

Record Keeping and Self Help Groups

While there is no legal responsibility for some groups to record minutes of meetings, it is still a very good idea to do so.

A record of a meeting has many benefits:

- It is an historical record of the group
- Reminds people about decisions that have been made
- Can be used to update new members or returning members
- Most importantly, records prevent disagreements down the track

There is no need to make the process of record keeping a strictly formal one. If the group prefers not to be too structured, and does not have designated executive positions such as secretary, treasurer etc this is quite acceptable.

A simple exercise book, brought along to each meeting, and used by any member to take some basic notes, can be a helpful record of the meeting.

The content of the records, or minutes, can vary depending on the needs of the group.

Basic records for most groups should include:

- Name of group
- Date and time of meeting
- Names of those present, and any apologies
- Decisions of any votes taken
- Brief details of topics discussed
- Correspondence, reports or documents introduced to meeting
- Future actions to be taken, who is to take them and the timeframe
- The time the meeting ended
- Signature of the record taker and a witness

There is no need to record lengthy details, but it is helpful to record sufficient information so that the minutes make sense later on.

Groups with legal accountabilities need to adhere to the requisites of the legal entities which govern them eg Incorporated Associations in Queensland need to meet the requirements of the Queensland Incorporated Associations Act.

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