

Topic 5

EMERGE
Supporting Farmer Led Groups

A collaborative project between
TAS FARM INNOVATION HUB
RMCG

Roles and Responsibilities

Every member has a role to play in the success of a group. While some members may hold titled positions with specific responsibilities (such as Chair, Secretary or Treasurer) all members share responsibility for contributing to the group's activities, decisions and overall purpose.

Having clear roles and responsibilities helps people understand what is expected of them, supports good communication and decision making, and ensures important tasks are not overlooked. It can also help prevent too much responsibility falling on one or two people.

A Group's office bearers can be called a Committee, Leadership Group, Executive, or Board. Any smaller working group established by the Office Bearers is generally referred to as a sub-committee or working group and can have similar roles, but it would always refer back to the primary Committee for final sign off.

Roles can be adapted to suit the size, purpose and needs of your group. A formal group might have the following office bearers or roles:

- President or Chair
- Vice President (may have two)
- Secretary (often also the 'Public Officer')
- Treasurer
- Meeting Chair (may be held by one of the above roles)
- General Members
- Signatories.

Groups should have simple processes in place for:

- Electing or appointing people to positions;
- Introducing (or inducting) new position holders to their role and responsibilities;
- Setting an expected term for each position;
- Handing over information, records and responsibilities when people change roles; and
- Keeping a record of who has held each position and when.

Depending on your Group's governance structure, you may be required to have a constitution or other document outlining your office bearers, titled committee members, and their roles and responsibilities. A constitution can describe how elections and appointment of new office bearers need to occur. This is usually at an Annual General Meeting. See **Topic 8. Preparing Meeting Agendas and Minutes**.

Every group should always identify who will sign on their behalf (Signatories). This typically occurs via a formal process and noted in minutes. These are called Signatories and typically is one of the above office bearers. Good practice requires that there should be more than one Signatory. If your group has a constitution, it may also indicate who your Signatories need to be.

You can create roles to satisfy additional requirements such a sponsorship and funding role, social media and communications role and any others that are relevant to your group.

You may also assign tasks to non-committee members, sub-committees or working groups or support staff from other organisations. It is a good idea to update your organisational documents periodically to consider the duties of any new role or group.

General roles and responsibilities – dependent on your group.

President or Chair

Objective: Lead the organisation, provide strategic oversight, ensure decisions are made in a timely manner. More likely to be held accountable for the actions of the organisation.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Provide strong leadership and strategic direction, keeping the group focused on its purpose, objectives and long-term success.
- Chair meetings effectively, encouraging open discussion, managing differing views and supporting timely decision-making.
- Maintain oversight of group activities, delegate tasks appropriately and ensure responsibilities are followed through.
- Communicate and collaborate effectively with committee members, general members and stakeholders, ensuring people feel valued and able to contribute.
- Represent the group as its key spokesperson and build relationships, partnerships and funding opportunities that support its goals.
- Understand and uphold the constitution, governance requirements and duties of office bearers, including acting as an authorised signatory where required.
- Ensure appropriate risk management, record-keeping and legal compliance.
- Demonstrate integrity, accountability and confidentiality, including appropriate handling of sensitive information.
- Be organised, adaptable and able to manage time effectively, balancing group responsibilities with other commitments
- Maintain sufficient knowledge of the group's activities and subject matter to support informed discussion and decision-making.

Vice President

Objective: Serve as a key support for the president / chairperson.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Support the President/Chair in leading the group and step into the role when required.
- Assist with oversight of the group and contribute to its strategic direction and long-term success.
- Communicate effectively with members, growers and stakeholders, ensuring feedback is heard and the group represents its members.
- Work collaboratively and diplomatically, encouraging participation and supporting committee members to perform their roles.
- Be organised and reliable, managing competing responsibilities, meetings and deadlines effectively.
- Make timely, informed decisions and contribute relevant knowledge and experience to discussions.
- Demonstrate accountability, integrity and flexibility in supporting the group to achieve its objectives.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality and discretion when handling sensitive information.

General roles and responsibilities – dependent on your group

Secretary

Objective: Provide administrative leadership to ensure effective and efficient operations.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Lead the administration of the group, including organising meetings, schedules and other administrative activities.
- Prepare and manage meeting documentation, including agendas, correspondence, minutes and action records.
- Take and circulate concise meeting minutes, capturing key decisions and actions. Where an AI note-taker is used, ensure critical information such as voting outcomes is independently recorded.
- Using an AI notetaker without proper consent, clear policies, or team alignment can trigger significant legal, privacy, and cultural challenges.
- Maintain accurate, organised and secure records, ensuring appropriate record-keeping and legal requirements are met.
- Manage incoming and outgoing correspondence in collaboration with the President and Vice President.
- Demonstrate strong organisation, attention to detail and time management, including managing multiple tasks and deadlines.
- Communicate clearly and professionally and work collaboratively with committee members, members and external stakeholders.
- Use relevant digital systems and software to support communication, documentation and record management.
- Maintain confidentiality and privacy when handling sensitive information.
- Be flexible and responsive, following agreed procedures and supporting other administrative needs of the group as required.

Treasurer

Objective: Oversee the groups' financial resources to ensure effective, efficient management and long-term financial sustainability.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Manage and monitor the group's finances, including bank accounts, cash, investments, income and expenditure.
- Maintain accurate and transparent financial records, ensuring all transactions, grants, membership income and donations are properly recorded.
- Prepare budgets, financial statements and reports, including financial reporting for the annual general meeting.
- Provide regular financial updates to the committee and support informed financial planning and decision-making.
- Understand and comply with the constitution and relevant financial, record-keeping and legal requirements, including requirements for bank signatories.
- Identify, assess and manage financial risks to support the group's long-term financial sustainability.
- Demonstrate strong financial and analytical skills, including budgeting, accounting and interpreting financial information.
- Act with integrity, transparency and attention to detail in all financial matters.
- Maintain appropriate confidentiality and discretion when handling sensitive financial information.

General roles and responsibilities – dependent on your group

Public Officer

Objective: The Public Officer is the group's official nominee in the legal sense. The Public Officer must keep CBOS informed of the association's constitutional changes, office bearers and financial situation through an Annual Returns.

Typically, their address is the organisation's address, if the Public Officer changes address, they must lodge a form with CBOS notifying this change within 14 days. See https://www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/clubs-fundraising/incorporated-associations/changing-incorporated-association-details

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Treat organisation correspondence as a priority.
- Inform CBOS of changes to the organisation, finance etc.
- Ensure compliance with record-keeping and other legal requirements relevant to the role of treasurer.
- Lodge required annual reports or returns (tax returns). Acts as the official representative for the ATO.
- Maintain required organisational and membership records.
- Keep the committee informed of relevant compliance requirements.
- Prepare grant and funding applications.

Signatory

Objective: Ensure payments, financial transactions, and/or official documents are appropriately authorised on behalf of the Group.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Signatories should be trustworthy, responsible, and familiar with the group's financial procedures, delegations (what the group authorises you can do), and record keeping requirements.
- Authorise payments, transactions or documents in accordance with the group's agreed processes and delegated authority.
- Check that payments or transactions are legitimate, accurate, appropriately approved and supported by relevant documentation before authorising them.
- Where required, ensure two authorised signatories approve payments or transactions.
- Does not approve payments to themselves without appropriate independent authorisation.
- Keep passwords, banking details, access codes and other sensitive information secure and do not share individual login credentials.
- Promptly advises the group and relevant financial institution when a signatory changes or no longer holds the position.
- Work with the Treasurer and other authorised members to support transparent and accountable financial management.

Meeting Chair

Meeting Chair (may be permanent or decided each meeting)

Objective: Ensure a smooth meeting, hold the group's attention, and direct the conversation and decision-making processes when required. They may need to be patient, diplomatic, consistent, impartial/ objective and able to match the values of the committee.

Key attributes and responsibilities:

- Chair meetings, follow the agenda, and keep discussion focused and on time. Ensure sufficient time to discuss matters prior to decision-making.
- Encourage fair participation, including from quieter members.
- Remain impartial and help the group reach decisions.

Questions to consider

- ☑ Do our committee members feel comfortable with their duties? Do they feel they need more information to support their responsibilities?
- ◯ Do we have an on-boarding and off-boarding process? (See **Emerge Topic 6: Induction and succession**)
- ◯ Would having identified sub-roles be useful for us? e.g. 'social media manager', 'event lead', 'partnership procurement'?
- ◯ Could working groups or sub-committees be useful for us? e.g. Organising an event, reviewing a new system.

Additional Resources

- **WA Grower Group Alliance - Toolkit**
  https://www.gga.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GGA_Grower-Group-Toolkit-WEBSITE.pdf
- **Victorian Landcare Program – Committee Roles**
  https://www.landcarevic.org.au/assets/Uploads/2.3-Committee-roles.pdf
- **Australian Government - Guidance on privacy and the use of commercially available AI products**
  https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-guidance-for-organisations-and-government-agencies/guidance-on-privacy-and-the-use-of-commercially-available-ai-products
- **AI notetakers on client calls: how to record and transcribe with consent**
  https://demandify.com.au/news/ai-notetakers-and-call-recording-consent

How this resource came about

The Emerge project was funded by the Australian Government's Future Drought Fund to support new, emerging and informal farmer groups to develop their skills and knowledge, and to create this set of resources for use by groups into the future. Groups participating in 2026 received coaching and additional learning opportunities to supplement the content of these resources.

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