Developing Policies & Procedures

What is a Policy?

A statement of principles and objectives to guide all decision making in relation to organisational or service functions which are repeated, and to ensure consistency in approach and value. Policies should always reflect the philosophy and the purpose of the organisation.

Well written Policies should:

- Make staff and volunteers clear about what is expected of them.
- Reduce conflict and confusion.
- Enhance decision making process.
- Create uniformity of procedures and practices.
- Increase equity and fairness.
- Increase accountability.
- Enhance image as a professional and efficient organisation.

What is a Procedure?

Procedures are, in effect, a list of the steps and stages required to satisfactorily complete a task or carry out a responsibility to the standard required by the organisation.

As well as having a clearly stated policy framework, committee also needs to develop clearly stated procedures, i.e. written guidelines for implementing policies.

Procedures should:

- Apply equally to functions which are repeated (where policies are appropriate) and those which are ‘one-off’.
- Provide a basis for measuring quality in that everyone should know what is required of them in carrying out each procedure within their area of responsibility.
- Provide instruction and guidance to new and existing members of committee and casual, sessional or relieving staff and to all volunteers.
- Provide a basis for supervision.
Development of Policy & Procedures

When developing policies, all relevant people should have an opportunity to comment or have input into the draft.

A draft policy may be developed by a sub-committee or staff member and then presented to Committee of Governance for amendment, approval or rejection.

The final policy should be approved by Committee of Governance and recorded in the minutes.

Policy must be dated with date of approval and include a review date.

Policies should be entered into the Policy & Procedure Manual.

All persons/groups affected by a policy should be notified of its development or change.

When reviewing policy, the policy may stay the same but the procedure may need to change.

**Policies are binding on an organisation:**

- When they have been endorsed by the committee of management
- If they do not contravene legislation
- If they do not contravene the organisation’s constitution
- Those who are affected are notified of its existence.

The document should include at Policy Title; Date of Endorsement; Purpose of Policy; Broad Guidelines and Broad Procedures or Detailed Procedures if not kept in a separate manual.

**Policy Checklist**

- What is its purpose?
- Is it in line with the organisation’s mission and philosophy?
- Has it been through the proper process?
- Is it dated?
- Does it require a separate procedure (in procedure manual)?
Types of Policies

The types of policies needed will vary from House to House but some of the areas that should be covered are:

**Ethical Policies** -
Code of Ethics; Community Access & Participation; Dispute Resolution; Harassment; Code of Conduct.

**Staffing** –
Accrual of Time & Time in Lieu; Staff Safety; Police Checks; Position Descriptions; Professional Development; Appointment of New Staff; Staff Appraisals; Tutors.

**Volunteers** –
Police Checks; Access; Responsibilities; Rights.

**Committee of Governance** –
Decision Making; Communication; Reporting; Meeting Attendance; Strategic Planning; Staff/Executive Liaison; Employment; Record Management.

**Programming** –
Tutor Rates; Program Fees; Venue Hire; Refunds.

**Building** –
Entry/access keys; Maintenance; Room Hire; User Behaviour.

**Financial** –
Cheque Signing; Petty Cash; Maintaining Books; Banking.

**General** –
Photocopy use; Computer use; Social functions; O.H. & S; Cultural Diversity; Auspicing; Child Care; Disabilities; Emergency Evacuation.

The list could be endless, but policy needs to be developed to meet your organisation's needs.

*From Kilmister, Boards at Work Ltd, Generic Board Policies*