

# creative volunteering *no limits*

A Regional Arts Australia Initiative

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Carry Out Business Planning  
Develop Funds & Resources  
Undertake Marketing

**Network within Communities**

Plan & Program Events  
Work with Collections

REGIONAL  
arts  
AUSTRALIA

Department of  
Communications  
Information Technology  
and the Arts

facs making a difference  
Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services

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Flinders University

Museums Australia

Volunteering Australia

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Flinders University, Cultural Tourism, School of Humanities contributed to the management of the project.

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## Foreword

### Creative volunteering

We are pleased to welcome you to the Creative Volunteering Project.

This project, jointly funded by the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS) and the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, has been two years in the making.

Regional Arts Australia have administered this project, which will offer six one-day workshops in over 60 locations across regional Australia. The workshops will reach up to 15,000 of the cultural volunteers who keep our regional museums and galleries open, help our regional theatre companies reach opening night and organise our rich and diverse regional festivals.

Volunteerism has always been a cherished Australian quality, a quality that has helped build the communities that are home to the one in three Australians who live outside the metropolitan areas.

In times of crisis, volunteers have kept the bush fire brigades going and the tea urns boiling. In times of plenty and prosperity volunteers have helped make our regions as culturally sophisticated and engaging as our cities.

We are pleased to be able to offer something back to these communities in the form of specialised training in order to extract maximum benefit from the efforts of regional volunteer.

The workshops offered under the Creative Volunteering project address needs identified by volunteers themselves—collections management, business planning, networking, marketing, planning and programming events, and funding and sponsorship.

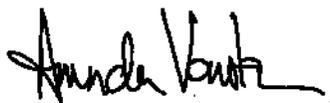
This program is tailored to meet the needs the regions have identified as most urgent. It will deliver the skills and expertise that will help regional Australia preserve its past, engage with the present and imagine the future

The Government has been pleased to work with Regional Arts Australia on this important project.

We look forward to seeing a new professionalism and confidence among regional volunteers as they take advantage of the opportunity to hone their skills and apply new strategies to their institutions.



Senator the Hon. Rod Kemp  
Minister for the Arts



Senator the Hon. Amanda Vanstone.  
Minister for Family and Community Services

## Foreword

### Regional Arts Australia

Regional Arts Australia is proud to support sustainable, industry relevant training and professional development across regional Australia.

Regional Arts Australia is a peak national organisation for the ongoing development of the arts across regional Australia. Regional Arts Australia advocates at a local, state and federal level to ensure that the arts across regional Australia are appropriately recognised and resourced. In early 2001, Regional Arts Australia gained national funding support from the Commonwealth Government to develop and deliver skills based workshops to regionally based volunteers across Australia.

Regional Arts Australia recognises that communities throughout Australia depend on volunteers to keep huge numbers of organisations and activities afloat. This is particularly so in the case of the arts, cultural heritage and museums which are mostly managed and run by volunteers, enriching both the communities in which they live and work, and in fact, the whole of Australia. Well over a third of all people living in the regions are volunteering their time and expertise in some way for the benefit of their communities.

This workbook is one of six that has been produced as part of a **Course in Creative Volunteering**. Consultation with interested parties, including most notably Museums Australia, has contributed to the development of this nationally recognised course, now available to regionally based volunteers across Australia.

The course comprises six one day workshops which have been designed to increase the recognition and skill base of volunteers. In this present day environment of increasingly complex negotiations and arrangements, volunteers can increase their knowledge and skills about:

- Planning for business development
- Marketing planning to help to build markets in the regions.
- Establishing and maintaining networks within and across communities.
- Funding and resources for the operation of programs and activities.
- Planning and programming local events.
- Working with collections.

The support of the Commonwealth Government has made it possible for us to deliver to regional Australia the right tools for training to help volunteers gain valuable skills in carrying out their work, and importantly, to have these skills recognised.

On behalf of Regional Arts Australia I am sure that the many volunteers working across regional Australia will find this workbook a valuable resource for themselves and their organisations.

Have fun at the workshops and enjoy sharing the knowledge to secure a sustainable and viable future for arts and culture.



Nicola Downer  
President, Regional Arts Australia

## Overview of the workbook

This workbook is part of a series of workbooks that form the Creative Volunteering program. It is designed to be used in a facilitated workshop and, later, as a resource tool for you and your organisation. It contains information and exercises that will assist you in the management of your organisation and in your own learning.

## How to use this workbook

The topics in this workbook are arranged in a logical sequence so that your understanding is gradually developed. Read the topics and think about how the points raised relate to your own experience.

A case study is provided for you to refer to as you go through the topics. The case study is introduced in the first topic and is developed throughout the workbook so that you have a concrete example to work with.

Your facilitator will take you through each section step by step, discussing the case study and then inviting you to complete the exercises at the back of the book.

## Work at your own pace

The workbook has been designed for you to work at your own pace. If you do not have all the information to finish an exercise during the workshop, attempt part of it and then move on to the next topic with the group. You can fill in the blank sections when you return to your organisation and you are able to find the information.

## Exercises

These exercises are important for recording your progress as you study, and can be used to demonstrate your understanding of the topics. At the end of the workbook is a section to record your exercise responses.

If you are seeking a formal assessment of this module you will need to make sure that the specified exercises at the back of the workbook are signed and dated by the facilitator of the program. For more information, see the *Pathways to Formal Qualification* section at the end of this workbook.

## Find out more...

At the back of the workbook is a list of other places – websites and other resources – where you might find out more information. Use this list to start your research if you want to find out more about the topic that you are studying.

## Guidelines for learning

### The workshop space

The workshop space is a safe learning environment that is structured to allow you to experiment, ask questions, make mistakes and be proud of your achievements. Don't be afraid to ask if you don't understand. A workshop is non-competitive and participants are encouraged to support each other. Everything you need to know will be explained to you.

### Flexible learning

It is important that you are able to understand, record and retain information during the workshop. If you need to work in an alternative way, you must let the facilitator know so that you can be supported to do this. For instance, if you need things to be read to you, then you could be paired with another learner who can do this with you. This will remain confidential.

### Privacy protection

Workshop opportunities will allow you to share information and ideas with other volunteers from your area. This local area knowledge is especially useful when it comes to networking within communities. Sharing information is an act of trust, and requires everyone to agree that what you share for the purposes of learning, will not be used out of context or divulged to others who were not at the workshops. Please respect each others commitment to sharing.

### Evaluation

At the end of today's workshop you will be asked to fill out an evaluation form on the workshop. The information on the form will remain anonymous. Care will be taken to ensure that the information on the forms remains confidential and that individual responses cannot be personally identified. Your views on the workshops will help us to make sure that the project is meeting its goals.

## Skills audit

Everyone has valuable skills and knowledge gained throughout life that can be used for the benefit of the organisations you work with as a volunteer. This is what you bring with you to the workshop. Often people are unaware that the skills they have gained throughout their lifetime, either at work or in the home, may be of value to their organisation. For example, organising the family budget teaches invaluable budgeting skills.

This exercise is to assist you to list the skills you can offer your organisation. Write down everything you can think of, regardless of whether you think it is relevant.

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What are your current interests? eg movies, gardening, internet, quilting

Can you organise tasks and set priorities? eg family budget, crop rotation

What skills do you have? eg great with children, carpentry, cooking, storytelling

What equipment can you operate? eg computer, typewriter, calculator, fax

What office skills do you have? eg keyboarding, filing, book-keeping, calculating

What are you really good at?

List any training/courses you would like to undertake:

## Topic 1: Understanding Networks

Networking within communities happens every day: it is an important community-building tool, and makes it possible for many groups to do things and pursue opportunities they would not be able to manage on their own. In regional areas, or where resources are limited, this method of sharing resources and creating links is especially important.

Networks need to be structured to suit the interests of the network members. If you are setting up a network, or tapping into one, it is important to be able to identify how it might be structured so that it best serves the needs of its network members. In this topic, we will look briefly at different types of networks, how they are structured, and their purpose.

### Case Study

In this workbook we use a hypothetical case study to help you work through the exercises.

#### **Case Study**

Riverside and Parrakilla are medium sized towns in Western Rivers Region, a fruit growing area 200 km inland from the State capital. Riverside grew up as a river port in the days of the paddle steamers, while Parrakilla was a soldier settlement irrigation area set up after World War II on the opposite side of the river, which forms the boundary between two local government areas. Over the last 20 years wine making has become an important industry.

A number of artists work in the towns and the surrounding region. The Regional Arts Council does the best it can to organise arts events, but is hindered by the lack of a proper venue for performances or exhibitions.

Both towns also have active historical societies whose members have been collecting artefacts and materials connected with the settlement of the area. Recently they have become aware of the need to include the local Indigenous community within their activities.

The historical society committees have been discussing the possibility of setting up a regional museum. The Arts Council has been looking to set up a centre which would give them a venue for theatre performances and art exhibitions as well as providing work space for artists and community groups.

Active committee members from each group happened to be part of the same team at a quiz night to raise funds for the Parrakilla swimming pool. As they talked, they realised they had a number of goals in common, and that each of their organisations could benefit if they all worked for one shared facility.

## Understanding Your Community

Communities are groups of people who share a common interest.

This could include:

- A place (your home, your school or where you were born)
- An activity (like sports, work or a club)
- A belief or value (your religion or way of life)

Members of communities think of themselves as 'belonging'. People can belong to many different communities; maybe you live in one community, participate in a social club, and have a spiritual community as well. Sometimes these communities overlap. It is our experience of sharing and belonging with others that makes our communities important to us. Members of communities may not agree on everything but there are usually things that hold the community together, and give it a sense of itself.

### Local Networks

In your community, many networks already exist. Some of them are easily visible, and some of them operate without your being aware of them at all. Networks within community groups, and between them, are working to share resources and information. Individuals come together to help each other and make connections that enrich their lives.

Think about the organisations that operate in, or have links with the communities where you live. The potential for networking is huge. Key individuals with local knowledge are likely to have contacts in many of these organisations.

#### Case study

In Western Rivers, the network members for the project were:

- Parrakilla Historical Society
- Riverside Historical Society
- Western Rivers Regional Arts Council

Other interested bodies identified during the planning stages included:

- The Indigenous communities in the local area
- Local artists and collectors
- The schools
- Local government bodies
- Tourist associations

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## Activity

Identify individuals and organisations that you network with or who you would like to make contact with. Use the checklist on the next page to record your list of potential network members.

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## Checklist for potential network members

### What potential contacts do you bring with you?

Think about your friends and acquaintances, your contacts in other organisations, people who are on committees with you, even the partners, family and contacts of all these people.

Using the categories below as a prompt, write down the people you can think of who could fit into each category. Add categories if you wish.

- Trades People.....
- Politicians and their staff .....
- Contacts in government departments.....
- Media .....
- Churches .....
- Businesses .....
- Schools & education centres .....
- Local councils .....
- Financial services .....
- Legal services.....
- Publishing .....
- Sympathetic people with significant money at their disposal.....
- Sympathetic people with significant spare time .....
- Contacts in arts & cultural organisations.....
- Contacts in museums & libraries .....
- People interested in history .....
- Contacts in history or heritage groups.....
- People with other special skills or attributes .....
- Contacts in other sectors of the community .....
- .....
- eg. Environment, women's groups, ethnic communities, sports clubs, etc.

Adapted from a checklist for identifying strengths in McArdle, J. *Resource Manual for facilitators in community development* Vol II, Vista Publications Vic, 1993.

## Connection points

Networking is about making connections with people. It is useful to see the connection as working both ways. Every network has points of connection that make it work.

Connection points are important to name. Sometimes those points are a starting place for further connections. Sometimes they are a goal to be worked towards. In each case, it is important to ask:

*What do we have in common?*

### Case study

In the Western Rivers Region, the new network made a list of all the possible connections they might make to help them achieve their goal of a new shared facility.

They found dozens of potential connections. For instance, the historical society memberships of the two towns had many shared interests. Some had a collection of steam driven engines used in the area.

As well as having a shared common interest within their groups, they also had connection points with the State Historical Machinery Society, the State and National Institute of Engineers, and the Agricultural Bureaus in the surrounding areas.

### Exercise 1 (a):

#### Local networks –

(turn to page 35)

Think about your organisation, the networks and the potential network members that you identified with the checklist on the previous page.

Choose three contacts that you can use as the basis for your exercises. Consider what you have in common – the connection points.

Record your answers in the blank template at the back of the book (page 35). This will form the basis for your formal assessment



## Types of Networks

Networks are working relationships between people and organisations that agree to share information and resources.

**Informal networks** are the relationships that you use everyday – your friends and family, the people who you interact with in your community. For instance, the parents at a school are an informal network, who might share the school run or mind each others children. Informal networks are not tightly structured, but are responsive and supportive in nature.

**Formal networks** are structured through an agreement process and usually include guidelines for sharing. For instance, committees at schools meet regularly to share decision-making and expertise. They have a structure that everyone agrees to use (meetings, etc).

On the next page are some examples of the ways formal networks may be structured.

**Networks can also be either on-going or project-based.**

**On-going networks** maintain regular contact and usually have strong connections and matching purposes related to the overall operational activities of the organisation.

**Project-based networks** form to achieve a specific project, such as a festival or collaboration to build an arts centre. These networks may be dissolved when the project has been completed.

### Case study

In the Western Rivers region, both kinds of networks are highlighted:

#### Informal:

The committee members were informally networking at the quiz night.

#### Formal:

The Regional Arts Council, and the Historical Societies from both towns each maintain their formal networks via regular meetings.

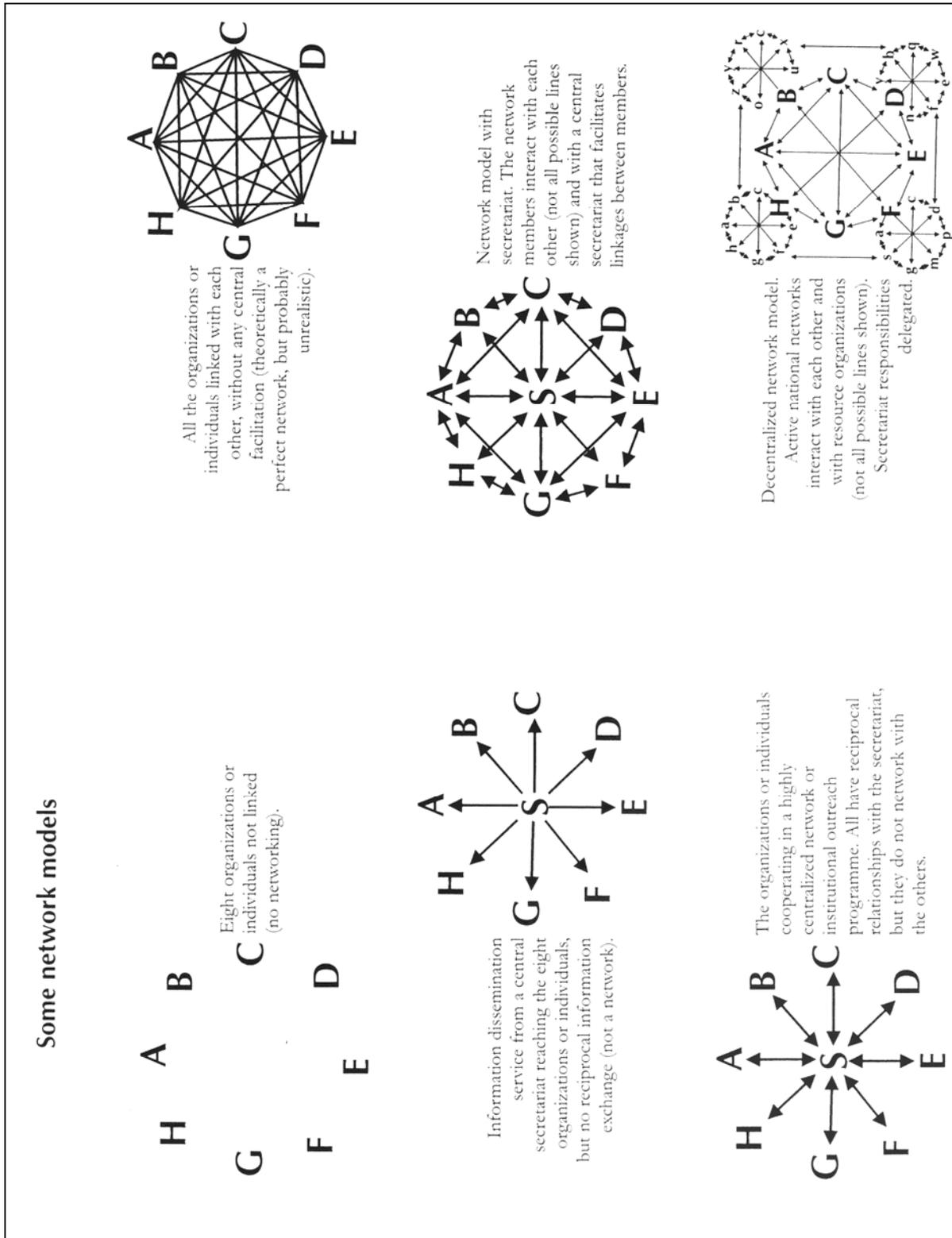
### Exercise 1 (b):

Local networks –

Complete the Local networks grid by deciding if the networks that you have identified are formal or informal, and whether the relationships are on-going or project-based.

(turn to page 35))





Starkey, P *Networking for Development*  
International Forum for Rural Transport and Development, New Premier House,  
London, 1998.

## Topic 2: Networking Opportunities

Once you have made sense of what networks are, and how they function in your community, it is time to think about how you can best tap into existing networks, or create new networks of your own.

### Action Plan

What needs to happen in order to bring people together and get your network off the ground?

In other workshops you will look at business planning and project management. Planning is also important in networking. After identifying potential partners an action plan can help you work out the steps you need to take.

An action plan serves as a useful guide to keep everyone on track and focussed. It is a planning tool, a monitoring tool, and a record of what is happening.

It can include:

- The tasks to be carried out
- The milestones along the way
- Who will do the tasks
- When they need to be done

The action plan needs to be done collaboratively. Try not to nominate anyone for a task – ask for nominations. Try to match people’s interests and skills to the tasks that need to be done. There is more likelihood of success for the action plan if everyone is happy about their roles.

**Case study**

In Western Rivers, the first strategy in forming a network was identifying individuals and organisations and bringing them together to talk. The group discussed what needed to be done to achieve this, who would do what and by when.

task	who	when		
		Oct 03	Nov 03	
seek suitable venue for meetings	Jan T.	venue secured		
contact potential network members and invite to meeting	Kym K.		1 <sup>st</sup> meeting	

**When you are working with your committee or group, use this checklist to help you get started.**

### ACTION CHECKLIST

1. Brainstorm all the relevant groups / agencies in your area.  
  
Identify some issues or projects in which you could work with other organisations/ groups / individuals.  
  
Identify local community groups which you could support, or which could support you.  
  
Review what has and has not worked for your group in working with other organisations.
2. Still with your group, identify one or two local organisations / groups which would be able to offer the greatest cooperation / contribution in working towards achieving your vision, or one or two local community groups which you could support in achieving their vision.
3. Invite the managers of those organisations / groups to attend a session, led by you, to identify projects and issues, and start to identify strategies which use the combined power of all the players.
4. Develop an action plan, to ensure ongoing cooperation and information sharing between the organisations.

Adapted from Manager's Checklist. 4 steps towards action in: Auer, Jocelyn et. al. 1993. *Just Change: cost-conscious manager's toolkit*, Wollongong, NSW. National Reference Centre for Continuing Education in Primary Health Care.

## Community Resources

Your organisation will have resources and needs. So will other organisations in your community. These are all important factors that will influence the shape and activity of your network.

Resources are what organisations use to keep their activities going. It is useful to think of resources in terms of things that you use rather than things that you have.

Resources can include:

- Money or funds
- A place or venue
- Equipment
- People – their knowledge, skills and experience
- Time

Some resources are shared by different organisations in the community. The community itself will have its own resources, which may be shared by many organisations, such as a community hall, trestle tables or display screens.

Often resources shared between organisations or groups provide the first connection points (as discussed in the first topic) which in turn can lead to on-going partnerships and joint projects.

### Case study

In the Western Rivers Region, Riverside and Parrakilla are working towards a shared resources partnership: the regional cultural facility.

In order to do this, they will need to seek out community resources, as well as identify what resources they each bring to the project.

They may decide to commit:

- Time
- Administrative resources (communications, office space, storage)
- Expertise

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## Activity

What sorts of resources would you seek from your network?

What sorts of resources can you bring to it?

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## Networking with purpose

**Strategic networking** is purpose-driven: it occurs for a reason. The benefits to *each* of the network members need to be shared so that there is an exchange of energy in some way.

There are lots of reasons to network:

- Your organisation needs extra **services, capital or equipment**
- Your organisation needs specific **expertise** for a particular project
- You are looking for connections to certain **target groups** of people
- You want to build a **new audience**
- You need to demonstrate broad **support** for a project

## Benefits

An effective, sustainable network provides benefits to all network members. For instance, a local school draws on its connections with the building industry to achieve construction of a playground (the school's networking purpose). The construction company also benefits: it is supporting the school, perhaps even picking up extra business through the exposure it will receive in the local newspaper (the construction company's purpose).

On a larger scale, for instance during the lead up to a regional festival, strategic connections are made between many groups and organisations, to work together towards a common goal – the festival.

Strategic networking involves matching needs and ensuring all partners benefit from their involvement in the network. It is important to be able to communicate clearly what each network member seeks to achieve through the network. They might not have the same purpose, but they will complement each other.

### Case study

The networking purpose of the new network in the Western Rivers Region might be: "To establish a community-based arts and cultural heritage facility".

### Exercise 2:

#### Networking purpose –

Identify a purpose for your networking. This may be collaborating for a specific project, increasing the involvement of your community, or sharing resources and expertise.

What purpose does the network serve for other members of your network? What are the benefits of the network to each of them?

(turn to page 36)



## Checklist to help you determine the networking purpose

### WHY NETWORK?

Name the network meeting you wish to concentrate on.

Who do I want to meet / get to know?

What do I want other people to know about my organisation / service?

What issues is my organisation confronting for which we need ideas or assistance?

What issues am I confronting as an individual volunteer in the community with which I need help / support?

What information do other organisations have access to, which my organisation would find useful?

Do other organisations possess resources which our organisation could use?

Which organisations would I like more information about?

Are there deeper levels of cooperation (such as joint funding applications, accommodation, fundraising activities) which could be fostered by some or all of the organisations in the network?

Adapted from McArdle, J. *Resource Manual for facilitators in community development Vol II*, Vista Publications Vic, 1993

## Topic 3: Networking Tools

Identifying how your organisation might share benefits with others through networking is an important first step. But how is networking achieved? What are the tools you can use?

One of the most important networking tools that your network will use is the meeting. In this topic, we look at the good practice elements of a network meeting.

We also consider the structure of the network and sharing responsibilities; and we look at how information is managed within and between networking partners.

### Effective Meetings

Meetings are a formal networking tool. When organisations work together, meetings are a useful place to discuss ideas and make decisions.

### Organising a meeting

Important things to consider when organising a meeting are:

- Who will be there (open or by invitation)
- Where it will be (neutral place or workplace)
- When it will happen
- What people need to bring
- How long it will take
- What you hope to achieve (the outcomes)
- How the outcomes will be recorded, and who gets the information



Usually the secretary, or other person nominated by your network, will notify all members of the details of a meeting. This notice of meeting will include details of time and place. It will often go out with the agenda and, if possible, copies of the minutes from last meeting and any papers that need to be considered during the meeting. This allows people time to read and consider any points raised beforehand.

### The agenda

There needs to be agreement about what will be on the agenda. Sharing this agenda setting is very important as it gives everyone a sense that the meeting 'belongs' to them. The exact items and style of different agendas may vary depending on the formality and purpose of your group. However, there are a few basics that are usually adopted to help meetings run smoothly and to make sure that nothing is forgotten.

### Basic meeting agenda

***Details of meeting***

The venue, date and starting time are stated.

***Minutes of last meeting***

The minutes from the last meeting will be considered and any required changes made. (When the group is confident that they provide a true record of proceedings, they will be accepted).

***Standing items***

These agenda items are matters that are discussed every time you meet and can include incoming mail, network member reports, finances, safety and so on.

***Business arising***

Any actions agreed at the last meeting that require follow up and on-going tasks that need to be updated.

***Any other business***

New items of business to be raised. (It is useful if members can nominate topics they wish to discuss and distribute relevant material before the meeting).

### Roles

Committees or network groups may nominate people to take on a variety of roles. However for the purposes of the meeting there are two main roles: the person who runs or chairs the meeting, and the person who takes the minutes or writes down what happened.

The ***chair person*** needs to be a good listener, able to identify issues, clarify ideas, keep people on track with the agenda, and help people reach agreement. Sometimes, it can be a good idea to ask a 'neutral' person to chair, especially if the issues are complex.

The ***minute taker*** records who was there, what was said and what decisions and actions were agreed upon. Where the meeting was held and the times it started and finished are also recorded.

**Case study**

In Western Rivers, it was agreed that the network meetings would take place at a neutral venue. The positions of chair and minute-taker were rotated between the members, so that each meeting was arranged in a slightly different way. This added interest and developed a sense of shared responsibility. A draft agenda was circulated by email before each meeting, and all members were asked to suggest items for it.

**Exercise 3:**  
Meeting agenda –

(turn to page 37)

Prepare an agenda for a meeting of your network members. If your network currently meets regularly, draw up an agenda for the next meeting; if you intend to form a new network, set the agenda for the first meeting.



## GOOD IDEAS for MEETINGS CHECK LIST

These ideas for managing meetings come from a range of groups. Each idea has been used and found valuable by others. Although they may not necessarily be relevant to your situation, check through the list to see which ones might work in meetings of your organisation or on the project you have in mind. Mark the ideas you would like to test out or trial with your group.

- ✓ Ask team members before or at the beginning of meetings if they have items they wish to add to the agenda.
- ✓ In selected meetings, sort out the priority order of items at the beginning of the meeting.
- ✓ Allocate a suggested time to each item to be discussed.
- ✓ Put up the agenda and time allocated on a flip chart or whiteboard,
- ✓ Arrange the agenda so that quick "easy" items are at the beginning and finished first.
- ✓ Check before discussing an item that key people are present.
- ✓ Rotate who takes the role of chairperson at meetings.
- ✓ Take turns at chairing long meetings.
- ✓ Summarise the main points of what people say on a flip chart or white board.
- ✓ Summarise key team decisions on flip chart paper.
- ✓ Sometimes split into subgroups to discuss specific aspects of a problem.
- ✓ Sometimes go round the room systematically to check opinions.
- ✓ Use brainstorming to generate ideas and opinions.
- ✓ Sometimes make conditional decisions to try something out for a certain period of time.
- ✓ Use a subgroup with appointed co-ordinator to prepare work on a complicated problem or deal with particular tasks or projects.
- ✓ When conflict develops around a specific issue or decision, take a short break to allow people to cool off or discuss 'mellowed issues'.
- ✓ When members have strong feelings about issues, try to reach decisions by consensus rather than by majority voting.
- ✓ Write next to each decision who is responsible for making it happen.
- ✓ Fix specific checkpoints to monitor complex decisions.
- ✓ Use a process observer (can be a group member) who follows how the group operates and at the end of the meetings reports key observations.
- ✓ Sometimes spend time at the end of a meeting to discuss the process of a meeting and draw conclusions.
- ✓ Schedule a special meeting for discussing basic problems for which the group never seems to have time to deal.

Adapted from Merry and Allerhand . *Developing Teams and Organizations* Addison & Wesley 1977.

## Sharing Responsibility

The structure of the working relationship needs to be just as clear as the network purpose and goals.

A formal network needs to have documented agreement on key areas of responsibility. Financial management, people management, risk management and accountability all need to be considered. Working out who does what might depend on the resources that each brings to the relationship. Agreements, contracts and statements of intent between all parties involved should be specific about who has the ultimate responsibility.

You may need to get an expert to help with some of the legal or industrial issues that need to be sorted out, especially if there are shared finances.

In a complex network, it is useful to have a central point of contact – a person or place where all the network members can make contact with each other. You will need to consider how information will flow and how your network members will be able to access information.

Reporting is another important area to be managed. Who will report on what, and to whom? With many different people involved in a joint project, it can be useful to nominate individuals to coordinate and/or monitor activities and progress toward stated goal.

### Case study

In Western Rivers, all participating organisations (project partners) nominated a representative to act as a first point of contact, for receiving information and for getting information out to the network members.

The network was structured so that all partners had equal representation. A core committee was formed from the organisations' representatives to accept responsibility for network actions.

For instance, the Riverside Historical Society is to research museum display needs, the Parrakilla Historical Society is to devise a funding strategy and Western Rivers Arts Council research potential architects.

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## Activity

Think about the networking goal that you identified earlier. How many interests are represented? How will the responsibility be shared? Who are the network members accountable to?

---

## Information Management

Recording, storing and retrieving information effectively makes good sense for organisations, individuals and networks. It improves the flow of communication and saves time repeating work.

It is essential to keep records of:

- Financial transactions and arrangements
- Policies and legal documents
- Agreements and contracts
- Minutes of meetings
- Stock and assets
- Communications amongst network members, and between the network and other groups.

## Privacy

Information may be private. For instance personal contact information, financial records, and contracts should be saved properly and securely. It is important to know *who* needs to access the information. Other information, like promotional material, needs to be as easily accessible as possible. Make sure it is accurate and up to date. When networking within communities, you will need to be clear about what information you can share, and what is private.

### Case study

In Western Rivers, it was decided that the personal details of the network members should be protected – home addresses and phone numbers, etc. A privacy statement was circulated at one of the meetings for members to sign.

## Access to information

The information that is generated from a partnership or networking arrangement needs to be accessible to everybody involved. This can include recording decisions made and people present at meetings. Make sure that one person does not hold all the information. Sharing information shares the power between people, and develops trust and goodwill.

Think about information as information IN and information OUT. Then there is also information that stays *within* the organisation.

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## Activity

Think about the sensitive information that your project network might need to protect. Draw up a Privacy Statement that network members can sign so that the information remains confidential.

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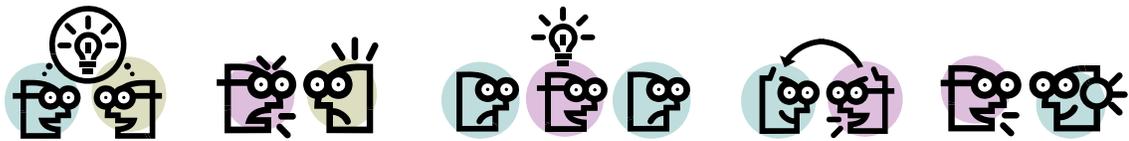
## Topic 4: Communication & working with groups

Networking skills are founded on good communication techniques. We need to be able to communicate our ideas effectively and understand the ideas of others.

In this topic, we take a look at the elements of communicating effectively in order to reach common goals.

Encouraging participation is the key to networking within communities. In particular, we look at the importance of inclusive communication, so that access to information is available to everyone who needs it.

Reaching a common understanding about how your network will work is useful – then it can move forward with what it is doing. A network will represent many interests. One of the most important processes of a network is reaching agreement – decision-making, problem solving and conflict resolution.



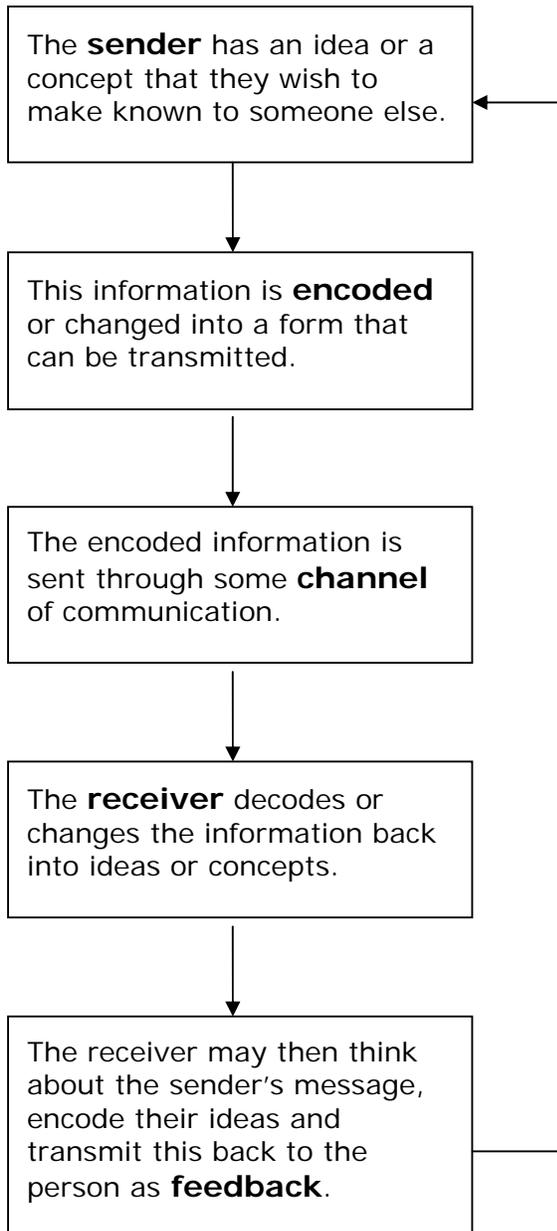
### Communicating with a Purpose

Communication is how we share understanding between ourselves.

The clearer we are in communicating our ideas and feelings, the better others understand us. And the better we listen, the more we understand others. Effective communication is about being aware that it is a process of giving, taking and gradually clarifying until an understanding is reached.

## The communication process

The diagram on this page shows a basic communication model. It breaks down the process of communication into a series of steps. Of course we communicate everyday in many ways without thinking about the process, however it can be useful to consider the steps briefly.



**Communication model** Adapted from “*High Performance Organizational Behavior*”, Leifer, R. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, n.d.

**Encoding** just means choosing the right *words, images or gestures* to convey what you are trying to communicate.

For example, if you saw someone on the other side of the street and you wished to communicate a greeting, you might choose a wave of the hand. A wave is a code which we all understand to mean “hello”. When you speak to someone, you usually choose English words. French words are perfectly good codes, but generally are best suited for use in a French-speaking country.

**Channels of communication** are the methods we choose for communication. Channels can include the telephone, letter writing or email, and face-to-face conversations or meetings.

The channel you use will depend on what is available and the reason you are communicating. For instance, if you need to record the communication, email, fax or letter is useful. If you are discussing, then talking on the phone or in a meeting may be a more effective method of communication.

Feedback is important for checking that the receiver has understood.

**Tips to improve communication:**

- Give information in a variety of ways
- Repeat important concepts
- Explain difficult ideas
- Listen carefully
- Clarify what you hear.

## Encouraging Participation

Participating in activities in the community develops a sense of belonging to that community. It is also an opportunity to extend your understanding, meet new people, and maybe learn some skills. People are all motivated differently.

What people bring to their work in their community, and what they get out of it influences:

- their willingness to participate
- the way they participate, and
- the level of their participation.

Think about these factors:

- What motivates them?
- What skills and resources do they bring?
- What do they need to know?
- What level of responsibility do they have?
- What are the benefits to them?
- What time can they commit?

Networking within communities means seeking out different people and ways of doing things so that sharing can occur. It is important not to assume that everyone thinks and operates the way you do. Because you cannot always know what these differences are, choose practices that give maximum opportunity for everyone.

### Inclusive practices

Inclusive practices are ways of doing things that make it easy for everyone to participate. If you are not sure what the right approach to a different group of people is – ask them. They will let you know.

Careful choice of language will be appreciated by people with disabilities. The style guide following gives a few hints on terminology that is inclusive and people-focussed.

### Case study

In the Western Rivers network, issues of access were discussed at one of the planning meetings.

One of the network members was deaf and felt that he couldn't fully participate in the meetings. When he was consulted as to the best solution, he suggested that the meeting minutes be written up on a whiteboard as the meeting proceeded. The minutes were transcribed afterwards onto paper and circulated.

Another member had difficulty climbing steps, so the group found meeting places she could walk into easily.

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## Activity

Think about people in your community who might want to be involved in what you are doing. They will have a variety of needs relating to communication. What can be done to make sure that they are able to be involved and to access information as easily as possible?

---

### **STYLE GUIDE- a best practice guide for inclusive language**

Many terms describing disabilities or people with disabilities are now considered outmoded or offensive. If in doubt, ask the person you are about to interview for their preferred description. Don't be surprised if two people with apparently similar disabilities choose different terminologies. Assumptions are always potentially dangerous and could lead to unintentional offence.

The best guide, as stated in ABC Editorial Policies, is always to put the emphasis on the person rather than the disability, and in any title always put the person first ahead of the disability. Avoid labels and group descriptions such as, 'The disabled' even if it means using a couple of extra words.

Beware of potentially offensive throwaway remarks or humour regardless of whether they are being used in a disability context. The field of disability has as many acronyms as any other specialised area - Please explain them.

**Able-Bodied:**

No longer consider acceptable

**Afflicted with:**

No longer acceptable, considered too emotive and negative. Try a simple neutral word such as 'has'.

**Arthritic:**

Person with arthritis preferred.

The same principal applies to Autistic, Diabetic, Epileptic, Haemophiliac, Paraplegic, etc.

**Carer:**

Usually only relevant or applicable when the person being 'cared for', is frail, aged and/or has severe disabilities or a serious illness. Never assume that someone accompanying a person with a disability is a carer. They could be a partner, friend, family member or junior colleague.

**Challenged:**

An overused term - someone saying they are financially challenged instead of broke - now seen more as a joke than a viable, acceptable description.

**Confined to a wheelchair:**

Wheelchairs are not confining or limiting, but liberating, providing mobility to someone who cannot walk. A person uses a wheel chair.

**Cripple:**

Seen as offensive and outmoded. Use only in a direct quote or as part of an organisation's Official title.

**Damaged:**

Not acceptable.

**The Deaf:**

This is a difficult one as it is both the title and preferred description of a powerful lobby group, as well as deliberately going against the 'no group labels' rule. However always check; some people will prefer 'Person with a hearing impairment', 'someone with a mild (or severe) hearing- loss', etc.

**Differently Abled:**

Euphemistic and not acceptable.

**Disabled:**

Instead, a person with a disability.

**Topic 4: Communication & working with groups**

**Disabled toilet/Disabled car park:**

We know what you mean but it is not literally what you said. Try being more creative in finding alternatives. Accessible toilet or car-parking for people with disabilities.

**Fits:**

Seizures is now the accepted term.

**Handicapped:**

Use only as a verb. Someone being handicapped in pursuing their chosen career by lack of access to study or work experience.

**Illness:**

Not to be used interchangeably with disability. Spina bifida and polio are illnesses which may result in a disability but a person with a disability is not automatically, inevitably ill.

**Intellectual Disability:**

A term loosely describing a group of conditions, and much preferred to retarded, mentally handicapped, etc.

**Invalid:**

Not acceptable.

**Manic Depression:**

The officially recognised term is now - bi-polar affective disorder.

**Mongolism:**

Down's syndrome is the accepted term.

**Normal:**

Not a term to use when talking about disability as it emphasises negative differences.

**Psychiatric Disability:**

Person with Schizophrenia preferred, or whatever the condition happens to be. (Be careful not to confuse psychiatric illness and intellectual disability).

**Spastic:**

No longer acceptable. Person with cerebral palsy preferred. Use only as part of an organisation's official title.

**Sufferer:**

No longer considered acceptable particularly where no illness is or ever was, involved.

**Transcribe:**

The verb used for putting a print document into Braille or the other way round. Braille is a form of writing not another language, and indeed is used in many languages, so therefore translate is not applicable.

**Unfortunate:**

Not acceptable. Nor is 'less fortunate than ourselves'.

**Vegetables:**

You eat them.

**Victims:**

Of crime, not disability.

**Wheelchair-bound:**

Not acceptable. 'Uses a wheelchair' preferred. (see confined to a wheelchair).

Tucker, C. *You Can Make a Difference A Program Maker's Guide*,

Australian Broadcasting Corporation Sydney, 2000

Additional guidelines are available online: Inclusive Language Tips, Commonwealth

Disability Strategy Fact Sheet 5, [www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/fs/fs\\_05.pdf](http://www.facs.gov.au/disability/cds/fs/fs_05.pdf)

## Reaching Agreement

With many people working together, it is important to have good decision-making practices. When people are making decisions together, it improves their sense of ownership and shares responsibility for the decisions made.

Before you begin making decisions, you need to agree on how those decisions will be made. There are several models:

Consensus (everyone must agree)

Majority (most people agree)

Negotiation (give and take until agreement is reached).

Sometimes, it is impossible to have everyone making decisions, especially where large numbers of people are involved. Usually, a delegated decision-maker will represent the interests of others. For instance, key people representing their organisations might negotiate through a committee structure.

### Case study

In the Western Rivers network, all the network members agreed early in the process that decision making should be made by consensus if possible.

Their conflict management strategy was that if a consensus could not be reached, they would carry out a negotiation process that would take into account the needs of the different interests as far as possible.

Part of decision-making is conflict management. Does everyone need to be happy? For instance, if one party does not agree, should they stay involved? Clearly, it is better to have guidelines for this before problems arise, so that disputes are resolved fairly.

One model of a negotiation process to resolve problems is outlined on the next page.

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## Activity

Think about meetings that you have been to. What made them effective?  
How was conflict managed?

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# Problem Solving for Conflict Resolution

## 5 STEPS

### 1. ACCEPT & DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Once the problem is clearly defined, the solution is possible

### 2. GATHER FACTS & INFORMATION

Be conscious of the kind of information you're considering. Solutions are only as good as the information on which they are based. There are four levels of information you may consider.

FACT = that which has actual existence

INFERENCE = a logical conclusion based on fact

SPECULATION = a theory based on conjecture rather than fact

OPINION = a belief stronger than an impression

### 3. ORGANISE INFORMATION

It is important to identify and agree upon the criteria for an acceptable solution.

- What do you want to achieve?
- What must you reserve or maintain?
- What must you seek to avoid?
- Which has more priority?

### 4. DEVELOP ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Develop as many good options as possible; most problems have more than one solution. Test your options against your criteria. Also consider:

- Risk involved
- Practicalities
- Permanency of solution
- Costs and effort
- Timing

Arrive at the best decision and choose a fall back position.

### 5. TAKE ACTION & MONITOR EFFECTIVENESS

Be prepared to monitor and adjust your plan of action – circumstances frequently change and accordingly so might your problem solving strategies.

Adapted from Problem Solving: 5 Steps. An easy tool for reaching solutions.  
*New Community Artist Community Arts Network.*

## Topic 5: Representing your organisation

It is essential when networking that you promote a positive image of your organisation at every opportunity. In this topic we will consider some basic skills and tools that can assist you with representing your organisation.

### Introducing your organisation

In any networking situation, it is important that you are able to introduce your organisation confidently. In the Fundraising module of this workshop series, you will explore how to make a full presentation to potential sponsors, including how to construct a detailed statement to describe your project. In this topic we will just look briefly at the first stage of that process - that is constructing a statement to introduce your organisation.

#### Key information

There are key pieces of information that are important when first introducing yourself and your organisation:

- the **name** of your organisation
- your **core business** or activity
- **your role** within the organisation
- the location or **region** in which you operate.

What information you might want to give will be determined by

- your purpose in communicating,
- which other people are involved,
- what organisations they represent.

This could include:

- your organisation's **vision statement** - providing an overview of the organisation and where you are heading
- a brief summary of current or **proposed activities**
- stating your **networking purpose**
- any known **connection points** - this can help target your networking relationship immediately.

#### Case study

At the first meeting of the new network in the Western Rivers Region, many of the people already knew each other. However some of the people attending were new to the region, so each person was asked to introduce themselves.

Margaret stated that the organisation she represents is the Parrakilla Area School. The school has students from Reception to Year 10 most of whom live on small farms and wineries in the area. Margaret is the art teacher.

The school has a commitment to Enterprise Education approaches and is intending to produce a 'boutique' olive oil.

Margaret will be working with the students to design labels, and also develop an information display which would promote the region's agricultural industry and the school's enterprise.



## Being prepared

Preparing a statement to introduce your organisation doesn't mean you have to read it out word-perfect each time you participate in a meeting. However, constructing a statement in advance does help you consider the important things to say and how to say it concisely.

Having this information summarised in front of you can be very useful when making phone calls to people for the first time. This statement can also form the basis of pamphlets, information sheets, grant applications or sponsorship proposals, and to introduce stories or articles for your local paper.

### Exercise 4:

#### Describing your organisation –

(turn to page 38)

Prepare a statement that introduces your organisation to the networks you participate in. Include some of the following points:

- the name of your organisation
- your core business or activity
- your role within the organisation
- the location or region in which you operate
- your organisation's vision statement
- a brief summary of current or proposed activities
- your networking purpose
- any known connection points



## Business cards

Another very important tool when representing your organisation is the business card.

Seek out and act upon every opportunity to present your business card. It is a very convenient way of exchanging details with other people, and you can use the back of the card for additional notes. Your card can prompt people to ask for more information and will act as a reminder after the meeting.

In the marketing module of this workshop series you will look at a range of marketing tools in more depth, including business cards. In this topic we will briefly examine the main points to consider when designing your card.

A good business card:

- has an attention grabbing logo that is unique to your organisation
- clearly defines your organisation
- promotes a positive image
- creates an uncluttered impression
- contains all essential information, but is not filled with non-essential information
- contains information that is up to date.

You may decide to engage a professional graphic designer. You can also design your own using a simple design program on your computer. Whichever you choose, you will need to decide on the information you wish to include and consider what sort of image that you want to promote.

Information you may consider including on your card:

- the name of your organisation
- your core business
- your name and role (if relevant)
- contact details including street address (also postal address if different), telephone numbers, email address
- vision statement, or other identifying phrase
- opening times



**Parrakilla Area School**  
**15 Valley Road, Parrakilla SA 7890**

*Margaret Smith*  
*Art Teacher*

Tel: (66) 248 2215  
Email: msmith@pas.com

*Preparing tomorrow's citizens*

### Exercise 5:

#### Business card –

Prepare the information you will need for a business card when you are networking.

(turn to page 39)



**Topic 5: Representing your organisation****Checklist for promoting a positive image of your organisation**

Use this check list to help you promote a positive image of your organisation.

**Communicating with the Public**

Ask the following questions when determining the image you want to project:

- Are you clear what your organisation stands for?
- Do you have a logo/slogan?
  - does it appear on publications, leaflets, transport, buildings?
  - is it contradicted in any way by employee attitudes to customers, quality of service, service delivery or what managers say or do?
- Does your organisation project positive messages to the public?

Ask the following questions when planning, producing and monitoring communications:

- Does your organisation have a policy on providing information to the community?
- Is there a budget for providing publicity and information?
- Do you regularly monitor and review all your different communications with the public?
- Is the target audience always involved in the design of any communication?
- Are materials supplied in languages other than English?
- Do they need to be?
- Do you test whether your communications are understood and effective?
- Are any of your key people trained in using the media?
- Is information defined and designed with the needs of different audiences in mind?
- Does your organisation find out what your audience or customer expectations are?

Information provided to your audience or customers could include:

- What activity, service or experience they can expect
- Opening times, dates and places where events or exhibitions will be held
- How to make suggestions

Additional information which could be available to the wider community includes:

- Policies of your organisation and the reasons for them
  - How to contact your organisation
  - How to become involved in your organisation
  - When and where issues are discussed – do you have regular meetings?
- (Many of these issues are related to marketing. Some of them will be covered in more detail in the marketing workshop in this program.)

Adapted from Maywald, S. *Consulting with your community*.

Local Government Community Services Association of South Australia, 1989.

## Find out more...

### Useful Sources of Information:

- Your local government or council body may have statistics on demographics or other local area profiles.
- Local networking agencies, such as community centres or local government service agencies may have lists of local groups, organisations and clubs, or a directory of cultural organisations.
- The Australian Bureau of Statistics [www.statistics.gov.au](http://www.statistics.gov.au)
- One Melbourne Story Database <http://one.melbourne.vic.gov.au>  
(An interesting collection of stories written by Victorian volunteers and reflecting on aspects of 'community').
- Visit Disability in the Arts, Disadvantage in the Arts Australia on [www.dadaanat.net.au](http://www.dadaanat.net.au) for tips on making your arts and cultural services accessible to those with disabilities.
- Information on interpreting and translation is available at the front of your local telephone directory.
- The Australia Council Arts Marketing website [www.fuel4arts.com](http://www.fuel4arts.com) is dedicated to ideas and discussion around marketing in the arts and cultural sectors.
- Talk to community-based networks in your area to find out how they operate – doing this IS networking!
- Talk to local service providers about joint projects in which they have been involved in.
- Visit the Communication Initiative website [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com) for an inspiring range of initiatives focussing on communication and development and browse for working models of partnerships in action.
- Visit the Western Australian Department of Sport and Recreation site at [www.msr.wa.gov.au](http://www.msr.wa.gov.au) and follow the links to the 'How To' guides for a range of excellent practical information on project planning, marketing and event management.

# ASSESSMENT TEMPLATES

## Exercise 1: Local networks

<b>Network member</b>	<b>Connection points</b>	<b>Type of relationship</b>
<p><b><i>Example</i></b>                      Local council</p>	<p>Both have an interest in the cultural development of the local community</p>	<p>Formal relationship                      Project based</p>
<p><b><i>Example</i></b>                      Country Women's Association</p>	<p>Many of the volunteers in your organisation are also members of CWA.                      Both have an interest in community activities.</p>	<p>Informal relationship                      On-going</p>

## Exercise 2: Networking purpose

Network member	Your organisation's purpose for networking	Network member's purpose for networking
<p><b><i>Example</i></b> Local council</p>	<p>Resources for your project</p>	<p>Seeking appropriate projects to fund to achieve community development outcomes</p>
<p><b><i>Example</i></b> Country Women's Association</p>	<p>Share resources – CWA arranges flowers for exhibition opening Promotion of events in CWA newsletter</p>	<p>Share resources – CWA borrows your trestle tables for fetes etc. Community involvement</p>

## Exercise 3: Meeting agenda

Name of organisation or group -----

Meeting name -----  
(eg. Board meeting, Funding Committee meeting)

Venue -----

Date of meeting ----- Time of meeting -----

### **AGENDA**

1. Minutes of last meeting
  
2. Business arising  
(Any actions agreed at the last meeting that require follow up and on-going tasks that need to be updated.)
  - 2.1.
  - 2.2.
  - 2.3.
  - 2.4.
  
3. Standing items  
(These agenda items are matters that are discussed every time you meet and can include incoming mail, network member reports, finances, safety etc.)
  - 3.1.
  - 3.2.
  - 3.3.
  - 3.4.
  
4. Other business (New items of business to be raised.)
  - 4.1.
  - 4.2.
  - 4.3.
  - 4.4.

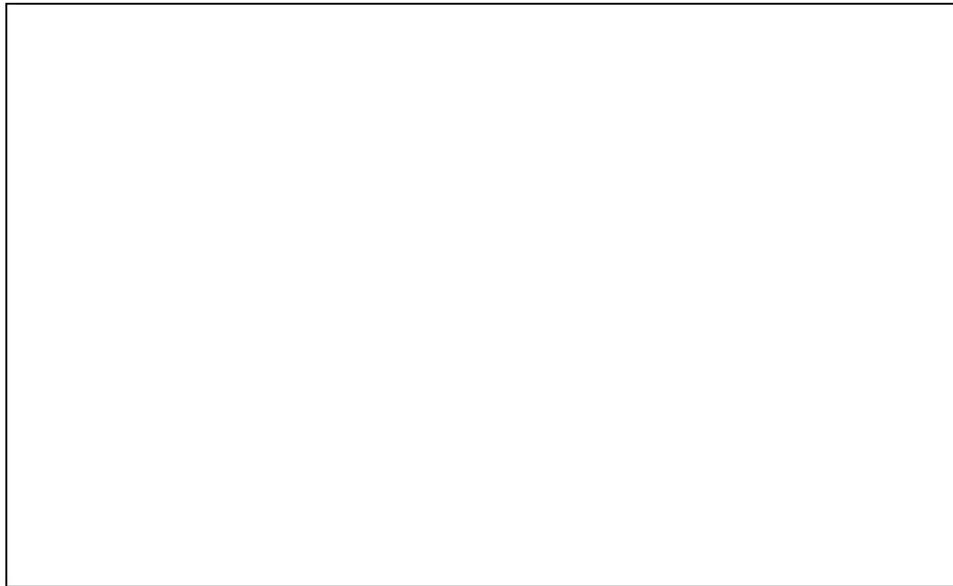
## Exercise 4: Describing your organisation

<b>The name of your organisation</b>
<b>Your core business or activity</b>
<b>Your role within the organisation</b>
<b>The location or region in which you operate</b>
<b>Your organisation's vision statement</b>
<b>A brief summary of current or proposed activities</b>
<b>Your networking purpose</b>
<b>Any known connection points</b>

## Exercise 5: Business card

Draft a business Card incorporating:

- the name of your organisation
- your core business
- your name and role (if relevant)
- contact details including:
  - ✓ street address,
  - ✓ postal address (if different),
  - ✓ telephone numbers,
  - ✓ email address
- vision statement, or other identifying phrase (optional)
- opening times



Facilitator's name and position \_\_\_\_\_

Facilitator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Pathways to a Formal Qualification

As evidence of your satisfactory achievement in the **Network within Communities** workshop, you will receive a statement of Attainment which will count towards the **Course in Creative Volunteering**, a nationally recognised short course for volunteers.

### Pursuing a formal vocational qualification

This workshop has been developed in line with the nationally recognised Unit of Competency: **CHCNET2A Maintain effective networks**

This workbook with the completed, signed exercises can be presented to a Registered Training Organisation as part of your supporting evidence for Skills Recognition. (Skills Recognition is also known as Recognition of Prior Learning or RPL.)

### Putting together a portfolio of evidence

To assist you with compiling a relevant portfolio, the following information is provided. *However you must check this with the training organisation.*

To be assessed as competent for **CHCNET2A Maintain effective networks** you will need to demonstrate your ability to participate in both formal and informal networks, as an individual and as a representative of your organisation.

The assessor will look for **evidence** of your communication skills, and specifically that you are able to:

- clarify meaning
- maintain interaction
- establish and maintain (professional) relationships
- explore issues
- problem solve
- elicit and give factual information and opinions

The types of evidence you can present would usually include:

- Certificates from relevant education or training courses
- Work products such as reports, minutes of meetings, planning documents
- Third Party reports such as a reference (from an appropriately qualified person) that outlines the skills, qualities and experience you possess *that are relevant to your application*

**NOTE:** It is important that you discuss the requirements for Skills Recognition with an assessor from the training organisation.