



Neighbourhood Houses Tasmania Inc

Delegation of Authority

A critical aspect of any Neighbourhood House structure is the delegation of authority (who can make decisions about what) from the Management Committee to the Co-ordinator and staff. Generally, the Management Committee delegates the day to day House management responsibilities and authority to the House Co-ordinator, who in turn delegates responsibilities and authority to House staff or volunteers for day to day and project tasks.

As a general principle, the Co-ordinator manages and directs staff, not the Management Committee. For these reasons it is important that lines of delegation are made very clear and are then respected, so that people are not trying to operate with multiple “bosses”. The delegation of authority needs to spell out clearly whether or not the Co-ordinator and staff have the power to:

- Make decisions in regard to certain matters (Decide exactly what the Committee wishes to be consulted about before decisions are made).
- Prepare recommendations to Committee on certain matters (Are there areas or issues that only the Committee can deal with?).
- Spend or commit money up to a certain amount (The Co-ordinator may be given authority to purchase goods up to an amount approved by Committee, without seeking specific approval each time).
- Maintain records of and report to the Committee on any aspect of the House’s affairs, activities or interests. (Are there issues or areas about which the Committee would like to receive reports at each meeting? Are there any areas or issues where the Committee would prefer that staff do not have a say?).
- Give instructions.
- Delegate authority to others.
- Act on behalf of the Committee (for example, answer Committee correspondence, speak on behalf of the Committee).

Having clear and up-to-date position descriptions for each staff member is the first step in setting clear lines of delegation. Other considerations include:

- Give a thorough briefing when handing over tasks
- Delegate both responsibility and the authority needed to carry out tasks
- Establish firm and realistic timelines
- Delegate, where possible, the entire task to one person
- Offer guidance and feedback but respect the delegated authority

Delegation of authority chart

