

Strategic Planning

Setting a Clear Direction

Organisations are competing for volunteer time, resources and effort for worthy community causes. But some seem to struggle to achieve their goals, offer meaningful experiences and attract the resources they need, making it hard to retain support. One of the main reasons is that they are not clear about what they want to achieve and why it is important.

The process of strategic planning will often resolve the chaos within a committee and direction of the organisation. It aims to bring everyone on to the same page. Stepping people through the decision-making process allows for an understanding of individual values and for group decisions to be made collaboratively.

The purpose of a strategic plan is to establish the 'why' and the 'what' (not the how).

- Agreeing on the purpose – why does the group exist and what are its objectives?
- Agreeing on what is important – what are the shared values?
- Agreeing on what the group wants to achieve – setting goals for the group.
- Documenting decisions – having a point of reference.
- Communicating decisions – being consistent and confident.

There are five key components to a strategic plan.

- 1 Vision.** A vision sets the direction of the group and all other decisions should align with that direction. There are four parts to a vision: What does your group do? Why is it unique or different? What is the end point? Make it relatable.
- 2 Values.** Before reaching group decisions, the individual reasons why people are involved should be acknowledged. What do they hope to gain and what will they contribute? Why do they want to be involved and why is the organisation important to them? Then, establish shared values and what is important to the organisation.
- 3 Purpose.** The purpose of the organisation needs to be clearly established and articulated. What impact does it intend to make? What is the shared purpose? What is the importance of the organisation and its role?
- 4 Goals.** Assess the current situation, what is working well and identify areas that need to be improved or changed. Visualise and describe what the future looks like, be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.
- 5 Strategies.** What are the underlying impacts or influencing factors relating to the current situation? What is the best bet approach to achieve the future goals.