



Freeware for community groups

Improve the governance and administration of your association or committee

This DigiBiz Mentoring program for community groups and not-for-profit organisations is made possible through the Australian Government funded [Digital Enterprise Program](#). Branded as DigiBiz, the project is an initiative of the Centre for eCommerce and Communications at Federation University Australia. It is supported by City of Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, and Pyrenees Shire Councils, and Regional Development Australia-Grampians.

Find out the full range of our Digital Enterprise training activities at www.digibiz.net.au

Events...Workshops...Digital champions...Case histories...Online resources

Each business or community group can access free workshops and four hours of mentoring

Mentoring facilitator- Freeware and cloud based computing:	Chris Elliott
Mentoring facilitator- Governance and operations:	Gerrie Carr-MacFie
Mentoring facilitator- Microsoft Office:	Roneta Hill

Check out mentor profiles online at www.digibiz.net.au



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Learning Outcomes

At the end of the workshop you will:

- Have an increased awareness of how broadband technology can benefit your committee
- Have a practical understanding of FREEWARE and how you can use it to improve the governance, administration and security of your board/committee/not-for-profit organisation
- Have an increased understanding of electronic record keeping via effective Agenda's and Minutes



Session 1. DigiBiz- assisting you leverage more from Broadband

Facilitator: Gerrie Carr-MacFie

Technology is changing the way we communicate and do business. The roll out of the National Broadband Network presents opportunities for your community.

More information on Broadband Technology is available at www.digitalbusiness.gov.au

Session 2. Freeware unpacked

Facilitator: Chris Elliott

Administration and reporting obligations for your community group can eat into scarce time and resources. Efficiencies can be made using broadband technology. Cut down on phone calls, emails and circulation of Minutes/Agendas by sharing access to your secure stored information. Chris Elliott identifies and explains Cloud-computing, Freeware, File Sharing and Data Security.

Session 2 PowerPoint is downloadable on the [DigiBiz](#) website

Session 3. Broadband enabled governance and administration

Facilitator: Gerrie Carr-MacFie

Community based committees and boards have responsibilities to stakeholders, donors and volunteers. Improve the governance and administration of your committee/board. Gerrie Carr-MacFie identifies useful governance and record keeping practices, shares tips, templates, and identifies prospects for using freeware.

Session 3 workbook is downloadable from the [DigiBiz](#) website



Session 3.

Responsibly acquitting board duties

The responsibilities your organisation holds as a community owned entity are many and varied. If you want community and donors to invest volunteer time and dollars you should ensure basic governance and management policies and procedures are in place. Donors and community don't just invest in a cause- they invest in entities that can demonstrate sound governance.

The Role of Committee and Members

Committee members are appointed according to your association's rules. The committee (sometimes referred to as the 'management committee' or 'board') looks after the association's affairs. Incorporated Associations have legal duties under the [Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012](#) (the Act).

Depending on the rules duties may include:

- maintaining the association's financial viability
- ensuring the association's purposes are being achieved
- keeping up to date with legal requirements
- signing contracts on the association's behalf.

Specifically, committee members' functions under the Incorporations Act include:

- Annual general meeting held within five months of the end of the association's financial year
- Submitting a 12 month financial statement which gives a 'true and fair' view of the association's financial affairs, to members at the annual general meeting
- Overseeing the association's financial affairs. This includes making sure the association does not continue to operate if it is insolvent
- Returning all documents that belong to the association within 28 days of ceasing to be a committee member.

As a community owned association it is important to adopt procedures and policies to ensure good governance. The association should also strive to be transparent in communicating dealings to your members and to your funding bodies.

Six questions for responsibly acquitting board duties

1. Act with reasonable care and diligence

Ask yourself - would someone who was observing me undertaking my board/committee role think that I was being careful and conscientious in my duties?

2. Act in the best interest and proper purpose

Ask yourself - is this decision in the best interest of my board/committee and does it further its charitable purpose?

3. Proper use of information and position

Ask yourself - am I using my position as a board member for the benefit of my charity, or am I using it for my own interests, or the interests of my family, or others I have a relationship with?

4. Responsible financial management

Ask yourself – are there systems and processes in place that ensure that our charity's resources are being effectively put towards our charitable purpose and are protected from misuse?

5. Disclose and manage conflicts of interest

Ask yourself – would an independent observer be sure that I was acting in the best interests of my charity? Or might they think I was acting in my own interest? What could I gain from this decision?

6. Insolvency

Ask yourself – will my charity be able to pay its debts when they fall due?



Managing meaningful meetings

A successful committee conducts efficient, productive, and inclusive meetings documenting, and recording decision-making that is securely stored and available to members, stakeholders and regulators.

If not managed correctly, committees can become obstacles. Successful committees create and sustain an action-oriented focus. The chair or president plays an important role in the conduct of meetings. The chair should take the lead in:

- Clearly defining the purpose of the meeting. What does the committee need to accomplish?
- Scheduling meetings well in advance and in association with the secretary/treasurer emailing the agenda and associated documents so members can prepare for the meeting.
- Beginning and ending committee meetings on time.
- Inviting feedback from all members on key issues and decisions.
- Making members feel comfortable through asking questions. Ideas are often developed and solidified through exploration. As well, asking for clarification can mean a poorly-expressed, good idea isn't lost.
- Providing feedback and acknowledgment when a committee member brings forward an idea.
- Investing in consensus building- it takes time, but less time than revisiting decisions repeatedly or motivating people to take action on decisions with which they don't agree.
- Manage a vote on significant decisions and record the decision
- Manage conflict- generate new ideas and new perspectives.
- Keep action items task oriented and distribute the tasks as evenly as possible.
- Have committee members approve the minutes to confirm that everyone agrees that discussion summaries, decisions, and action items are recorded correctly.
- Follow up with members after a meeting. Don't wait until the next meeting to check on the status of action items

Awesome agendas

A meeting agenda is... *'A list of topics that you want to discuss at the meeting. The agenda limits the scope of the meeting discussions, both in subject and in length.'* Getting agendas right can help to inform and shape the culture and actions of your association. The Chair and the Secretary usually work to set the agenda.

Board/Committee meeting agenda templates can be found on the net. You can modify to suit your needs. An agenda should:

- Confirm the purpose of the meeting
- Contain focused topics that achieve the goal of the meeting
- Provide nominal time estimations for items such as reports/discussions
- Can include a suggested motion to provide focus for the discussion
- Include actions from last meeting
- Be distributed with supporting documents (financials/reports/minutes) to participants before the meeting

DigiBiz sample agenda

Name of Organisation		Purpose of Meeting:		
		Date/Time:		
		Chair:		
		Attendees:		
		Apologies:		
Topic	Discussion	Action	Motion Moved/Carried	Person Responsible
1. Chairs Welcome & Report				
2. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest	The Chair should ask if any actual or perceived Conflicts of Interest are likely to arise.	Members can advise at any time during the meeting if a conflict arises	Any member with a Col should not be in the room during discussion/motion of the relevant item	The Chair and all members have responsibility to raise Col
3. Minutes of Previous Meeting				
4. Financial Report	No question is stupid.	Financial responsibilities are clear under the law		
5. General Business- Items	Points can be notified via the		In some circumstances it	

to be numbered. Standing reports numbered e.g. 4.1Risk	agenda		may be efficient to frame up motion prior to the meeting- providing this does not stymie discussion	
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Recording meetings

Keeping a record of meetings is essential where you have mandated responsibilities. Minute recording is typically done by the Secretary and should be approved by the Chair/President before distribution. Good minutes are important:

- They are the only record of the work done and decisions made by the board and its committees.
- They are the written history of the association.
- They keep people informed who were not able to attend the meeting.
- They are essential in continuity for subsequent committees and boards.
- They may be a legal requirement under the rules of your Association.
- They may be required by funding bodies/donors/regulators.

Have the agenda in front of you while you take minutes. It is not necessary to write down everything that is said-summarise briefly. Record all motions:

- Name the member who made the motion /bold the action
- Record (name) that the motion was seconded
- State and underline whether the motion was carried or failed.
- Record the vote tally that includes yes, no, or abstained.
- Request that lengthy, involved motions be written out and given to you.

Avoid verbal reports where possible. If a verbal report is given summarise it. It is not necessary to record reams of information from a report if the information is available in the files of another committee. Write up the minutes as quickly as possible after the meeting, while your notes still make sense.

Minutes should be stored securely/ Cloud based Freeware is available that allows for minutes storage and sharing.

See the [DigiBiz presentation on Freeware](#) (Dropbox/Google Drive/ Evernote)

DigiBiz sample minutes

Name of Organisation		Purpose of Meeting: Date/Time: Chair: Attendees:			Apologies:	
Topic	Discussion	Action	Motion Moved/Carried	Person Responsible		
1. Chairs Report			The Chairs Report as written is accepted Moved: Initials/Name			

			Seconded: Initials/Name Carried	
2. Minutes of Meeting xx/xx/xxxx	Brevity is best.		The minutes of the meeting XXXX are accepted as fair and correct. Moved: Initials/Name Seconded: Initials/Name Carried	
3. Financial Report	Liabilities must be properly understood, reported and discussed.		The Financial Report as <i>presented/as amended</i> be accepted Moved: Initials/Name Seconded: Initials/Name Carried	
4. Reports and General Business		What needs to be done		Who is taking the lead
Close of Meeting:			Next Meeting:	

KWIK TIPS 4 effective meetings

- Select and use a template for agenda's and minutes-include a nominal timeframe for each discussion item.
- The agenda and minutes should be forwarded to the committee five working days before the meeting.
- Stick to the agenda- defer non-agenda items to 'Any other business'/or list as an item next meeting.
- Minutes should be moved by a committee member that has attended the meeting.
- Minutes should be brief.
- If a motion is passed it is passed by the whole committee/board and the whole board takes responsibility. Non-attendance does not absolve a committee member from responsibility.
- Conflicts of Interest (CoI) should be notified and recorded. If a CoI has been identified the person affected should leave the room when discussion/voting on the issue is undertaken. The time the person left the room and the time they returned should be noted in the minutes.
- Save, work-on and share agendas and minutes in The Cloud.