

# Rules for Associations

## Steps to Stay Current

Rules (or Constitutions) are important to govern how an incorporated association runs. Organisations evolve and change the way they operate over time, but often the Rules are not updated to reflect these changes.

Top issues are often around meeting timing, achieving quorums, membership categories, end of financial year date, electronic banking and use of technology in meetings. Volunteers may be overwhelmed with interpreting the legal speak in Rules or have struggle with the process of updating and adopting changes and lodging with the Office of Fair Trading (Queensland).

Liz Todd at Plan for NRM has over 17 years' experience working with not for profit organisations. To be effective, organisations need to have good governance procedures and decision making in place. Having up to date and relevant Rules helps associations to achieve accountability and the confidence of members, as well as meet legal obligations.

Here are my Five Top Steps to help organisations update their Rules.

- 1 Get the latest Model Rules for Associations.** Simply google 'Rules for Associations Queensland' and head to Queensland Government link. Download the Model Rules as a Microsoft Word document. These latest rules will have updates about how an association can operate and are much simpler than past versions. These are the default legal Rules in situations that your Rules do not cover.
- 2 Grab two highlighter pens.** On a printed copy of your existing Rules, in one colour highlight all the sections that are still current and important. In another colour, highlight all the sections that have changed or no longer relevant.
- 3 Modify the Model Rules.** Step through each section of the Model Rules and in track changes insert the relevant information relating to your association. Mark as draft.
- 4 Consultation and adoption of Rules.** Circulate the new draft Rules to members for review and comment. Once finalised, you must pass a special resolution at a general meeting to adopt the new Rules. Within 3 months of passing the resolution, the secretary must complete and lodge a rule amendment form and pay the fee.
- 5 Lodge amendments.** On the same website as the Model Rules, at the 'Changing the rules' section there is a form 'Download the rule amendment form' pdf. In part 1, you are adopting a complete set of own/model rules (attach copy) and complete Appendix A referring to all the changes made. Submit and pay.