

Notes made from Workshop

Managing Conflict in Community Groups

28 July and 11 August 2020, @ Baringa Community Centre

- Developing processes in organisations to encourage cooperative relationships
- Leadership and committee roles in resolving disagreements
- Ways to manage conflict in your organisation by using people’s differences to build stronger groups

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What does conflict feel like?	What does the opposite of conflict feel like?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being outside the group • Compromised and exhausting • Integrity disrupted • Inconvenient • Takes energy away from goals / vision / mission and fun • Feels painful • Like stress • Undercurrents • Whispers • Tantrums • Intimidation • Alliances • Withdrawal • Abuse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling supported • Feeling connected • Feeling loved • Being valued • There is clarity about how it / we fit/s • Synergy between governance and operations • Plan and attention are evident • Working together • Feeling safe

Difference between Discussion Vs Conflict	
Discussion	Conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect • Openness • Listening • I / We 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disrespect • Closed • Withdrawal • Them / They

Conflict in community groups sometimes occurs because of;

- Authority ‘pathways’ or lines of authority are not clear. Often the pathways to go about doing the groups business are well laid out but authority or responsibility isn’t as straightforward.
- Volunteers and members level of “engagement” / motivation / passion, or put another way there are too many cooks in the kitchen
- Change: As a result of adjusting or not adjusting to change
- Communication is not clear or not understood
- Conflict emerges between volunteer and members of the public through the course of business and volunteers don’t feel supported or have sufficient debriefing available to them.
- Tensions arise between processes and “how we do it” Vs. actions and actually going about doing it.

Some ways to avoid or address conflict;

- Develop clear policies and processes and roles (that are agreed and understood by everyone who is involved in those roles)
- Be curious about why this happening
- The Committee is the custodians of the values, goals and mission of the organisation, it’s important to reflect this in the activities of the committee
- Ask the questions
 - what would it take to progress this matter?
 - What would you like to change?
 - what is it about the process that you / we need to change?

Questions for consideration

- Q. Even with the best processes is it reasonable for everyone to get everything they want all of the time in organisations?
- Q. Conflict can be viewed across a range of responses. At one end is the “can we live with it?”, at the other side there is “this has to change?”.
- Q. Conflict can be useful in a number of ways; one is that it may help us understand a discrete issue that affects our organisation.
- Q. It simply isn’t possible to work with the hope of eradicating all conflict in groups – it’s really about managing it as a natural part of the team.

See the link below for law changes for incorporated associations

In particular note law changes that started on assent 22 June 2020 relating **to the use of communications technology**, “If an incorporated association uses technology such as video conferencing to hold its general meetings, the provision of using this technology no longer needs to be stated in its rules.”

Also as raised in the workshop -

Law changes expected by 30 June 2022, **Internal grievance procedure in place**. Please note the below law changes have not commenced. They are expected to commence by 30 June 2022.

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/laws-regulated-industries-and-accountability/queensland-laws-and-regulations/associations-charities-and-non-for-profits/incorporated-associations/new-laws>

Dispute Resolution

Also in Qld, **Dispute Resolution Centres** offer mediation to community groups with managing conflict that is not able to be resolved by two parties – see below link

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/legal-mediation-and-justice-of-the-peace/settling-disputes-out-of-court/dispute-resolution-centres/view?title=South%20Queensland%20Dispute%20Resolution%20Centre&id=6>