

Neighbourhood House Good Practice Guide

2012



Neighbourhood Houses
The heart of our community

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Purpose & Background

The Good Practice Guide Self Assessment System (GPG) is an evaluation tool for Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (NH&LCs) in Victoria. It assists NH&LCs to evaluate their strengths and identify opportunities for improvement as they strive for organisational excellence. The GPG is a step by step process that guides you through a thorough investigation of your House or Centre's governance, management and delivery practices.

The GPG can also be used as a professional development tool for Co-ordinators, Staff and Committees of Governance, and will assist in ensuring the ongoing viability and sustainability of your organisation.

For Committees of Governance this tool will assist in ensuring you meet your legal, financial, reporting and employer responsibilities. For Co-ordinators and staff, it will assist in ensuring you have the systems, policies and processes in place for effective management of your house. It is important that committees and staff work jointly with the GPG to ensure there is shared responsibility and accountability for the overall operation of the House.

ANHLC is committed to supporting and improving the quality of programs activity and services within the sector. The original version of a NH&LC Self-Assessment system, launched in 2002, was called Quality Houses. This Good Practice Guide acknowledges and builds on previous work done in this area.

To many, the term 'best practice' is probably more familiar than 'good practice'. Best practice generally refers to methods or techniques that have consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means and are used as benchmarks. Best practice is often used to describe the process of developing and following a standard way of doing things that multiple organisations can use. A key difficulty is that there is not a general consensus on what constitutes best practices and 'best practice' assumes that it is not possible to go beyond what has been already prescribed.

NH&LCs implement community development in a variety of ways. Though based on the same principles and practice (see below) and sharing the same aims and objectives, NH&LCs implement community development in different ways to suit their respective communities and citizens. To suggest or impose prescriptive best practices that do not align with specific individual or organisation contexts would be counterproductive.

Therefore, this document is about good practice: a term that is less prescriptive than best practice. Good Practice Guidelines outline broad strategic areas and well regarded practices, thereby allowing choices to be made to best suit specific circumstances and contexts.

Context

Across Victoria, Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres operate as autonomous, incorporated, community managed providers of a wide range of services.

There are approximately 390 Neighbourhood Houses across Victoria. Additionally, there are 16 Neighbourhood House Networks and the Victorian state peak body The Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres (ANHLC).

Programs provided by Houses & Centres integrate community development and adult learning and vary widely in content and context. Though neighbourhood houses go by various names, such

as community houses and learning centres, they all have a strong commitment to the philosophy and practices of the Neighbourhood House sector as a whole.

They also have a high level of commitment to accountability – both to the communities in which they operate and to the funding bodies who support them. This has been demonstrated over the years by their willingness to participate in a wide range of service agreements and policy development with a variety of government departments as well as their flexibility and responsiveness to community need.

Apart from the quality of the services provided, the success of neighbourhood houses has been largely due to the importance placed on people's needs and the support given to them within an environment that is informal, encouraging and non-threatening. The outcome of this is an overall sense of empowerment of both the individual and the community as a whole.

Whilst there had been a number of measures utilised by houses and centres throughout the State to quantify or qualify these services, there had been no agreed process for evaluating the quality of the service provision and community management in terms of sensitivity, responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness for the particular community it aims to serve.

These Standards provide an agreed base line for individual houses and centres to assess their operations and to enable consistency of performance across the sector. Input from neighbourhood houses who trialled the Good Practice Guide was invaluable in ensuring the tool was easy to use and would provide a comprehensive framework to assist houses improve their practices.

The GPG is based on the NH&LC Sector Practice diagram (as per the ANHLC Sector Framework 2003) and sets out standards in the four (4) practice areas of:

- Governance
- Management
- Delivery & Operations
- External Relationships/Capacity Building

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.

Neighbourhood House Community Development Practice

The vital ingredient that binds together the three parts of the NH&LC sector — the peak body ANHLC, the 16 NH Networks and the more than 390 Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres across the State — is the particular style of practice, which is underpinned by the 10 Sector Principles outlined in the NH&LC Sector Framework. The three parts of the sector work collectively to take the whole sector forward.

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. There are ten NH&LC Sector principles:

- Community Ownership
- Community Participation
- Empowerment
- Access and Equity
- Life Long Learning
- Inclusion
- Networking
- Advocacy
- Self help
- Social Action

The GPG system is a continuous improvement tool which helps you to identify your strengths and achievements and identifying opportunities for improvement.

When you have completed the GPG process you will have a realistic picture of the aspects of governance, management and general operations that meet the standards along with a prioritised list of actions to undertake in order to meet the standards.

Neighbourhood House Good Practice Areas

Practice Area 1 Governance

A good practice house provides leadership through effective governance and ensures its sustainability by developing structures, policies and processes that:

- is clear about the organisation's purpose and direction
- reviews the quality and integrity of its operations
- is accountable for its performance
- assesses and manages risk
- comply with funding body standards and requirements

Practice Area 2 Management

A good practice house provides a safe, healthy and satisfying work environment for staff and volunteers by developing relationships, procedures and processes that:

- ensure legally compliant human resource practices
- motivate their involvement and commitment
- enhance their effectiveness and provide for their professional development
- harness their creativity and encourage ideas for improvement
- ensure policies and procedures are understood and implemented
- ensure their health, safety, and well-being within the work environment

Practice Area 3 Delivery & Operations

A good practice house is valued by its Members and Learners. It practices community development and develops procedures and processes to:

- understand their shared and individual needs
- provide appropriate responses to meet their needs
- create a healthy, safe and inclusive environment to support wellbeing
- support people actively participating in their community and pursuing individual opportunities (choice)
- seek feedback on performance

Practice Area 4 External Relationships/Capacity Building

A good practice house is actively involved in the sector and contributes to the broader community and ensures its viability by attracting and retaining external resources. The house:

- shares its knowledge, resources with, and participates in, neighbourhood house networks and ANHLC
- participates in networks and partnerships with other community agencies
- works effectively with local government
- develops effective relationships with funding bodies including government, business, philanthropic and other organisations
- is aware of and maximises potential funding opportunities

How Does the Good Practice Guide Work?

The GPG Self-Assessment is an ongoing process that will ensure the structure and practices of the neighbourhood house are sustainable and will assist in delivering a high quality service to the community. The process consists of the following steps:

1. Form a self assessment working group or “Good Practice Team” (This may not be the same people for each practice area.)
2. Using the Self Assessment Worksheet 1 identify strengths, opportunities and actions for improvement required against each standard, (an example is provided on page 13).
3. Using the Self Assessment Worksheet 2 monitor and evaluate processes in achieving each practice area, (an example is provided on page 15).
4. Feed priority actions identified into the organisation’s Strategic, Annual and/or Work Plans.
5. Provide feedback to the Committee of Governance, staff, volunteers and members and other relevant organisations and individuals on the practice learning’s from the GPG self assessment. Celebrate!!

Step by Step Good Practice Guide

1. Form a Self Assessment Working Group or Good Practice Team

Decide who will be involved. Committee members, House Co-ordinator/Manager, staff, volunteers, participants - it is important to have a group that is representative of the house and that committees and staff work jointly on the standards. The Good Practice Team may not be the same for each practice area. A team of three to five people is recommended.

2. Work through the Standards using Worksheet 1

Begin by choosing the Practice Area and its Standards where the House operates well, so as to get used to using Worksheet 1. Once the team have developed confidence in the process, move on to those Practice Areas and Standards which may be more challenging.

1. Choose a Practice Area and consider the first standard;
2. Identify existing policies, plans, documentation and practices for this standard;
3. Note this evidence & where it is kept (both hard copy and electronic copy);
4. Then (if needed) identify opportunities and actions required for improvement to meet the standard. If the house doesn’t have the evidence or the team needs help, seek assistance from the NH networker, other houses or ANHLC;
5. Next prioritise any actions for improvement as high, medium or low. When prioritising actions consider both their strategic impact and their urgency;
6. Identify who is responsible for carrying the action forward noting that the Committee of Governance has overall responsibility for governance issues with the Manager/Co-ordinator having responsibility for management and delivery actions;
7. Consider the next standard (this is an iterative process) i.e.: go back to step 2.1 and repeat the process to complete all the standards in the practice area;
8. Ideally, complete all the standards in one practice area at one time;
9. Monitor & evaluate processes for achieving each practice area as below.

3. Monitor and Evaluate Your Processes using Worksheet 2

At the completion of each Practice Area, use Worksheet 2 to review and reflect on processes in achieving and maintaining each practice area and its associated standards.

This stage is for the GPG team to self assess and identify how the organisation monitors and evaluates processes and effectiveness in achieving each practice area. Identify opportunities and actions required for improvement.

4. Develop Action Plans

Integrate identified actions for improvement into the other planning processes developed in the House – especially the strategic and annual plans and work plans. Identify who will be responsible for completing the action. This will ensure actions are followed through.

The GPG team should develop a review process to ensure that actions that may have received a lower priority will be put forward for action in future.

5. Provide Feedback on the Practice Learnings from your GPG Self Assessment

Use the completion of the GPG Self Assessment tool to promote that the House has good practices. Promote the completion of the GPG self assessment to the wider community e.g. a press release with photograph of the Good Practice Guide Team / activity in the House.

Acknowledge, communicate and celebrate the completion of the self assessment. Thank the people involved in the process for their time, effort and goodwill!

Auspiced Houses

It is recognised that some houses are auspiced by other organisations. Please refer to Appendix 1 for NHCP Guidelines and the role of a community committee within auspiced NH&LCs. When using the GPG examine your practice based on your current governance arrangements?

Please Note: Practice area 1 Governance, Standard 1 may not apply

Neighbourhood House Good Practice Standards & Evidence

Practice Area 1 Governance

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
<p>1.1 We operate within the rules of our organisation as defined in our constitution, including organisational membership, committee membership, authorities, delegation and decision-making processes.</p>	<p>CoG Terms of Reference/CoG Charter CoG Constitution/Articles of Association Member Register Deeds of Delegation CoG Minutes CoG Member Profiles</p>
<p>1.2 We have a clear and current understanding of purpose (mission) for the organisation that is consistent with the sector philosophy and principles. This has been formally adopted (endorsed) by the Committee of Governance within the last 12 months.</p>	<p>Mission Statement Values Statement CoG Minutes</p>
<p>1.3 Our organisation structure is clearly documented and defines the key roles, authorities, responsibility and relations between the CoG, staff and volunteers.</p>	<p>Organisational Chart Authorities Delegations</p>
<p>1.4 Our planning process include the production of an annual plan, which details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key activities to be resourced, • key objectives to be achieved and a • financial budget showing income and expenditure. 	<p>Planning Schedule & Timetable Annual Plan Annual Budget</p>
<p>1.5 We have developed policies and procedures that provide the framework and guide and support our operations. The policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and accessible to staff and volunteers.</p> <p>These policies and procedures have been formally adopted (endorsed) by the Committee of Governance within the last 12 months.</p> <p><i>(It is planned that a comprehensive list of Policies & Procedures will be available on the ANHLC Website)</i></p>	<p>Policy Framework/Index Governance Policies & Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision Making • Deed of Delegation • Conflict of Interest <p>Financial Policies & Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banking & Investment • Petty Cash • Purchasing <p>Staffing Policies & Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time in Lieu • Confidentiality and Privacy • Grievance • Induction Manual • Staff Handbook • Working with Children Check <p>Operational & Organisational Policies & Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability Action Plan • Grievance Procedures • Student Handbook • Childcare • Continuous Improvement

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
<p>1.6 Our Committee of Governance & management staff understand our legal & regulatory obligations and ensure compliance with these.</p>	<p>Relevant legislation and regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Association Incorporations Act • Occupational Health & Safety (OH&S) Act • Disability Discrimination Act • Copyright Act • Food Handling Regulations • Childcare Regulations • Liquor Licencing • Fundraising Legislation (eg for raffles) • Privacy Acts
<p>1.7a We have internal reporting processes that regularly provide information to the Committee of Governance to facilitate informed decision making and ensure quality and integrity in operations.</p> <p>1.7b We have external reporting processes that meet our legal compliance, regulatory and funding obligations.</p>	<p>Record Keeping System Statistical Data Collection Management Reports CoG Minutes Operational/Work Plans Risk Management Reports Funding Body Audits and Progress Reports Project Reports Audit Reports Annual Report Annual Return to Consumer Affairs Victoria</p>
<p>1.8 Our Committee of Governance & management staff understand the financial operations of the house and is regularly provided with information to effectively manage the business of the house, ensure its sustainability.</p>	<p>Financial reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • profit & loss • balance sheet showing assets & liabilities (eg staff entitlements & grants in advance) <p>Audit Reports Funding Body Reports Annual Return to Consumer Affairs Victoria</p>
<p>1.9 We have a risk management plan to identify and manage risk to protect our CofG, staff, tutors, volunteers and people accessing the house.</p>	<p>Risk Management Plan Public Liability Insurance Professional Indemnity Insurance Contents Insurance Directors and Officers Liability Insurance Business Interruption Insurance Work Cover Insurance OH&S Policies</p>
<p>1.10 We have a risk management plan relating to the selection of staff, volunteers and CofG to ensure that only fit and proper persons hold positions of responsibility within our organisation.</p>	<p>Police Checks Working with Children's Check Referees</p>
<p>1.11 We ensure that Professional Development opportunities (education and training) are provided to all Governance Committee members, according to the needs of their role, and their personal aspirations.</p>	<p>Professional Development Plans Professional Development Budget Committee Skills Register</p>

Practice Area 2 Management

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
<p>2.1 We have a defined and legally compliant system for recruiting staff and volunteer positions and ensure all staff are appointed according to an appropriate award and classification for the duties they undertake.</p>	<p>Recruitment Policies & Procedures Succession Planning for CoG, staff & volunteers Employment contracts/Letters of appointment Copy of Current Modern Award or NHACE Collective Agreement Copy of Equal Employment Opportunity Act</p>
<p>2.2 We ensure our employment practices for staff, tutors and volunteers are compliant with all legislative and funding body requirements.</p>	<p>Privacy and Confidentiality Superannuation OH&S Act Long Service Leave provisions Harassment and Bullying</p>
<p>2.3 We have defined activities and processes to ensure that <u>all staff, tutors</u> and <u>all volunteers</u> have a clear understanding of our organisation's overall purpose, current direction, responsibilities, accountabilities and obligations.</p>	<p>Staff/Tutor Induction Procedures Volunteer Induction Procedures Annual Planning Day Staff/Tutor meetings Volunteer meetings Position Descriptions Staffing/Tutor Policies Volunteer Policies</p>
<p>2.4 We provide the opportunity for feedback between each staff member/tutor and the person to whom they report, to discuss their performance relative to their role, to acknowledge achievements and address areas of concern and identify opportunities for Professional Development and Training.</p>	<p>Regular Performance Reviews</p>
<p>2.5 We ensure that Professional Development opportunities (education and training) are provided to all staff and tutors according to the needs of their role, and their personal aspirations.</p>	<p>Professional Development Plans Professional Development Budget Personnel Records External Supervision (when appropriate)</p>
<p>2.6 We document our policies, processes and procedures and these are accessible to all staff, tutors and volunteers.</p>	<p>Policies and Procedures – Manuals and Online</p>
<p>2.7 We encourage and seek input from staff, tutors and volunteers to improve our processes, programs and services.</p>	<p>Staff/Tutor Meetings Volunteer Meetings Bright Idea Sessions Planning Days Online Feedback Forms</p>
<p>2.8 We ensure that the organisation provides flexibility where possible to accommodate the individual needs of its staff, tutors and volunteers.</p>	<p>Personnel Policies Induction Procedures T.O.I.L Policy Collective Agreement Provisions (where relevant)</p>

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
2.9 We have a clearly understood Staff, Tutor and Volunteer Grievance Procedure that is available for all members of staff and volunteers to have complaints of a serious nature dealt with discreetly.	Staff, Tutor and Volunteer Grievance Procedure Grievance Files
2.10 Staff, Tutors and volunteers understand our clearly stated 'Confidentiality and Privacy' policy that applies to relationships and dealings with all Members and Learners.	Confidentiality and Privacy policy Position Descriptions

Practice Area 3 Delivery & Operations

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
3.1 We understand and operate using a Community Development Model consistent with the Sector Principles	Governance Structure Annual Plan Information Booklets and Brochures Community Meetings & Focus Groups Needs Analysis Community Development Projects Policies and Procedures Co-ordinator's Job Description
3.2 Our house is inclusive and accessible and we have clear and visible policies to support this.	Access and Equity Policy statements displayed and online Disability Action Plan
3.3 We regularly consult to determine the needs and expectations of the community in which we operate. This information assists in the design of programs and services we provide.	Annual Members' Meeting Needs Assessment ACFE Briefings Local Govt Briefings NH Network meeting Demographic Review User surveys/focus groups Social Media e.g. Twitter, Facebook Online Consultation & Surveys
3.4 Members and Learners are provided with information on the range and content of the programs and services we offer.	Information Booklets and Brochures Reception Enquiries Web Site Social Media e.g. Twitter, Facebook
3.5 We use a variety of marketing and promotion tools and regularly measure and review their effectiveness.	Marketing Strategy/Plan Evaluation of Effectiveness of Marketing Strategies Google Analytics for the Website Use of Social Media e.g. Twitter, Facebook
3.6 We provide high quality activities, programs and services.	Tutor Recruitment Process Tutor Skills, Experience and Qualifications Risk Management Assessment for each Program, Activity or Service Documented Program, Activity or Service Outline and Outcomes

3.7 We receive feedback from our Members and Learners regarding the value of the programs and services they receive as well as the safety and inclusiveness of the environment we provide. This is used to review and improve our programs and services.	Program and Service Evaluation Forms Program and Service Review Meetings Online Surveys Continuous Improvement Policy Feedback via Facebook, website
3.8 We have a clearly understood Grievance Procedure available for Members and Learners to lodge complaints of a serious nature.	Member's/Learner's Information Kit Member & Learner Grievance Procedure
3.9 We have clearly understood policies and responsibilities/procedures for compliance with Occupational Health and Safety regulations.	Copy of OH&S Act OH&S Policy and Procedures
3.10 We have clearly understood policies and responsibilities/procedures for compliance with health and food handling regulations.	Copy of Health & Food Handling Regulations Health and Food Handling Policies and Procedures

Practice Area 4 External Relationships/Capacity Building

Self Assessment Standards	Typical Evidence
4.1 We actively participate in a range of activities that enable us to share our knowledge and resources with the neighbourhood house sector including ANHLC and NH Networks.	ANHLC Conference & Forums NH Network Meetings Local & Regional Networks Participation in Neighbourhood Houses Annual Survey Social Media Website
4.2 We participate collaboratively in networks and partnerships that enable us to support or be assisted by other community organisations that operate in a similar sphere of activity.	Local Community Organisation Networks Community Partnership Projects MoU & Partnership agreements Auspice of other organisations
4.3 We actively develop and maintain effective relationships with relevant Council officers and Councillors to ensure our organisation is known and understood and to access any resources and support that may be available to us.	Meetings with Local Government – Officers and Councillors Reports to Local Government Program available at Council Link to your House website on Council website Neighbourhood Houses recognised in council plans Partnership projects Officers and Councillors invited to AGM and other events Participation on council community consultation committees
4.4 We actively develop and maintain effective relationships with our local State and Federal Members of Parliament to ensure our organisation is known and understood and to access any resources and support that may be available to us.	Meetings with State and Federal MP's Distribution of program Partnership projects MP's invited to AGM and other events

<p>4.5 We actively develop and maintain effective relationships with funding bodies that are able to provide resources (financial, physical or human) in support of our key aims and objectives.</p>	<p>Meetings Communication Proposals Submissions Joint Planning activities Funding applications</p>
<p>4.6 We actively develop and maintain effective relationships with local business & industry</p>	<p>Tailored training delivered for businesses Sponsorship Work experience Joint projects Reciprocal training</p>

SAMPLE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE Self Assessment Worksheet 1

What evidence - policies, plans, documentation and practices do we have/do; where are they kept; what's missing and what do we need to develop or revise.

HAVE - policies, plans & documentation; DO - practices

Practice Area: _____						
Standard	Evidence	Where is it kept? or What do we do?	Action for Improvement	Responsibility	Priority High Medium Low	Date complete record that actions have been completed

See next page for completed example

EXAMPLE Self-Assessment Worksheet 1

What evidence - policies, plans, documentation and practices do we have/do for each standard; where are they kept; what's missing and what do we need to develop or revise.

HAVE - polices, plans & documentation; DO - practices

Practice Area: <u>Governance</u>							
Standard	Evidence policies, plans, documentation and practices	Where is it kept? or What do we do?	Actions for improvement	Responsibility	Priority High Medium Low	Date complete record that actions have been completed	
1.1 We operate within the rules of our organisation as defined in our constitution, including organisational membership, committee membership, authorities, delegation and decision-making processes.	Quintessential NH Constitution 2003	Admin filing cabinet Server top level folder <i>Quintessential NH Constitution</i>	Update constitution in 2012 in line with changes to incorporation act	Chairperson Committee of Governance	High in 2012		
1.2 Our organisation structure is clearly documented and defines the key roles, authorities, responsibility and relations between the CoM, staff and volunteers.	Don't have an org chart		Develop an organisational chart showing governance and management lines of reporting and communication	Chairperson Committee of Governance	High		

SAMPLE GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE Self-Assessment Worksheet 2

Evaluation - how do we review and reflect on our processes in achieving and maintaining each practice area as a whole; what improvements in achieving the four practice areas & their standards could we make.

Practice Area	Identify existing processes	Evidence	Actions for Improvement	Responsibility	Date complete
Practice Area 1 Governance					
Practice Area 2 Management					
Practice Area 3 Delivery & Operations					
Practice Area 4 External Relationships/Capacity Building					

See next page for completed example

EXAMPLE Self-Assessment Worksheet 2

How do we review and reflect on our evaluation processes in achieving and maintaining each practice area as a whole; what improvements in achieving the four practice areas & their standards could we make.

Practice Area	Identify existing processes	Evidence	Actions for Improvement	Responsibility	Date complete
Practice Area 1 Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual Strategic Planning Session Review of purposes and constitution every three years All members encouraged to contribute ideas/thoughts at each COM meeting 			Chairperson Committee of Governance	
Practice Area 2 Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff encouraged to contribute ideas for improvement in both processes and identified actions at regular staff meetings Users regularly surveyed to identify improvements in all aspects of house 	Minutes of Meeting – Managers filing cabinet Latest results on notice board & in filing cabinet	Ongoing Annually	Manager/Co- ordinator	
Practice Area 3 Delivery& Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation surveys distributed to each class at least once per year with results displayed on notice board 	Latest results on notice board & in filing cabinet	Annually	Manager/Co- ordinator	
Practice Area 4 External Relationships/Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus group held with external agencies annually to identify areas for improvement in House practices and processes 	Notes from Focus Group	Annually	Manager/Co- ordinator	

Appendix 1 – Auspice Bodies

from NHCP Guidelines 2009, page 14

Auspice Bodies

An auspice body or agency is one that takes on legal and financial responsibilities for the 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. It is preferred that this be an interim or short term arrangement, or it may be an ongoing one in exceptional circumstances, that supports the functioning of the Neighbourhood House.

An auspice agency, in signing a Funding Agreement for the NHCP 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 recognizes the role of the Neighbourhood House community-based committee or reference group;
- has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Neighbourhood House community-based committee or reference group that clearly defines roles, relationships and lines of accountability between the two and ensures all parties are treated equally; and
- ensures 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;
- ▷ the Neighbourhood House community-based committee or reference group retains its responsibility for reporting, data collection and communication with DPCD;
- ▷ 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 auspice arrangement by either party; and
- ▷ mutual benefits for both parties and the community are recognised and acknowledged.

