

Checklist: Questions about your group



Legal information for community organisations

This checklist covers:

- key questions before starting a not-for-profit organisation, and
- considerations when deciding to establish a new charitable entity.

Before starting a not-for-profit it is important to have a clear idea about the aim and proposed structure of your group.

This information will help you make decisions about the best way to set up your group. It will also help to highlight any legal issues that your group may need to consider now, and in the future. Although you may be just starting out, it is important to think now about the longer term goals of your group.

You might like to write down a few lines under each question. You may wish to do this as a group, or to have each group member do this separately and then discuss as a group.

The aim of and purpose of your group

What is the aim or purpose of the group? What does the group want to achieve or what is the need that it will fulfil? For example, will your group:

- provide help and support to a particular group in the community?
- pursue a common recreational interest?
- raise awareness about a particular issue?

Write down a few lines about the aim of, and need for, your group.

Are there groups that already exist that have similar aims or purposes to the group you want to start? If so, is there still a reason for starting a new group? Have you or your group considered joining the existing one rather than starting a new one? (Remember, there can be extra expenses and paperwork involved in running a separate group).

List any similar groups that currently exist and the reasons why a new group is needed.

Is the group forming to produce a one-off, short-term project (for example, organising a one-off event, raising awareness about an upcoming government decision)? Or will the group be a long-term venture (for example, assisting youth from a particular cultural group, starting a self-help group for people suffering from a certain condition)?

The people involved in the group

Do you have people who are interested in being involved in the group? If so, how many people might get involved now? And in the future? If not, how will you attract people to join your group?

Will the group have members? Who will be the members of the group? If there are members, are there membership requirements? Will there be a membership fee?

How will the group organise? Are there (or will there need to be) rules by which the group operates? If there are rules, are they written down or just 'known' by the group? Will the group have a formal structure (for example, hold regular meetings, have people who hold positions in the group) or just be quite informal?

How will the group be managed or run? Will it have a board or committee of management? Will it be run completely by volunteers, or will it employ staff? What about in the future?

If the group is going to employ staff (either now or in the future) will it employ a person involved in setting up the group or a member of the group?

The activities of your group

What will be the main activities of the group, or what programs or services will the group provide?

Where will the group be located? Where will the group operate or where will its activities take place (for example, within a local government area, state-wide, nationally, overseas)? What about in the future?

Will your group be providing activities, programs or services to the public generally, to a targeted group of the public or just to members of the group?

What equipment, buildings or infrastructure will be needed to carry out the activities of the group?

Will the group be involved in activities where there may be risks (for example, organising events, serving food or alcohol, publishing information that people will rely on, outdoor activities etc.)? List any of the risks you think could possibly occur in relation to the activities your group will be undertaking.

Money and resources

Do all the people involved in your group agree that it is going to be a 'not-for-profit' group, with all of the funds going back to the group? (For information about what it means to be a 'not-for-profit' group, see the Related Resources section at the end of this document.)

- Yes No Not sure

How much money (funding) or other resources do you estimate that your group will need to carry out its activities?

Does your group currently have any money or access to any resources?

Resources

Related Not-for-profit Law Resources

▀ [Before you start](#)

This information on the Not-for-profit Law website provides further guidance on the practical and legal questions to address prior to establishing a new not-for-profit organisation.

▀ [Getting started](#)

Should you decide to proceed with the establishment of a new not-for-profit organisation, the resources on this section of our website can help you get your idea off the ground.

A Not-for-profit Law Information Hub resource. Access more resources at www.nfplaw.org.au

© 2014 Justice Connect. You may download, display, print and reproduce this material for your personal use, or non-commercial use within your not-for-profit organisation, so long as you attribute Justice Connect as author and retain this and other copyright notices. You may not modify this resource. Apart from any use permitted under the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth), all other rights are reserved.

To request permission from Justice Connect to use this material, contact Justice Connect at PO Box 16013, Collins Street West, Melbourne 8007, or email nfplaw@justiceconnect.org.au.