



R•A•N•C•H

Regional Association of Neighbourhood & Community Houses Inc.

“Collaborating to develop our communities”

Coordinator ORIENTATION GUIDE

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Why this manual?

The Regional Association of Neighbourhood and Community Houses (RANCH) is funded by the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) to provide governance and management support to 29 Neighbourhood Houses in Central Victoria, including yours.

Our Committee and staff understand that taking on the role of Coordinator in a Neighbourhood House can be daunting. We know there is a lot to learn and even understanding what you need to know about is a challenge. We hope this manual can make that process easier.

The manual can't cover everything as each organisation is different in some way. The most important rule for a new co-coordinator is never hesitate to ask someone if you are stuck or unsure. RANCH, your colleagues and the peak body for Neighbourhood Houses, Neighbourhood Houses Victoria <https://www.nhvic.org.au/> (please note that the NHVic website is under reconstruction and parts may not currently be available) are always willing to assist.

The RANCH website is also a valuable source of information for coordinators. <https://ranch.net.au/>

What is a Neighbourhood House?

The first Neighbourhood House in Victoria was established in 1973. Currently, there are approximately 400 Neighbourhood Houses throughout Victoria. The number continues to grow in response to community need.

Neighbourhood Houses are owned and managed for and by the community. In most Houses, the Committee of Management, participants, volunteers and workers at the House share decision making.

Neighbourhood Houses are welcoming, non-threatening places where anyone can come to meet new friends, contribute to their community, get helpful information and learn new skills.

Although Neighbourhood Houses differ from each other in many ways, they are united by the Neighbourhood House Sector Principles and therefore aim to:

- assist community members to make their communities fairer and more sustainable with the resources, services and infrastructure they need, and
- empower communities to have more control over their own destiny
- encourage personal growth, self-help and the sharing of knowledge

Neighbourhood Houses work with a range of other local and state organisations in both formal and informal Networking and Partnership arrangements.

What are Neighbourhood Houses expected to do and how are they expected to do it?

Through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, **the Victorian Government** provides recurrent funding to support the coordination of a service that provides community development activities consistent with the aims of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program.

The community development approach is a defining feature and expectation of the program. It is a practice that employs particular values, methods and knowledge. RANCH understands that few Neighbourhood House Coordinators have had an opportunity to gain formal training in Community Development.

It is therefore recommended that a process is put in place to develop your expertise in Community Development practice as required which may include formal training, mentoring, professional supervision and attendance at Professional Development workshops including the Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic) annual conference and RANCH activities.

All decision making and activity should be underpinned by and consistent with the Neighbourhood House sector principles. Details are in the Neighbourhood House Sector Guidelines located at the RANCH website

<https://ranch.net.au/resources/neighbourhood-house-sector/> In short, they are:

Community ownership	Inclusion
Community participation	Networking
Empowerment	Advocacy
Access and equity	Self-help
Lifelong learning	Social action

The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program aims and requirements below are also located on our website and also via the NHVic Membership Resource page. <https://www.nhvic.org.au/Pages/Category/resource-library>

Program aims

The Neighbourhood House Coordination Program provides funding to Neighbourhood Houses, Neighbourhood House Networks and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria to:

Support the provision of community development programs and activities that lead to community-strengthening outcomes by:

- supporting diversity and promoting community participation and inclusion
- facilitating community development and capacity building in support of individuals and groups within communities
- supporting lifelong learning opportunities for people to improve their access to training and employment pathways, and

Undertake community development processes to address locally identified priorities and needs through:

- community consultation
- development of agreed community responses to identified priorities and needs
- identification of partners and funding sources
- facilitating and evaluating responses to identified needs and priorities.

It is noteworthy that the guidelines were updated in 2016 to require NHs to achieve both aims of the NHCP.

The Neighbourhood House Good Practice Guide is a sector-developed guide to support quality standards in neighbourhood houses. This can be located in the Resources section of our website.

<https://ranch.net.au/resources/nh-coordinator-kit/>

Program requirements

Funding to neighbourhood houses is allocated on the basis of hours of coordination (as identified in each service agreement). Funding assists with employing a coordinator and related costs to:

- provide a balanced mix of community development planning and activities that achieve each of the program aims
- promote participation in the Neighbourhood House program and activities by diverse community groups and individuals

- be open for at least as many hours as the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program provides coordination funding
- provide at least twice as many activity hours as the number of coordination hours funded by the NHCP
- Activities may be provided concurrently

It is expected that the planning, development and delivery of these program requirements will be based on a documented annual plan.

All neighbourhood houses funded through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program should participate in the governance, management and activities of their Neighbourhood House Network. (RANCH)

Participation can include:

- representation on the Committee of Management
- attendance at network events and professional development opportunities
- engagement with the network for management and governance support, program development and strengthening regional linkages

The [Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Guidelines](#) is an excellent resource and Coordinators and Committee of Management members are encouraged to become familiar with it. It contains valuable information about how Neighbourhood Houses are expected to operate. It provides a comprehensive overview of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program including aims, requirements, reporting and an overview of the who, what and how of Neighbourhood Houses.

Whilst the Sector is made up of a wide variety of organisations ranging from RTO's and LGA auspice organisations, despite their size, if they receive NHCP (Neighbourhood House Coordination Program) funding from the DHHS they are required to operate and comply with the principles and reporting requirements outlined in NHCP funding Guidelines pages 12 -15. Make sure you are familiar with this document as it underpins your funding agreement and has a lot of information. **The Guidelines were due to be reviewed this year by DHHS but this has been put on hold due to Covid-19.**

Please be aware that you are required to acknowledge DHHS in any advertising material. Your agreement will have details.

The specific activities that each Neighbourhood House undertakes will vary as different communities have different needs and priorities, resources and capacities. The Committee of Management usually determines the priority areas of work through their strategic planning.

However, if the guidelines are properly implemented, the work of the Neighbourhood House will be targeted to the needs of the diverse groups that make up the local community, particularly those facing the greatest barriers and challenges.

Things you need to know or do quite soon

Move slowly

There is usually a large amount of physical, emotional, financial and historic investment by a lot of people embodied in a Neighbourhood House. Just as you would not start rearranging the furniture throughout a share house you moved into on day one, it is wise not to make change until other people's investments are well understood and considered.

Submissions, contracts and reporting

Systems vary widely in NHs for recording and filing submissions, contracts and reporting requirements. It is advisable to:

- check whether there are any submissions already submitted to any funding bodies and awaiting a decision as to whether they will be approved
- review what contracts exist, both ongoing and one-off, including any submissions that were approved and still in implementation phase or awaiting acquittal to ascertain the deliverables and reporting requirements

Locate or develop a reporting checklist/calendar outlining what reporting is owed to who, what is required, and when is it due. Linking this to your phone/computer calendar with reminders is also a great idea. If you give yourself a reminder ahead of the due date even better!

Partnerships

Find out what partnerships are in place. These may be quite formal, documented partnerships or quite informal arrangements where organisations may make use of your Neighbourhood House for delivering activities for example. Make sure you understand the Neighbourhood House obligations in the arrangements, who all the partners are and the rationale behind the arrangement. RANCH can help support with special kinds of partnership arrangements, giving advice and support. For e.g. MOU's and Terms of References. NH Vic also have templates available.

Passwords

Ascertain where password information is recorded. If there is no password register, develop one. Passwords are often required for websites e.g. the DHHS Funded Agency Channel or Neighbourhood Houses Victoria, Online services e.g. Skype, Superannuation clearing houses, service providers e.g. power or phone, your email and website accounts. Update them where necessary. It is a good idea not to have user names and passwords associated with staff or organisational representative's names, that way if you move on they don't have to be changed again.

Authorised representatives

Ascertain and if required update authorised representative information with organisations such as the ATO, power and phone providers.

Notify stakeholders including NHVic update details

Notify stakeholders of your appointment. This should include all funding bodies, local government representatives and Neighbourhood Houses Victoria (NHVic).

Committee reporting requirements

Seek clear direction from the Committee as to what they require from you in your regular reports to the committee. RANCH suggests this should include progress against objectives in any strategic or operational plans and progress against any contracts.

Your team

Develop a clear picture of who all the people are that support the work whether paid or unpaid and their roles and the basic extent of their involvement. In other words, who does what, when and how often and are they paid or not!

Delegated authority

Ascertain the extent of your authority. Ideally, there is a written policy/ies outlining in detail which functions and responsibilities have been delegated to the coordinator and which are retained by the committee of management. If such a policy/ies does not exist RANCH can provide a template for the committee to work through and authorise. As a bare minimum, policy should cover who can spend how much and what authority is required and who can sign off on or acquit contracts.

Clarify your responsibilities

Familiarise yourself with your Position Description, the strategic and/or operational plan including any responsibilities allocated to you in any plan. Ask your committee and Neighbourhood House Coordinator colleagues about which meetings you should be attending both internally e.g. volunteer team meetings, committee meetings, and externally e.g. Neighbourhood House sector meetings and stakeholder meetings.

Financial systems

Learn how the financial systems work. This will include understanding how invoices and receipts are processed and filed, how the chart of accounts and budget are structured and what bank accounts exist and how they are used. Review the financial reports provided to the Committee of Management.

Find out where things are

Spend some time going through the filing cabinet and the computer files. Find out where things are. Use volunteers or committee members with a good understanding of the Neighbourhood House's operations to assist.

Things you need to know or do but can cover off a little later

Once you are on top of the list above the following will need attention:

Understand the community

It is essential to good Neighbourhood House community development practice to gain a thorough understanding of the community in which the Neighbourhood House is located. This takes time. It involves understanding the overall picture of the community, e.g. the sort of information obtainable from the ABS Census, the situation for particular cohorts e.g. from local government, non-government organisations and community groups as well as building a picture from communication with the individuals who make up the community. Talk to and develop relationships with local community groups, organisations and networks. Go to them don't expect them to come to you.

Identifying and understanding key players in the community is part of this process however it is important to understand their views may not reflect the community views or be consistent with good community development principles.

Understand the community's assets, gifts and needs

Communities are made up of diverse cohorts each with different perspectives and needs. The Neighbourhood House program focuses on the needs of those experiencing disadvantage. It is important to prioritise needs rather than wants. Entire communities can experience disadvantage e.g. rural decline and poor infrastructure in country towns, as can particular cohorts e.g. discrimination against indigenous Australians. Speak to the often forgotten voices, rather than always focusing on the loudest voices. ABCD tool can be very useful.

A good needs analysis is not about what your community thinks your Neighbourhood House should be offering. It is about what your community members need. Our job is to work out what we can do to assist them realise their goals. Sometimes it means we offer something at the Neighbourhood House. Sometimes it will be about working with a

group to make a change; maybe by lobbying, fundraising, or advocating for a building. It may be about enabling community members to undertake their own project.

https://www.ourcommunity.com.au/management/view_help_sheet.do?articleid=10

Understand your Neighbourhood House

Become familiar with the mission, statement of purposes as well as participants, programs and activities of the Neighbourhood House. Find out what documented policies and procedures are in place.

Build your networks

Develop an understanding of and relationships with key organisations and individuals, particularly stakeholders and strategic partners. Target those organisations and stakeholders who can enhance the Neighbourhood House's ability to meet its ongoing activities and strategic objectives.

Governance

Understanding governance in some detail assists with an effective relationship with your committee. Committees have varying skills levels and often members have no training in governance. Therefore, supporting your committee to understand and fulfil their roles effectively can be an important part of your role.

Section 2 of the [Neighbourhood House Coordination Program Guidelines](#) provides a brief overview of the committee's governance function and appendix 2 provides a little more detail. If you do not have a thorough understanding of governance, see Justice Connect's excellent resources. <https://justiceconnect.org.au/our-services/not-for-profit-law/>

NHVic also provides a range of useful resources to support good governance.

<https://www.nhvic.org.au/Pages/Category/resource-library>

Experience at RANCH tells us that many people think they understand governance because they previously served on a committee/s at some time. While the experience may be valuable, it does not guarantee an accurate understanding of a Committee's role, obligations and function.

The same is true of community development. Committees do not usually have training in or a strong grasp of community development. Assisting committees to understand how decision making can be informed by community development principles and practice is a part of the Neighbourhood House sector's developmental approach to governance.

Insurance

The State Government, through DHS supply public liability insurance to all funded Neighbourhood Houses. The insurance is delivered by Victorian Managed Insurance Authority –**VMIA**. The coverage includes a range of insurances including Public/Products Liability, Professional Indemnity, and Director's and Officers' Liability.

Other insurance such as WorkCover, which is required by law or for business interruption, burglary or other insurances as required by the committee, will be through a private insurer/s. You will need to find out about these arrangements.

Employment

Become familiar with the awards and/ or collective agreement that cover you and any other staff. For more information about NH Collective Agreements and Awards see the NHVic website.

Ensure you have an employment contract and that it makes clear the terms and conditions of your employment. Industrial relations is a specialised field and organisations are advised to take membership with Jobs Australia CSIR

service which provides regular updates on changes to these awards including pay rates and specialist advice on any industrial relations matter.

Jobs Australia can be contacted on 1800 060 098 or at ja@ja.com.au

NHVIC Finance Group is a great resource

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/601170493955299/>

What or who can I and can't I ignore

Funding bodies

Funding bodies can't be ignored but.....

Generally, it is important to respond promptly to communications from your funding partners. However, DHHS funds a vast number of organisations ranging from hospitals to foster services and beyond. The majority of these organisations provide direct services to individuals as clients. Neighbourhood Houses are an anomaly in their funded organisations because they do not usually deliver these kinds of services.

Because of the range and nature of services funded by DHHS you will receive communications that do not apply to Neighbourhood Houses and some that are relevant.

Until you learn to distinguish what you must respond to, it is wise to call for clarification – either the DHHS central office, your networker Kevin Vivien ranch@ranch.net.au or one of your Neighbourhood House Coordinator colleagues who has been around a while.

Potential partners

Neighbourhood Houses are often contacted by other organisations who are seeking to work with a Neighbourhood House to deliver a program. Many of these are worthy programs but all will use your time if you partner with them. If the committee has given you clear direction it is easier to say yes or no.

A conversation with the committee about how they wish to manage these kinds of proposals is advisable. The decision should consider the Neighbourhood House's strategic objectives and organisational capacity. Your strategic plan should identify strategic objectives so proposals that are consistent with goals in your strategic plan are most likely to be worthy of consideration.

About our sector

Sector structure

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funds our sector through the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program in three ways.

NHVIC

Neighbourhood Houses Victoria is the Victorian peak body that services and represents the interests of a membership of approximately 380 neighbourhood/community houses and learning NHs and networks of houses across the state.

As the peak body, NHVIC represents the interests of this sector to state government, the adult education bureaucracy and relevant statutory and regulatory bodies. NHVIC promotes the sector and offers a wide range of resources, support and referral on financial, legal, industrial and management issues such as GST, WorkCover and Enterprise Bargaining.

There is a weekly e-bulletin and monthly newsletter with lots of useful information and resources. NHVic also organises an annual conference with workshops and sessions on a range of topics directly relevant to neighbourhood houses.

NHVic Members' Group

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/NeighbourhoodHousesVictoria/?ref=bookmarks>

NHVic convenes working parties and subcommittees on issues of concern to the sector. NHVic is managed by a Board with membership drawn from the neighbourhood house sector.

Resources and Contacts:

Melinda Spiteri (who will direct you to the person who can best assist in your enquiry)

Ph: 03 9602 1228

Email: info@nhvic.org.au

Web: www.nhvic.org.au

Neighbourhood House Networks

RANCH is one of 16 of Neighbourhood House Networks in Victoria. Funded by DHHS. It provides governance and management support to the 29 Neighbourhood Houses in the RANCH region. It is an incorporated association with the 29 NHs as its members. It comprises the Neighbourhood Houses in the local government areas of:

Central Goldfields
Shire City of
Greater Bendigo
Loddon Shire
Macedon Ranges
Shire Mount
Alexander Shire
Shire of Campaspe

RANCH's Purposes are outlined on the RANCH website, as is our list of member Neighbourhood Houses.

RANCH services

RANCH offers services to committees and committee members, staff and volunteers including:

- RANCH members meetings ,
- Forums and other networking opportunities
- Confidential information and support
- Referrals to appropriate resources and services
- Assistance in reviewing and developing policies and submissions Training and induction for Committees and paid staff
- Representation and advocacy
- Independent advice
- Facilitation of meetings for Governance processes such as strategic planning, and risk management

Details of RANCH events and meetings are found on our website

The RANCH Networker can meet your Neighbourhood House Committee to assist with understanding the Neighbourhood House sector, community development, Committee and Coordinator roles and responsibilities and how to keep it all on track.

RANCH also understands that people are busy and resources are often tight. To address this RANCH assists with the cost of travel to RANCH activities and seeks to enable people to participate in activities online to avoid travel cost and time.

Neighbourhood House Networks play an important role in supporting [neighbourhood houses experiencing difficulty](#). Member NHs are encouraged to contact the RANCH Networkers to arrange a time to discuss and assist with any serious or emerging issues that may impact on the NH's ability to function. A good principal is the earlier the better!

Lisa Linton: networker@ranch.net.au 0439 215 553

Kevin Vivian: ranch@ranch.net.au ph.0437 859 874

To find out more about RANCH, visit the RANCH website at www.ranch.net.au

Who does what in Neighbourhood House?

Committee of Management.

As noted above, Coordinators should develop a thorough understanding of good governance. The following is only a high level overview.

In all Neighbourhood Houses, the Committee is responsible for setting and monitoring the organisations direction, and for ensuring that proper procedures are in place. They must ensure that organisation seeks to achieve its purposes as outlined in its constitution (rules). Committee members are representatives of the community who give up their time to ensure that the organisation is governed and managed in the best interests of the community.

Some committee members also volunteer their time in other ways in Neighbourhood Houses, for example, as a tutor or volunteer in the office. It is important that those committee members, who also teach or volunteer, are aware of the role they are working in at any given time – and ensure they are working within the parameters of that role so as to avoid any conflict of interest.

People come on to Committees for many different reasons, some want to increase their skills, or are keen to contribute to their community. The NH Sector aims to offer our committee members the opportunity to contribute to the success of our sector in an enjoyable, rewarding environment.

In brief, Committees have overall responsibility for the following:

Employment and wellbeing of paid staff.

Employment responsibilities include occupational health and safety, designing jobs, developing job descriptions, monitoring employee performance, ensuring regular training and professional supervision, compliance with all workplace laws and regulations and meeting all relevant award conditions. The committee should appoint a single member (often the chairperson/president) as the liaison between the committee and the coordinator. This ensures a coordinator is not being given information by multiple Committee members.

Policies and Procedures

Policies spell out what the organisation does and procedures spell how it is done. The Committee should ensure a regular review of all policies and procedures.

Legal requirements

This includes compliance with a range of federal, state and local government laws and regulations. e.g. The Associations Incorporation Rules/Constitution of the organisation, Associations Incorporation Reform Act (2012) industrial relations, OH&S, taxation, work cover, child safety, volunteer management and privacy.

Accountability to funding bodies

The responsibility of reporting and accountability to funding bodies lies ultimately with the Committee, even though the practical tasks are often carried out by the Coordinator.

Premises and equipment

The Committee should make sure the premises, facilities and equipment are provided and maintained so that the organisation can provide services properly and safely. It is also important to develop and monitor organisational policies around responsible use of assets.

Transparency

The Committee should involve and inform the wider Community about all aspects of the organisation. It also provides an opportunity for community feedback. The AGM is an important opportunity to do this.

Promotion and Marketing

The success and credibility of the organisation within the Community, funding bodies and policy makers is largely reliant on effective promotion and marketing. Publicising your outcomes through stories, is one of the best ways to achieve this.

Strategic Planning and Resource Allocation

A strategic plan will allow the work of the organisation to be proactive and based on real community need. Strategic planning also involves evaluation of all activities to ensure they are meeting the strategic directions of the organisation. All Committee members should participate in annual planning activities in order to prioritise organisational goals over the coming year.

Strategic planning is usually a 3-5 year visionary exercise designed to set measurable medium term goals. Goals are about new things or doing things differently. Annual plans are then drawn out of the strategic plan as a management tool for the coordinator and as a monitoring tool for the Committee. The coordinator is then able to develop work plans for all staff based on achieving the annual plan.

Note: the secretary has particular responsibilities under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012.

Descriptions of the committee's roles and responsibilities are available through the [NHVic Resource Library](http://www.nhvic.com.au/resources), or <http://www.communitydirectors.com.au/icda/tools/>.

The Coordinator

The role of the Coordinator is to put the strategic plan, set by the Committee of Management, into action. Coordinators must know their community and respond to needs by providing a venue and support for activities and services.

Coordinators work closely with the Committee to ensure that strategic plans are developed, implemented and reviewed, that Funding and Service Agreements requirements are fulfilled and policies and procedures are developed and reviewed.

On a day to day basis the Coordinator is responsible for the management of the centre, including management of volunteers, the implementation of the activities that reflect the Centre's strategic plan, submission writing for funding and some administrative duties. Your Position Description should outline the specific duties you will undertake.

Volunteers

Volunteers are vital to Neighbourhood Houses. Volunteers work as part of the team with the staff to respond appropriately to identified community needs and to promote the principles and practices of our Neighbourhood House as outlined in your Mission statement.

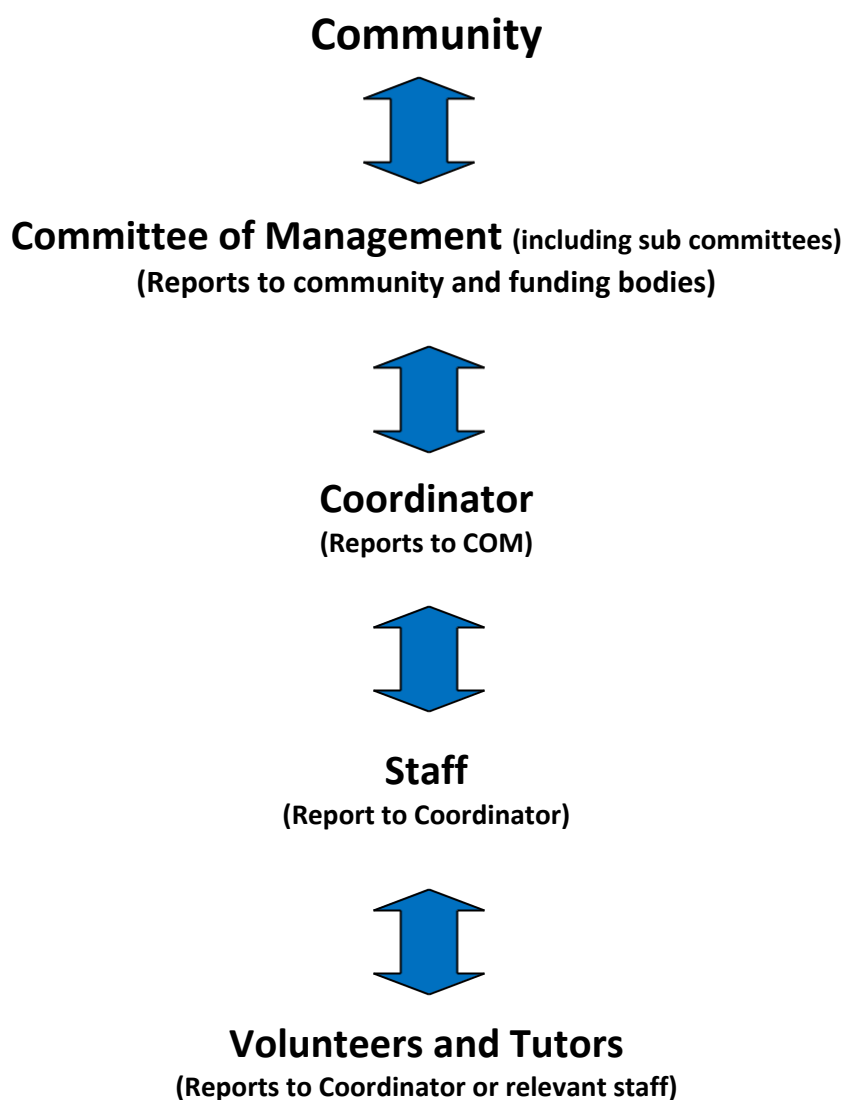
Volunteers are usually accountable to the Coordinator in carrying out their duties. The coordinator usually has responsibility for recruiting and training of volunteers. Volunteering Victoria <https://www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au/> has extensive resources to assist in recruiting and managing volunteers.

The RANCH website also provides links to support volunteer programs.

Staff

Staff are usually directly accountable to the Coordinator. The Coordinator is responsible for the development of work plans for staff and volunteers. Work plans outline the tasks, timelines and resource allocation for all priorities contained in the annual plan. Work plans are also a useful reporting mechanism to advise the Committee of Management of the progress of the strategic plan. Work plans are not necessarily rigid, but any emerging changes to the work of staff and volunteers should be discussed and agreed upon.

Sample Organisational flowchart.



Your organisational flow chart should show a clear line of communication and responsibility. The Community is always at the top of everything we do – and communication is always two-way.

Important things every Coordinator needs to know

My Agency and the Funded Agency Channel

The Funded Agency Channel (FAC) is a website that supports the partnership relationship between the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Education and Training and the organisations they fund.

All general information and communication regarding DHHS funding, including the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program, is generated and stored through the Funded Agency Channel. Other DHHS related or DET funding information is also stored there. Some of the content is not applicable to Neighbourhood Houses.

My Agency is the online portal accessible through The Funded Agency Channel where all contractual information and reporting specific to your organisation is located.

Common Reporting Requirements

As mentioned above, you will need to ascertain what reporting is required based on the contracts and agreements you have in place. However, the following are common to all RANCH Neighbourhood Houses

1. The Neighbourhood Survey is the major Neighbourhood House Coordination Program reporting requirement and is due around end of February each year. It is completed online. Data for this is best kept progressively during the year. This survey is compulsory and must be completed on time. It is a requirement of the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program under the funding agreement. DHHS will notify in advance when reporting is due.
2. Service Agreement Compliance Certification for the financial year is submitted through MY Agency in the Funded Agency Channel and is due by September 30th if you run by financial year. Your AGM date must be prior to this timeline. If your AGM is scheduled for later than this date then you need to go into SACC and change the date to the date of your AGM. It requires submission of a Business Governance Status (BGS) report including financial statements (usually your Annual Report) and declarations of compliance regarding:

Financial management

Risk management

Safety screening

Privacy and data protection

3. Disbursing copies of your Annual Report after your Annual General Meeting to funding bodies and key stakeholders is good practice.

Include stakeholders such as:

Dept of Health and Human Services (compulsory)

RANCH

ACFE if you have ACFE funding

Local Government officers and councillors

Local Members of Parliament

4. The Annual Return to Consumer Affairs Victoria is submitted by the Secretary; this return must be submitted online and is due within 1 month of the Annual General Meeting. Consumer Affairs sends a link via email to the Secretary of the Association to facilitate this.
5. If your House is registered through ACNC you must submit an annual information statement

Mediation and Dispute Resolution

The Dispute Settlement Centre of Victoria <https://www.disputes.vic.gov.au/> in the Department of Justice provides trained mediators that can assist in the settlement of all kinds of disputes at no charge.

Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) via Australian Neighbourhood Houses & Centres Association Inc. (ANHCA)

DGR is a 'special tax status' that organisations can apply for so that people who make donations to your centre can claim it as a deduction on their tax return. Many organisations and philanthropic trusts require that you have the status to apply for their grants. Some NH&LC do have DGR Status but it is not granted unless you meet very stringent criteria.

There is a new system available now for Houses who do not have the status that provides a process whereby they can apply for such grants via ANHCA, the national Association for Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres.

The purpose of the ANHCA Public Fund is to support the work of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres throughout Australia. The ANHCA Public Fund will accept donations, which are tax deductible to the donor, and may direct funds it receives to Neighbourhood Houses and Centres at its discretion.

The ANHCA Public Fund does not conduct fundraising campaigns or apply for grants on behalf of houses and Centres. Rather, it provides a tax deductible vehicle for those organisations to use in their own fundraising. ANHCA administers the process and deducts a fee although the process is a little more complicated than that. For further information ring your Networker or go to the ANHCA website.

<http://www.anhca.asn.au/content/anhca-public-fund-dgr>

Covid Specific Information

Online links to reliable information

It's so easy to get swamped by the amount of coronavirus-related information that's coming out minute-by-minute. The following are links to the most reliable sources of information that you need about COVID-19 in Australia:

The Department of Health and Human Services website is updated constantly and provides information directly relevant to NHs: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

There is also a daily update from the Victorian Chief Health Officer:
<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-daily-update>

Current information about COVID-19 from the Victorian Government can be found here:
<https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirusresponse>

The Australian Government Department of Health website provides a daily update
<https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert>

Information about Coronavirus and Australian workplace laws can be found here:
<https://coronavirus.fairwork.gov.au/>

Orientation checklist

Tick each item when it is completed.

Things you need to know or do quite soon	
I have read and understood the NHCP Guidelines	
I understand the interests and personal investment of individual staff, committee volunteers and key users of the Neighbourhood House.	
I have located and read all current contracts and funding agreements	
I have located and read any submissions to funding bodies that have not yet been decided I have a list of all reporting requirements and contract deliverables including due dates	
I have identified all partnerships that are in place and what our obligations are for each of them I have a secure list of all passwords e.g. email, websites, facebook etc	
I have ensured that the authorised Neighbourhood House representative with key suppliers, regulators etc. have been updated as necessary	
I have notified all key stakeholder of my appointment, e.g. DHHS, NHVic etc	
I have a clear understanding of my committee’s expectations on what and how I need to report to them.	
I understand the roles and responsibilities of all staff and volunteers	
I understand what I am responsible for and what my committee retains responsibility for in all aspects of the Neighbourhood Houses operations.	
I understand my responsibilities in my position description and how they relate to existing operations and strategic or other plans.	
I understand how our financial systems operate including our chart of accounts	
Things you need to know or do but can cover off a little later	
I understand my communities’ demographic profile	
I understand who the key players and organisations in the community are	
I have a good understanding of our communities needs or I have put in place strategies to identify those needs	
I have an understanding of the existing policies and procedures	
I have read and understood our Neighbourhood Houses mission and vision, statement of purposes or similar	
I have a good understanding of the activities of the Neighbourhood House	
I have identified key people and organisations I need to build relationships with to meet our Neighbourhood Houses objectives	
I have a good understanding of Governance principles and practices	
I have identified what insurance arrangements are in place, their purposes and coverage	
I have read and understood my contract of employment and the relevant Collective Agreement or Award under which I am employed	