

# Understanding your constitution

All Neighbourhood Houses must be an incorporated association under Tasmanian law to be able to receive government funding.

## YOUR CONSTITUTION

Your constitution is a legally binding document and it is important for the Board to work to the rules it sets out for your House. It should contain the essential rules only. Policies are used to provide other rules for the House.

The House should have copies of the Constitution available to give to new House members, Board members, stakeholders, and anyone else who's interested. The constitution is not a state secret so share it! Members should know the rules. They have the right to inspect and ask for a copy of the rules.



**The constitution outlines how your House and its members should operate. It contains information such as:**

- aims and purpose of the House
- membership process
- rights and responsibilities of members and office bearers
- how the office-bearers and members of the Board are elected or appointed
- how meetings are convened and conducted
- dissolution process



## All incorporated associations must by law have a constitution.

### An incorporated association can:

- operate regardless of changes to its membership
- enter into contracts
- apply for government grants
- accept gifts and donations

If the constitution is no longer a useful working document then changes can be made.

The procedures for changing your Constitution will be set out in the Constitution.

### Checklist for the Board about their Constitution

- Can members understand it?
- Can the rules be followed?
- Is it up to date?
- Is it consistent with the law?
- Is it fit for purpose?

Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading provides a template Constitution, known as the **Model Rules**. Your House can either adopt or amend the Model Rules to suit.

