

THE ASSOCIATION IN A NUTSHELL

Part 1: A Secretary's Satchel – Guide for Secretaries

New laws for Victorian incorporated associations

In November 2012, the laws regulating Victorian incorporated associations changed. The *Associations Incorporation Act 1981* (the old Act) was replaced with the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (the new Act). This Secretary's Satchel reflects the new laws.

Important! Rules changes affecting *all* incorporated associations

From 26 November 2012 there are new laws for incorporated associations. There are also new matters that must now be covered by an organisation's rules. Organisations that were using the model rules now have new model rules that apply (unless they chose to change their rules). This Guide refers to the new model rules.

THE ASSOCIATION IN A NUTSHELL

This Part of the Guide contains background information to help you understand your organisation, the roles of the members, committee and secretary within it, and how to use this Guide.

Key points

1. Who is this Guide for?

This Guide is primarily for secretaries of incorporated associations. This Part provides an overview of an association.

2. How to use this Guide

This Guide is in eight parts and includes a range of practical tools and other links.

3. What is an incorporated association?

An incorporated association is the most common (but not the only) legal structure used by not-for-profit organisations. There are laws that regulate incorporated associations in each state. This Guide deals with Victorian laws only. A Victorian incorporated association must operate in accordance with the requirements of the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic).

4. What are the reporting obligations of an incorporated association?

Certain information must be reported to Consumer Affairs Victoria under the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (Vic), including a yearly (annual) statement on the association's financial situation, and when changes occur (like when a new secretary is appointed, or an organisation's details change).

5. What are the rules and purposes of an incorporated association?

Every incorporated association has its own "rules" which set out in detail the procedures for running the organisation. Every association's rules must also contain a statement of purposes, which sets out the organisation's objectives. There is a tool in this Part to help you work out what your rules are – it is essential to be familiar with them.

6. What is the role of members of an incorporated association?

Members of an incorporated association have the power to make certain decisions about the organisation. In particular, they usually appoint the members of the committee.

7. What is a committee?

The committee of an incorporated association (that is, its governing body) is responsible for overseeing how the organisation operates. There are a number of special positions on the committee. Often the secretary is a member of the committee.

8. How does the committee differ from the “managers” of an association?

The committee of an incorporated association sets the overall direction of (or, “governs”) the association. In larger associations, there may be senior staff (for example, the CEO, operations manager and finance manager) who are responsible for running the association, day-to-day.

9. Who is the secretary?

Every association must have a secretary. The secretary has legal responsibilities for submitting documents to Consumer Affairs Victoria, and is the official contact person for the organisation.

10. Where can I go for information and assistance?

This Guide sets out information about running an incorporated association. The Not-for-profit Law Information Hub has further resources for incorporated associations, see www.nfplaw.org.au. and information about other Not-for-profit Law services, see <http://www.justiceconnect.org.au/nfplawlaw>.

Note:

In November 2012, the laws regulating Victorian incorporated associations changed. Under the new *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* the “secretary” has replaced the old role of “public officer”. The responsibilities that fell on the public officer under the old Act (the *Associations Incorporations Act 1981*) are now to be carried out by the secretary under the new Act. For more information about the role of the secretary, see [Part 3: Secretary’s Legal Role, Powers and Duties](#).

1. Who is this Guide for?

A [Secretary’s Satchel – Guide for Secretaries](#) is designed to help you (as the secretary) and others within your organisation, by alerting you to your legal obligations and offering “good governance” tips and tools for running an incorporated association in Victoria. The secretary used to be known as the “public officer” of an organisation. The name was changed when changes to the law came into effect on 26 November 2012.

It doesn’t matter whether you are a volunteer in a small support group, or a paid officer of a large social club – any secretary of an incorporated association in Victoria can benefit from this Guide.

In a nutshell:

- The secretary is the incorporated association’s official contact person and is responsible for reporting about the organisation to Consumer Affairs Victoria (**CAV**), and
- The secretary usually has additional responsibilities including organising meetings, dealing with documents, and keeping up-to-date records about the organisation. The secretary is often (but not always) a member of the organisation’s management committee.

This Guide may also be useful for other members of your organisation's committee (sometimes known as the "board"), as well as people and organisations who work with incorporated associations (such as peak bodies, advocacy groups, and lawyers assisting incorporated associations).

2. How to use this Guide

A Secretary's Satchel – Guide for Secretaries is produced by Not-for-profit Law, a specialist legal service for not-for-profit community organisations.

The Guide is in eight parts. Many of the parts of the Guide contain practical "tools" – such as sample documents, checklists, registers and flowcharts – to help you in your role. These are located at the end of each part of the Guide.

This Guide contains links to:

- email addresses and (government or community) websites that contain official or reliable information about the topics discussed - these links look like this: "www.consumer.vic.gov.au > clubs and not for profits." If you are connected to the internet, you can click on the link in the PDF document and go directly to the relevant website, and
- references to other resources and parts of the Satchel that may be relevant cross-references to other sections or tools of a particular part of the Guide - these look like this: "see [Tool 1: Flowchart for working out what are your association's current rules](#)."

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3. What is an incorporated association?

An incorporated association is the most common (but not the only) legal structure used by not-for-profit groups in Victoria. An incorporated association is also called an "organisation" in this Guide. There are other legal forms used by not-for-profit groups, such as corporations (or companies) and cooperatives. Different laws and rules apply to them, which are not covered in this Guide.

Every Australian State and Territory has its own laws to regulate incorporated associations. This Guide deals with incorporated associations in Victoria.

Tip:

For more information on what incorporation means, and different types of legal structures used by not-for-profit groups, see “Getting Started” on the Not-for-profit Law Information Hub: www.nfplaw.org.au/gettingstarted.

How do you know if an organisation is an incorporated association?

Incorporated associations have the word “Incorporated” or the letters “Inc” at the end of their name. This can be contrasted with organisations that have, for example, “Ltd” or “Pty Ltd” at the end of their name.

Tip:

If you are not sure whether your organisation is an incorporated association in Victoria, you can search the Register of Incorporated Associations on the CAV website: www.consumer.vic.gov.au > Clubs and not-for-profits > Search for an incorporated association.

In Victoria, the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)* (the **AIR Act**) is the main piece of legislation regulating incorporated associations. The AIR Act covers the establishment, operation and ending (or dissolution) of an incorporated association.

Tip:

The AIR Act gives powers and responsibilities to the “Registrar” of Incorporated Associations. In practice, the functions of the Registrar are carried out by CAV.

The *Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012 (Vic)* (the **Regulations**) set out further details about the legal requirements for operating an incorporated association in Victoria. The Regulations also set out the model rules for incorporated associations. Your organisation can use the model rules, or draft its own rules that address required matters (see below, 5. The rules and purposes of an incorporated association).

Current copies of the AIR Act and Regulations are available on the Victorian Government’s website for legislation: www.legislation.vic.gov.au (go to “Victorian Law Today” and search “Acts” (for the AIR Act) or “Statutory rules” (for the Regulations)). It is good practice to keep a copy of the current AIR Act and Regulations with your organisation’s official documents. You can find a copy of the model rules on CAV’s website, www.consumer.vic.gov.au > clubs and not for profits > incorporated associations > running an incorporated association > rules.

There are other laws which apply to incorporated associations – for example, laws dealing with occupational health and safety, workplace relations, tax, advertising and fundraising. The Not-for-profit

Law web portal: www.nfplaw.org.au/ contains useful resources and information sheets on a range of topics and laws to help not-for-profit organisations.

Tip:

Legislation is updated from time to time. For example, the old *Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (Old Act)* was replaced by the AIR Act on 26 November 2012.

The AIR Act incorporates changes to the Old Act that were passed by the Victorian Parliament in 2009 and 2010 but which never commenced. New laws now apply, and are covered in this Guide.

One way to stay updated on changes in the law is to register for the Non-for-profit e-bulletin. You can do this by signing up [here](#).

What does Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) do?

CAV is the Victorian government agency with primary responsibility for dealing with incorporated associations. CAV is a unit of the Victorian Department of Justice.

CAV has a number of legal functions relating to incorporated associations. These include:

- maintaining the Register of Incorporated Associations (a list of all incorporated associations in Victoria)
- approving applications for incorporation
- approving rules drafted by incorporated associations
- receiving annual statements from organisations (see [Part 8: Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) in this Guide)
- approving important changes to an organisation (such as changes to an organisation's rules, statement of purposes or name)
- cancelling an organisation's incorporation
- monitoring and/or investigating an organisation's compliance with the AIR Act and Regulations (and taking other action if necessary), and
- imposing fines (or taking other action if necessary) where there has been a failure to comply with the AIR Act.

You can contact CAV if you need help with:

- forms to be lodged with CAV, and requests for extension of time to lodge forms
- information and assistance to ensure your organisation's rules comply with the AIR Act
- requests for documents (eg. your organisation's rules or other documents lodged with CAV), and

- general advice about your obligations under the AIR Act.

CAV is *not* able to:

- give legal advice or pre-approve changes to your rules
- provide advice about how to interpret your organisation's rules, or
- resolve internal disputes within your organisation.

4. What are the reporting requirements of an incorporated association?

An incorporated association is required to report to CAV:

- every year by lodging an annual statement (see [Part 8: Reporting to Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) in this Guide)
- whenever a new secretary is appointed, or if the existing secretary's details change (see [Part 2: Appointing and Removing a Secretary](#) in this Guide)
- if the address or name of the association change, and
- when certain key decisions are made by the association – for example, if the association passes a special resolution to change its name or its rules (see [Part 5: Annual General Meetings](#) and also [Part 6: Special General Meetings](#) in this Guide).

5. The rules and purposes of an incorporated association

Every incorporated association must have its own “rules” (sometimes called a “constitution”). The rules set out in detail the procedures for running the organisation. Your organisation must follow its own rules.

Certain matters must be covered by your organisation's rules (these matters are listed in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act). Your rules must also be consistent with laws, including the AIR Act. Apart from these matters, your organisation has a fair degree of flexibility in establishing its rules.

Why follow the rules?

The rules are legally enforceable by members of your organisation or CAV. There are other good reasons for having to follow your rules. Your organisation's rules allow the members of your organisation to know how the organisation is to be run and managed, and how decisions will be made. It also means they can contribute to (or raise concerns about) the organisation's decision-making where appropriate.

Tip:

The rules of the association are a key source of information for secretaries. It is important that you read your organisation's rules and make sure you have an up-to-date copy handy and make sure your rules are consistent with the new requirements in the AIR Act.

Every organisation must have its “purposes” included in its rules . The purposes set out what the organisation is established to do, and may also identify for whose benefit the organisation operates.

Remember!

If you don't follow your organisation's own rules and purposes, you can be challenged by a member of the organisation for failing to do so. Under section 67 of the AIR Act, CAV can apply to the Magistrates' Court to enforce the rights and obligations of members of an association under the rules. The association or a member can also apply to the Magistrates' Court.

How to find out what an organisation's rules are

An association has two choices for its rules and you need to know which one applies to you. An association can either:

- adopt the “model rules”, or
- write its own rules, by drafting new rules from scratch or by making changes to the model rules.
(These rules must cover all the required items listed in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act.)

An association can change its rules from time to time by following certain procedures. An association's current rules must be lodged with, and approved by, CAV to be valid.

The different options available to an organisation when drafting and changing its rules can make it difficult for the secretary of an organisation to work out what the organisation's most current official rules are. Some specific guidance is provided below.

What are the “model rules”?

The model rules are an example set of rules that comply with the AIR Act – they are the standard form, or “fall back” or “default” position. The model rules are set out in Schedule 4 of the Regulations and are available on the CAV website: www.consumer.vic.gov.au > [clubs and not for profits](#) > [incorporated associations](#) > [running an incorporated association](#) > [rules](#).

Many associations choose to adopt the model rules when they become incorporated. An association can also convert to the model rules after it incorporates (although this is less common).

Tip:

The model rules can seem like a good option if you don't want to draft your own rules. But the model rules are not “model” in the sense of being the “best” for every organisation – for example, if your organisation wants to access certain tax concessions it may need to consider whether the model rules meet the necessary tax law requirements.

If your association was using the model rules prior to November 2012 and did nothing since then, the new model rules have automatically been applied to your organisation on 26 November 2013.

The model rules change over time. If your organisation has adopted the whole of the model rules, any changes to the model rules over time will apply to your organisation automatically (with the new model rules applying automatically from 26 November 2013 if not adopted earlier). This means that you should check to see what the most up-to-date model rules are – as these are the rules your association should be following.

Establishing your own rules

If your organisation has written its own rules, you should make sure that your rules cover all the matters required to be covered by Schedule 1 of the AIR Act. For more information on making sure your rules address all the scheduled items, go to Not-for-profit Law's [Rules Checklist](#).

You should also be aware that if your association's rules do not cover an item in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act, the relevant model rule(s) that cover the particular item will be automatically included in your rules (section 48(3) of the AIR Act). For example, if your association's rules do not specify the number of days notice required for a general meeting, then clause 33 of the model rules will apply so that at least 14 days' notice is required, or 21 days notice if a special resolution has been proposed.

The process of 'reading in' model rules can become very confusing, so it is better to make sure your own rules cover all the required items listed in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act.

Remember!

The rules of your association cannot override the AIR Act or any other laws. If there is an inconsistency between the AIR Act and a rule of your organisation, the rule has no effect (section 48(4) AIR Act). If the AIR Act says something must be covered in your rules, but your rules don't cover it, then the relevant part of the model rules will fill the 'gap' automatically (section 48(3)).

Depending on your organisation's application for incorporation, your organisation may have drafted its own rules, but used some of the model rules *as they were at the time when your organisation applied for incorporation, in combination with some rules you drafted*. If so, the latest version of the model rules in the Regulations will not be the same as the model rules your organisation adopted (because the model rules in the Regulations change over time).

When reviewing your rules, you should make sure that you are reviewing the correct version. You can request a copy of your rules from CAV to make sure you have the most up-to-date version.

Remember!

If your organisation has written its own rules, or made changes to the model rules, you must submit a copy of your rules to CAV for approval. Your organisation's own rules are not official (legally binding) until they are approved by CAV.

To check what your organisation's rules are, follow the steps in [Tool 1: Flowchart for working out what are your association's current rules](#).

6. What is the role of members of an incorporated association?

The members of an incorporated association have certain rights and responsibilities under the AIR Act, the organisation's rules, and the law developed by the courts ("judge-made law" or common law). Importantly, members of the organisation can attend general meetings and vote on particular matters such as:

- electing the committee
- changing the organisation's name, rules or purposes
- amalgamating the organisation with one or more other organisations
- removing an auditor, or
- winding up (ending) the organisation voluntarily.

An association's rules must set out the procedures for an "annual general meeting" and "special general meetings" (formal meetings where the members can make official decisions). Both *annual* and *special* general meetings are described as "general meetings" in the model rules.

Important:

To avoid confusion in terminology, the term "general meeting" is used in this Guide to mean a meeting of the members of the incorporated association which has been convened using the procedures for formal meetings of members in the association's rules. These procedures include giving notice of the meeting to members.

An association's rules must also set out the rights, obligations and liabilities of members. These may include:

- a member's right to participate in general meetings, elect the committee and have access to certain records of the association, including the members' register
- a member's obligation to comply with the rules and support the purposes of the association, and

- an acknowledgement that a member is not liable to contribute to the debts and liabilities of the association by reason only of their membership.

The members of an incorporated association are not responsible for making decisions about the overall running of the organisation – that is the job of the committee (see below, [7. What is a committee?](#)). However, if you have drafted your own rules, you can require the committee to get member approval of certain decisions (for example, investment plans, or entering into contracts over a certain dollar value).

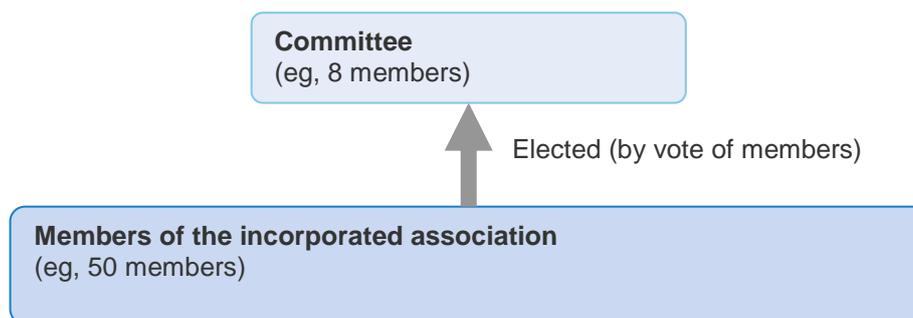
The members may be (and often are) involved in carrying out the organisation’s activities (for example, helping teams with coaching), but this is different to having the *legal* responsibility for management of the organisation. Sometimes the line between these two can seem unclear or artificial. If the rules do not specifically state that a decision must be made by the members, then it is likely to come under the overall responsibility of the committee. The committee may then choose to delegate ‘the doing’ to others (for example, involve members/volunteers/paid staff to actually ‘do’ what is needed).

7. What is a committee?

Managing an incorporated association is the responsibility of an elected committee. Sometimes other names are used for this governing body, such as the “board”, “council”, or “committee of management”.

In many cases, the members of the organisation elect a small group of people, who are themselves members of the association, to be on the committee (see Diagram 1 below).

Diagram 1: Electing a committee (example only)



In some organisations, all the *members of the incorporated association* are also *members of the committee*. This is not against the law -- it often happens in small associations or when the organisation first begins.

When all the members of an association are also on the committee, it can seem strange to separate the *management* of the organisation from the actual *doing* of the work! However, it is important to understand the separate (legal) role of the committee.

Governance - how the committee differ from “managers” of an association

Good governance practices are crucial to an association's ability to function, to achieve its objects, and to comply with all of the legal, ethical and operational requirements of a community association. Community associations, especially small associations, often struggle to distinguish between:

- the role and responsibility of an association's committee (to govern the association), and
- the role and responsibility of the staff, “organisers” or key volunteers that are not on the committee (to manage the association).

While these two functions may be performed by the same group of people, distinguishing between issues of strategic governance and day-to-day management is important, as particular legal duties apply to the governance, but not management, of associations.

The 'governance' of an association is the responsibility of the committee, and generally refers to the direction and control of an association. This includes overseeing the affairs of the incorporated association and making sure its legal obligations are met. Members of the committee have particular legal duties under the AIR Act and judge-made law, such as the duty of due care, skill and diligence, and the duty to act in good faith. CAV is responsible for enforcing these laws.

In larger organisations, different people may be 'managers' (such as a CEO, finance manager or operations manager), and in smaller organisations, key volunteers, and are responsible for making decisions about the day-to-day running of the association, based on the strategy decided by the committee. Normally these people do not need to comply with the legal duties that the committee must comply with, but occasionally, 'managers' or 'key volunteers' also need to comply with legal duties. This occurs where they are someone who is deeply involved in making key decisions that affect the operations of an association or who is influential in the affairs (financial or otherwise) of the association.

Are there special positions on the committee?

Commonly, there are a number of special positions on a committee – often one of which is the secretary. The people who take on positions on the committee are sometimes called “officers” or “office bearers” or “the executive” of the association. The titles of positions within a committee will vary between associations, however some common positions and their traditional roles are explained briefly below:

- the *chairperson* (or president) runs meetings and usually represents the organisation at public events
- the *deputy chairperson* (or vice-president) takes on the role of the chairperson when that person is not available
- the *treasurer* (or financial officer) deals with the financial affairs of the organisation, and

- the *secretary* reports to CAV, organises meetings, deals with documents and maintains records of the association. For further information about the role of the secretary, see [Part 3: Secretary's Role, Powers and Duties](#) in this Guide.

The committee may have other members who are not office bearers. These are sometimes called “ordinary committee members”. These members must also meet the duties that apply to members of the committee.

Remember!

Changes to the AIR Act that came into effect on 26 November 2012 replaced the term “public officer” with “secretary” – see [9. Who is the secretary?](#) below.

New category of person – “Office Holder”

The AIR Act uses the language of “officer holder” to describe the people in an association who have certain legal duties to the organisation that must be met. This use of the term “Office Holder” is different to the use of the term to describe people on a committee who hold an “office” like secretary or treasurer.

Is there a difference between “committee” and “office holder”?

The term “officer holders” is defined under the AIR Act. It includes committee members (both ordinary members and members holding a office like Treasurer) – plus some other people who are not the committee including:

- the secretary (even if the secretary is not a member of the committee), and
- a person, including an employee of the association, who is involved in key decisions that affect the operations of an association or who is influential in the affairs (financial or otherwise) of the association.

Special legal duties apply to office holders. While most duties that apply to office holders are now listed in the AIR Act, they are also part of the common (judge-made) law that has been in existence for many years. The substance of these common law duties has not changed. For more information about legal duties of office holders, see Not-for-profit Law’s [Guide to the Legal Duties of Not-for-Profit Committee Members in Victoria](#).

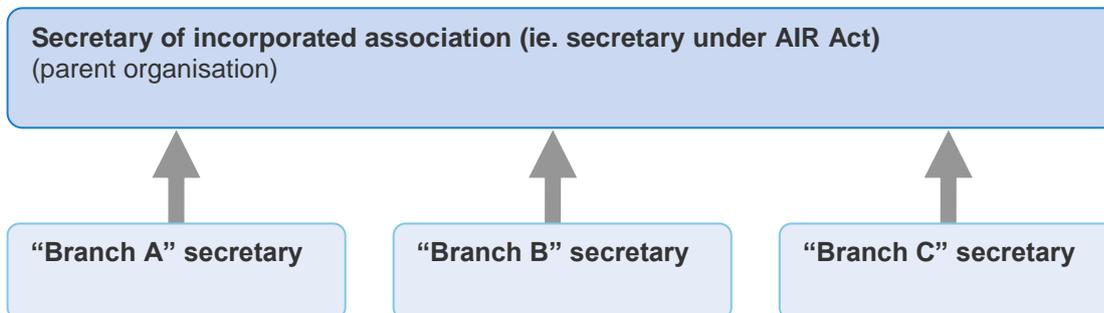
Branches and branch secretaries

If an organisation is large, it may have branches. Each branch will usually have its own branch secretary (and possibly its own committee), reporting to the parent organisation (see diagram 2 below).

In most cases, branches are not separately incorporated under the AIR Act, the rules of the parent organisation control the branch, and a member of the branch is a member of the parent organisation. As a

result, a branch secretary is not the “secretary” for the purposes of the AIR Act. Only the secretary of the parent organisation performs this statutory role.

Diagram 2: Example of branch secretaries reporting to secretary of parent organisation



If an organisation chooses to establish branches, it is good practice for the governance arrangements for the branches to be explained in the rules of the organisation. An organisation with branches should draft their own rules rather than adopt the model rules.

8. Who is the secretary?

The secretary of an incorporated association has responsibilities under the AIR Act for submitting forms and documents to CAV, and is the primary contact person for the organisation. Under the old Act, the “public officer” had these responsibilities. The term “public officer” has been replaced in the new AIR Act with the term “secretary”. Also, the secretary performs the administrative functions of organising meetings and minutes, handling membership and maintaining important documents and registers of the organisation.

The secretary may, but does not need to, be part of the committee. For example, the secretary could be an employee of an organisation (for instance, the general manager), who is neither a member of the committee nor a member of the association. Under the model rules, the secretary is a member of the committee.

Important:

If you have just been appointed as the secretary (or you are the existing secretary/public officer and your details have changed), you need to notify CAV – even if your organisation or the previous people in your role have not done this in the past!

See [Part 2: Appointing and Removing a Secretary](#) in this Guide for more information about who can be a secretary, how they are appointed, and what happens next.

9. Where can I go for information and assistance?

Not-for-profit Law

Not-for-profit Law is a specialist legal service for community organisations. Not-for-profit Law is a service of the Justice Connect which is a not-for-profit community legal centre. Not-for-profit Law's Information Hub contains information, fact sheets and advice to help not-for-profit organisations (including incorporated associations) with a range of legal and governance issues. Not-for-profit Law can also help you access free legal advice if you meet eligibility criteria. See the Not-for-profit Law website:

www.justiceconnect.org.au/nfplaw.

The Not-for-profit web portal is: www.nfplaw.org.au/

- See [Getting Started > Before you start](#), for issues to consider before you start an organisation, and download Information sheet: "What does 'not-for-profit' mean?"
- See [Getting Started > The incorporation decision](#), and download Information sheet: "What is 'incorporation' and does our group need to incorporate?"
- See [Getting Started > Choosing the right incorporated legal structure](#), and download Information sheets: "Overview of incorporated legal structures for Victorian not-for-profit organisations", "Incorporated association or company limited by guarantee?", and "Which incorporated legal structure should we choose?"
- See [Getting Started > Setting up your organisation > setting up an incorporated association](#), for information and links to reliable free resources to help you register your organisation as an incorporated association
- See [Running the organisation > Duties](#), and download Information sheet: "Duties of Committee of Management members in Victorian incorporated associations"
- See [Running the organisation > Occupational health and safety](#), and download "Guide: Community organisations and Victoria's OHS laws", and
- See [When things change > Changing your organisation's constitution or rules](#), for information on legal issues which arise when your organisation changes its rules.

Legislation

The [Associations Incorporation Act Reform Act 2012 \(Vic\)](#) is the legislation that regulates incorporated associations in Victoria.

The [Associations Incorporation Reform Regulations 2012 \(Vic\)](#) contain additional requirements for incorporated associations in Victoria. Schedule 4 of the Regulations is the model rules.

Government

Consumer Affairs Victoria

CAV's website contains helpful information about the operation of incorporated associations in Victoria. See www.consumer.vic.gov.au > [Clubs and not-for-profits](#).

Additional contact details for Consumer Affairs Victoria are as follows:

Address: 113 Exhibition Street, Melbourne

Postal Address: Consumer Affairs Victoria, GPO Box 4567, Melbourne 3001

Telephone No.: 1300 36 16 73 (between 8:30am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday)

Office for the Community Sector

The Office for the Community Sector (**OCS**) works across the Victorian Government to strengthen and provide support to community groups. OCS is part of the Department of Planning and Community Development. OCS's website is www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitysector

Australian Taxation Office

The Australian Taxation Office (**ATO**) publishes a wide range of information packs and fact sheets on tax issues for not-for-profit (called "non-profit") organisations. The ATO website provides access to these and other resources, and also online services. See www.ato.gov.au > [Non-profit](#).

Other links

"Skilled Volunteers: A Guide for Community Organisations" is a booklet published by Victorian Council for Social Service (**VCOSS**) available on its website: www.vcooss.org.au. It lists a range of pro bono (free) skilled volunteer service providers.

Infoxchange Australia empowers individuals, networks organisations and connects communities by providing access to information technology. See www.infoxchange.org.au.

OurCommunity is a (for-profit) social enterprise that provides advice and tools for community groups and schools, and practical linkages between the community sector and the public, business and government. See www.ourcommunity.com.au.

"The Law Handbook" is published by the Fitzroy Legal Service and provides information on a range of legal topics (based on Victorian law). It has a chapter on legal structures for community organisations and on "Taking Action" which are particularly relevant to community groups. It also covers contracts, employment, discrimination, disability law and has a useful glossary. The Handbook is available free online. See www.lawhandbook.org.au.

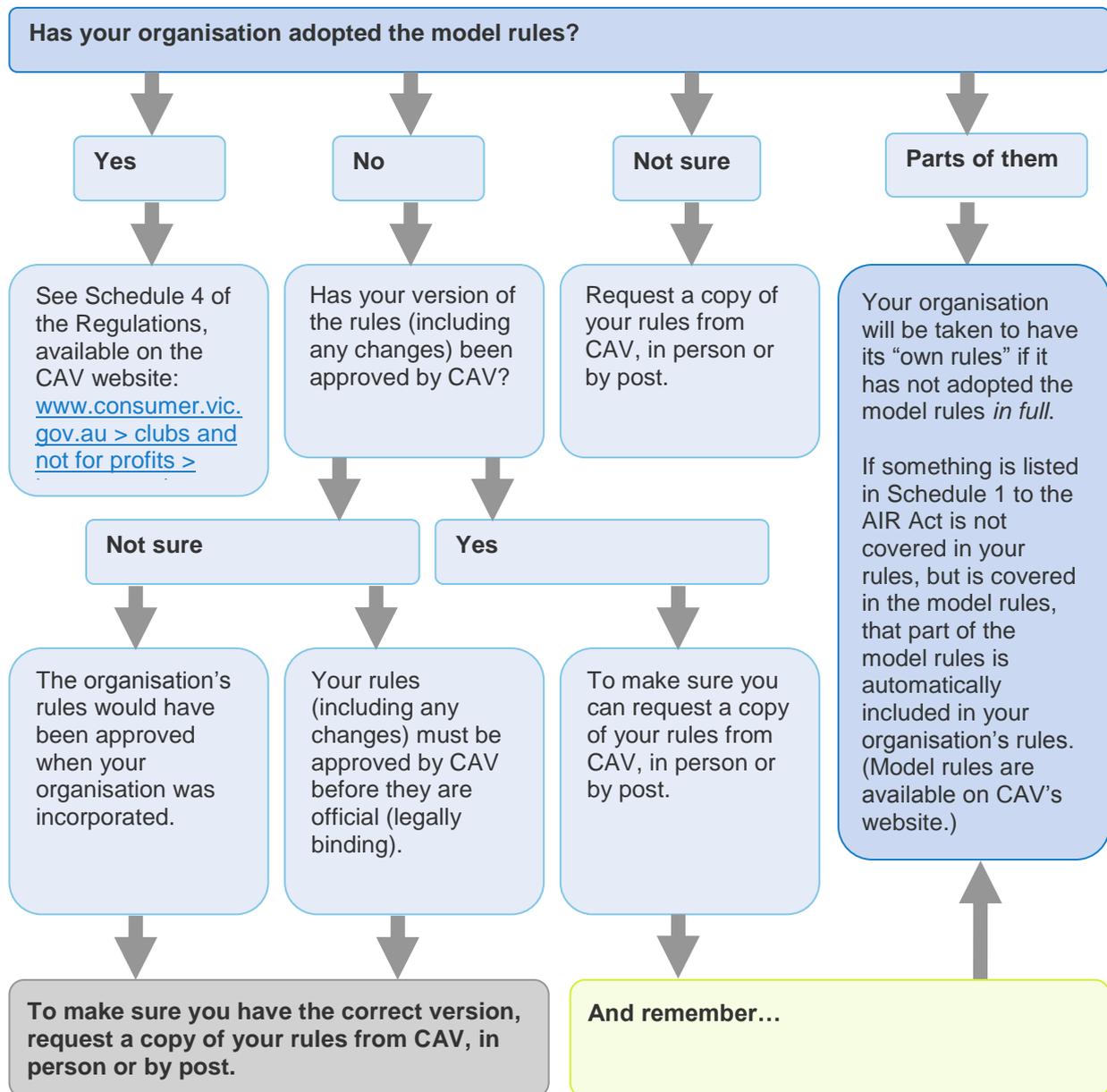
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Tool 1: Flowchart for working out what are your association's current rules

Note: CAV means Consumer Affairs Victoria.



Beware!

If your rules do not cover all the items listed in Schedule 1 of the AIR Act, certain model rules may automatically apply to you. If your rules are inconsistent with the AIR Act, the inconsistent rule is invalid. Go to Not-for-profit Law's [Rules Checklist](#) for guidance on checking whether your rules meet the requirements under the AIR Act.

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