What Policies do we need?
Nov 28, 2015

All organisations and committees are different, so there is no one-size-fits-all answer to the question 'What policies does my organisation need?'

Your committee needs to think about the particular nature of your group and identify what are the likely policies (and procedures) you might need in place to cover the things you do. There might also be policy requirements placed upon you by the government, legislation, peak bodies and funders, and your organisation's plans/rules/mission/vision/values etc.

When considering what your group might need, it can help to think about the three distinct areas of your organisation – governance, management and operations.
Governance policies and procedures cover the things the committee does – such as organisational planning, budget development and monitoring, and policy development and review, for example.

A Committee Charter is also used to spell out how the committee itself operates.
Management policies and procedures might include how staff and/or volunteers are managed (recruitment, training, health and safety etc); how funds are managed (such as approval requirements and reimbursement processes); and how assets are maintained and managed.
Operational policies and procedures cover the actual 'on-the-ground' work of the group – the standard operating procedures that spell out how we do what we do.

Don't think that you need to develop these documents from scratch – you will find many policies and procedures online that you can borrow from. Our Community has a policy bank on its website designed to help community groups with policy development. And many peak bodies will have policies and procedures already developed that you can either adopt or adapt to suit your needs.

Developing policies often happens reactively – something goes wrong and we think: 'If we'd had a policy in place about this, it either wouldn't have happened, or we'd have been better able to deal with it' so we then put something in writing to cover us in future. But it's much better than we think about what we might need in advance, and develop the necessary documents, so everyone is clear about what is expected and knows what to do if something does happen.