



CWS President's Update February 2020

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Policies and procedures now on website

Others in progress – a motion has been presented to adopt these processes, with updates due by the 2020 AGM. The policies are allowing for quicker onboarding of facilitators and coordinators. Specific governance requirements incorporated into the procedures include:

- Telling new members and volunteers about our insurance
- Including risk management practices in daily operations
- Separation of management committee from daily operations

Constitution now on website

There were several versions of our constitution doing the rounds when the new committee took over in September 2019. After some investigation it appears that the first document based on the 'model rules' template is the current version lodged with the authorities. This constitution has been added to the resources section of the website. Any changes to the constitution must be voted on by our members, therefore we will aim to have an amended constitution circulated to members prior to the 2020 AGM. Areas for consideration include:

- Expanding and refining the objects of the association
- Changes in the membership types and fees
- Amending the methods of notification to member to include electronic communication

Changes in the way we hold meetings

Our first general meeting with the new committee was well attended and long– people wanted to find out about the plans for the shed. However, because it was classed as a general meeting there were some onerous requirements regarding the formal structure of the meeting. This meant that minutes were required, and discussion was limited. I hoped that the second meeting would run more quickly but the formal structure meant that it still went for longer than two hours and people were drained from the experience. The management committee discussed the need to separate the formal decision making process from the need for a general discourse about the operations and strategy of the shed. We therefore agreed to separate management committee meetings from a less formal ‘members update’. The first management committee meeting to trial this new structure is this meeting the 12th February, and the first quarterly members update is being held on Saturday February 15th. The members update is not legally classed as a ‘meeting’ and therefore does not need a chair, agenda, a quorum, notices and minutes. It purposely includes time for coffee and informal discussions, a brief update from the President, interactive opportunities to gain members feedback and two guest speakers. A ‘motions template’ has been created to aid the submission of proposals to the management committee meeting. Members and other stakeholders may be invited to management committee meetings, but at the moment we are focusing on addressing the priority issues that we must attend to. It is hoped that this new format will be a more efficient use of all of our time and more enjoyable for those involved.

Risk management

A risk assessment has been built into every new group and activity approval at the Women’s Shed. The general manager is retrospectively working through established groups. The risk assessment includes generic risks associated with the use of the community centre and specific risks associated with that activity e.g. the need to wear Personal Protective Equipment when doing DIY activities. The assessment includes methods of mitigation and is given to coordinators and facilitators when their activity is approved.

Insurance renewal due February – quotes have been requested

Separation of GM and President role

A motion has been presented to the management committee to formally separate these roles and appoint me General Manager as well as President. In the past there has been much confusion about the when the president should consult about decisions with the management committee and when they are able to act alone. As I have become familiar with the way that incorporated associations are structure it has become clear that this confusion is in part due to a lack of

separation between the president's role (governance, strategy, advocacy for the shed with community stakeholders) and the general manager's role (day to day running of the shed).

The management committee have been elected by the members to look after the association and ensure that we meet any legal requirements. The management committee appoint a general manager to run the day to day operations of the shed. There should be open communication between the strategic and operational parts of the team. In fact the President never really acts alone – they are just the chair of the management committee. The general manager is able to take responsibility to day to day decisions within her role description. For example the GM may approve activities where they fit with the general values and aims of the Women's shed and are designed so that they will not run at a loss. Any activities that require further subsidy from the shed, or where it is unclear about the suitability of the activity should be taken to the management committee for guidance and approval. There are other nuances on the separation of roles – I will finalise role descriptions prior to the 2020 AGM so that anyone interested in either role can understand exactly what is expected of them, and are able to take on one or the other (i.e. someone may nominate to be president without the expectation that they need to be involved in daily operations, and vice versa). **I would like to take this opportunity to ask the secretary and the treasurer to document their processes in case they do not wish to stand at the next AGM (this is not a hint!! Just key person risk planning!)**

Community engagement and building connections

We have been working with Steve Whiteman of Economic Development Queensland, the motocross club and the Men's Shed regarding operations at the Community Centre. We ran two successful sausage sizzles at Noosaville Bunnings which attracted a lot of interest from potential members. The Coolum Men's shed were very generous with their advice and the loan of equipment for the sausage sizzles. A Women's shed group was set up in collaboration with Peregian Veggie Village, we now have 9 members there working on two plots. No other stakeholder engagement has occurred due to other priorities

Strategy – 'The Women and the Shed'

The Women- we are currently focussing on the operational aspects of embedding procedures and changing the IT systems so that we can continue to run activities and attract new members, facilitators and coordinators. With an established and engaged membership we will have a much better chance of reaching our goals to fund our own facilities.

The Shed – initial discussions with Buderim and Coolum Men's Shed and local MPs indicated that we have a lot of work to do before we can get our own land, building and equipment. There is also a decision to be made by members about how we will fund these facilities e.g. raising activity prices, raising membership, doing more sausage sizzles, making items to sell etc etc. The feedback I

have received since taking over is that most women have enough obligations and don't need any more responsibility, therefore we must be careful to keep our fundraising strategy realistic and sustainable or we will lose members. Once the more immediate issues of the IT system and the coordinators are on board we will have the resources to properly consult and plan our approach, which may include the use of moveable facilities.

The Women's Shed movement- it has become clear that we are 'pioneers' in the Women's Shed movement, and we have had to basically start 'from scratch'. We are happy to share our experiences with other women who want to set up their own shed. We may at some point look to form a peak body for Women's Sheds so that we can centralise funding as the Men's Sheds have done.