee's figurehead and acts as a link between the committee and the coordinator (who in turn acts as a link to staff and volunteers).

While in practice the president is required to play a leading role in the committee, it is worth noting that there is little legal distinction. The law may, where it is relevant, acknowledge that other committee members expect the president to take a leadership role, but there is no legal distinction between the duties of a president, and those of any other committee member.

At a minimum the president will be responsible for managing ("chairing") committee meetings - directing debates, ensuring that discussions do not stray too far from the prepared agenda and keeping committee members within the meeting rules. The president is also responsible for taking a leading role in keeping the vision alive, setting the organisation's course and monitoring its direction, and for ensuring that proper procedures are in place.

Other roles can include:

- Calling "special" or "extraordinary" meetings when required
- Assisting staff in preparing committee meeting agendas
- Welcoming and inducting new committee members
- Overseeing the search for and monitoring of the group's coordinator
- Acting as a spokesperson for the organisation to stakeholders
- Representing the organisation at official functions
- Calling other committee members into line if they are not fulfilling their responsibilities
- Mediating disputes between committee members.

A good president is generally one who:

1. **Leads by example** and gets all the basics right. They turn up to meetings on time, can read (and explain) a budget, know the meeting rules, and know the difference between governance and management.
2. **Conducts meetings skilfully**, steering committee members through the agenda, subtly keeping debate and discussion on track and ensuring decisions are clearly articulated. They keep the meeting to a reasonable timeframe, discouraging or delegating tangent discussion to sub-committees.
3. **Is a team builder**. They champion diversity and revel in different perspectives, different people, different abilities, and different methods of learning and working. They don't sap energy, but inspire it. Good presidents tend to be effective communicators who can rein in heavy talkers without offending them, while encouraging non-talkers to contribute more. They handle dissent with skill and diplomacy, often using humour to defuse awkward situations.
4. **Is a consensus builder**, who aims to bring people along, while having the courage to accept that it is not always possible to please everyone all of the time. They facilitate debate and broker compromises, knowing instinctively when to sum up and call for a decision.
5. **Has a deep commitment to the organisation** and never misses an opportunity to champion its cause. The chair has a strong sense of personal responsibility and is willing to take the lead.
6. **Is fully informed and informs fully**. They are not necessarily an expert, but are knowledgeable about the organisation's mission and activities, as well as its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. They ensure that all committee members have the information they need to take part in discussions and make informed decisions.

7. **Has an eye on the performance of the committee**, encouraging and facilitating regular self-evaluation activities. They play a pivotal role in the recruitment of new committee members by drumming up interest in the group and nurturing potential recruits. And they ensure that all new committee members get a thorough orientation to the committee, the organisation, and their expected contribution.

8. **Has the respect and trust of their committee colleagues and the coordinator**, and sets a strong moral and ethical tone. They are known for their ability to keep a confidence and to see past personal opinions to ensure fair discussion of the issues. They ensure everyone is aware of and abides by the organisation's conflict of interest policy and code of conduct.

9. **Has an eye to their eventual departure**, encouraging and nurturing possible successors and moving on when their time is up