Step-by-step to starting a new club

A guide for sport and recreation clubs and associations in Western Australia.
Frequently asked questions

Do we have to have a written constitution?
No. But it is more businesslike and it does ensure that you define your objectives and you can become incorporated.

How do we write a constitution?
Booklet 12 of this Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) series, ‘Establishing your club constitution and becoming incorporated’, provides you with a step-by-step guide to establishing your constitution.

Further information can be found at www.commerce.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Department of Commerce on 1300 30 40 74.

In any case, bear these points in mind:

• Keep it simple and short.
• Make it flexible (by allowing for by-laws).
• State your objectives clearly.
• Have a wind-up clause (be definite about the distribution of assets should your organisation lapse).

Do we have to incorporate?
No. But it can protect individual members in certain situations and give your organisation the right to sign contracts, lease premises, operate bank accounts and so on.

Booklet 12 of this series, ‘Establishing your club constitution and becoming incorporated’, provides you with a step-by-step guide to establishing your constitution. Further information and application forms can be found at www.commerce.wa.gov.au or by contacting the Department of Commerce on 1300 30 40 74.

What about office bearers?

• You should have a president, chairperson or someone in charge.
• Your organisation should have a secretary to deal with administration.
• If you handle money, you must have a treasurer. Small clubs or groups often combine the duties of the secretary and treasurer.
• It is useful to have a deputy to chair meetings when the president is absent.

How big a committee is required for the proper working of the organisation?
Keep it as small as possible! Work out the main areas of responsibility, e.g. fundraising, social – then determine the size of the committee. Recruit a qualified member for special projects. Don’t have people on a committee just to make up numbers.

Do we need an accountant for treasurer?
No. Small organisation accounts are not complicated, but an effective system right at the start is important.

Ask someone who knows how to set up a simple system to write down the steps for reference.

How do we register our members?
Many organisations use a spreadsheet or database on a home computer to maintain and update membership details. If you use this system, don’t forget to back up regularly.

Whatever registration system you use, make sure it is a simple and effective one.

How do we get sponsors?
Do you need them? If you achieve a sponsor’s funds or goods, it is going to cost you time and effort to make their support worthwhile. It is better to get your organisation running efficiently and find sponsors only for specific projects.
Can we get financial assistance to set up the club or group?
There are a variety of grants available to community sport and recreation clubs.

Do we have to have a Post Office Box for mail?
No, but it is most useful and worth the money. Office bearers tend to change quickly in clubs or groups.

Do we need contact with our local government council?
Yes. Establish a communication link. Many local authorities may be able to help you with information and resources.

Is personal advice available?
DSR has regional officers with expertise in the delivery of sport and recreation including various aspects of running clubs/groups, junior sport, seniors, Indigenous sport, coaching, officiating and volunteers.

Do we tell our state association of our activities?
In some cases, it is obligatory. In any case, it is always desirable.

Step-by-step to starting your club
1. Make sure there is going to be an ongoing need for the club or group (i.e. what are the aims of the organisation?).
2. Make sure you have a base for your activities.
3. Draft a constitution.
4. Decide whether to become incorporated.
5. Design an effective registration system.
6. Draw up a budget.
7. Make copies of your constitution and budget.
8. Call your prospective members together to:
   • examine the constitution and budget; and
   • get agreement on your objectives.
9. Ask members to consider standing for office.
10. You may have to have a second get-together to:
    • agree on the constitution and costs;
    • enrol members (after payment of a nominal fee); and
    • elect office bearers.
Ten hints

1. Draw up a club or group register of members’ and volunteers’ names, addresses, ages, occupations and other relevant information.

2. Plan for the future. Keep records from the outset; they provide a valuable source of historical data.

3. Plan your budgets for the year.

4. Keep your members informed by a club or group newsletter. Organise a permanent Post Office Box. Identify your club’s or group’s potential members and involve them in your activities.

5. Hold regular, interesting meetings in which decisions are made! Good meetings keep clubs or groups alive (see Booklet 7 of this series, ‘Take the ‘in’ out of ineffective – 10 steps to running successful meetings’).

6. Spread the workload. Members will be more committed if their talents are used and it will reduce stress on the elected representatives.

7. Develop a club uniform or organisation insignia, if appropriate.

8. Involve families and have a social aspect to your club or group.

9. Remember – take time to plan in detail with your members.

10. If your organisation is a sports club or group, think about:
    - introducing junior, men’s, women’s, mixed and veteran teams;
    - developing a coaching committee;
    - using DSR’s coaching courses;
    - making sure members know the rules; and
    - giving everyone a turn at umpiring.

Good luck!
Other resources

This resource is part of the Club Development Officer Scheme, which provides assistance to Western Australian sport and recreation clubs and organisations to become better managed, more sustainable and to provide good quality services to members and participants.

Other resources in the series include:

1. Step-by-step to starting a new club
2. Planning for your club – The future is in your hands
3. Taking the lead! A guide for club presidents
4. The key to efficiency – The club secretary
5. Show me the money – A guide for the club treasurer
6. Effective club meetings – A guide for the chairperson
7. Take the ‘in’ out of ineffective – 10 steps to running successful meetings
8. Lighten the load and delegate – Help for the overworked committee member
9. You have the answers – Solving club problems
10. Marketing and promoting your club
11. Sponsorship – Seeking and servicing a sponsor
12. Establishing your club constitution and becoming incorporated
13. Risky business – A club guide to risk management
14. Clubs’ guide to volunteer management
15. Member protection for clubs
16. How to be more inclusive of people from diverse backgrounds
17. Passport into schools – Linking sports with schools
18. Youth sport – Junior sport policy
19. Long-term involvement – Junior sport policy
20. Getting young people involved – Junior sport policy
21. Physical growth and maturation – Junior sport policy
22. Sport pathways – Junior sport policy
23. Forming links – Junior sport policy
24. People making it happen – Junior sport policy
25. Quality coaching – Junior sport policy
26. Making sport safe – Junior sport policy
27. The law and sport – Junior sport policy
28. Top 20 tips for officials
29. Top 20 tips for successful coaching

You will find the full series of the booklets on the Department of Sport and Recreation’s ClubsOnline website: www.dsr.wa.gov.au/clubsonline
ClubsOnline

ClubsOnline www.dsr.wa.gov.au/clubsonline is the place for sport and recreation clubs in Western Australia to communicate with other clubs, the Department of Sport and Recreation and Club Development Officers. It provides clubs with an opportunity to share ideas and access useful club-related resources.

Some of the resources you will find on ClubsOnline include:

- Find a Club, which helps you search for and contact clubs in your area.
- Free club website. Simply register with Find a Club and your club will be eligible for its own simple-to-build website.
- Club self assessment tool.
- Volunteers exchange to browse for ‘clubs seeking volunteers’ or post your own notice under ‘volunteers seeking clubs’.
- Find my Club Development Officer. The Club Development Officer Scheme is a partnership with local governments across Western Australia to build the capacity of community-based clubs. A statewide network of Club Development Officers assists, supports and develops community based sport and recreation clubs through education, facilitation and communication.
- Clubhouse resources including booklets, useful documents to download and a selection of podcasts.
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