



How to be an Efficient Secretary

Role of the Secretary

The basic function of the Secretary is to keep the records of the organisation (apart from financial records) and to deal with correspondence.

This includes:

- Keeping records of members including those on the Committee in order to show who is entitled to vote and to receive votes
- Calling and giving notice of meetings as required by the Constitution
- Ensuring that any papers required are prepared and circulated prior to the meeting
- Minuting the meetings
- Taking responsibility for seeing that letters are written and replied to and that correspondence is available for inspection
- Preparing agendas if required. This is sometimes a function carried out by the Chairperson and Secretary
- Ensuring that adequate written records and written or oral reports are available for the incoming Secretary so that they can maintain proper continuity

MINUTES

Provide a history of the organisation. They are a written reminder of the decisions reached. They are an important tool which can be used for planning, decision making, conflict resolution and training. By having such a record it is easy to keep track of what was actually decided.

They are a record of the meeting and the decisions that were made as per the agenda.

They include:

- Who met
- Where and when the meeting was held
- What was discussed
- What was decided
- Who agreed to do what

INFORMATION SHEET

It is best to write up the minutes as soon as possible while the process is still clear in your mind and send them to the members quickly so that those people responsible for following up on items have a record of this. If you are taking the minutes and get left behind ask the Chair to hold up the proceedings until you have noted the information. Read back what you have written and check that it is correct. It is important to do this straightaway otherwise there may be conflicting opinions as to what was agreed.

What is included in the minutes

- Information as per the agenda with the same numbering
- An indication of the type of meeting
- Date, place and time the meeting started and finished
- Those present (though if a large meeting the number present can be used but the name of the chair must be included)
- Apologies from those unable to attend
- Reference to previous minutes (minutes of meeting held on.....) It should be noted that they are correct and note any amendments or business arising from them. The original minutes cannot be altered but if alterations are required they should be noted in the new minutes
- When a report is presented it should be noted

Minutes are a legal document, recognisable in a court of law. They are a form of contract between the participants at the meeting. Therefore a sufficient number of the participants of the meeting must see and agree that the minutes are a true and accurate record of events, and a representative of the meeting must sign in front of a witnesses testifying that it is true record.

Storage of Minutes

The minutes must be

- Stored securely in a way that ensures that they are difficult to lose, remove or replace
- Stored only with other minutes of the same type of meetings
- Filed consecutively
- Indexed so that particular meetings can be easily located
- Indexed so that all decisions relating to a particular issue are easily located including policy and procedure changes

ConnectGroups Contact Details:

Telephone: (08) 9228 4488 **Rural Freecall:** 1800 195 575

Email: info@connectgroups.org.au

Web Site: www.connectgroups.org.au

Postal Address: PO Box 8140 Perth Business Centre WA 6849

Actual Address: 335-337 Pier Street EAST PERTH WA 6004

ConnectGroups Services:

New and Existing Support Group Development, Telephone Information Line, Information Forums, Facilities and Equipment Hire
On-line Directory of Support Groups and Community Organisations, E-News