

Quick Guide to being a Secretary

Often thought of as just taking care of the minutes, the role of Secretary means a lot more! This quick guide has been developed to provide you with a position overview of the Secretary role, including the skills and attributes that will be useful to you, and the external resources you will find helpful.

Not all organisational governance groups require a Treasurer – check your constitution and your legal structure as an organisation to determine whether this is a role you require, and the parameters around the role. Check the relevant legislation which will specify the prerequisite roles required to be appointed – for example, President, Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

Secretary

How you relate to the rest of the governing group

The Secretary is an essential position for organisations that are Incorporated or operating as a company. They are responsible for maintaining all official records and correspondence on behalf of the Board or Management Committee, and for recording all business decisions (in the minutes).

Together, the Chair and the Secretary set the meeting agenda. The Secretary's responsibility is accurate and thorough record keeping.

Valuable attributes

- Eye for detail
- Integrity
- Reliable
- Thorough understanding of probity and due diligence
- Clear articulation
- Analysis of information
- Connection to community

Useful skills you can bring to the role

- Excellent organisational skills (documents to be distributed prior to meetings)
- Computing skills, including Microsoft Suite
- Document formatting
- Proactive in seeking clarification

Documents to become familiar with

- Constitution
- Business Plans, Strategic Plan
- Service Agreements and funding specifications
- Policies
- Most recent audit report
- Annual report

Documents you may be responsible for establishing and/or maintaining

- Agendas and Minutes and associated meeting materials
- Coordinate and contribute to the annual report
- Ensuring actions are recorded and reviewed
- Office of Fair Trading return (joint responsibility with Secretary or Chair)
- ACNC annual return, if applicable (joint responsibility with Secretary or Chair)
- Board/Committee meeting calendar
- Monitoring and compliance calendar

What you need to know about compliance

- Service agreements will detail the quality and compliance requirements associated with the funding received. It is important to be familiar with these.
- Ensure the true and correct documents are signed, distributed and safely stored
- Facilitating Committee/Board access to important organisation documents

Useful resources

- [Community Door](#)
- [QCOSS' governance templates](#)
- Your sector colleagues and peers – networking with other Secretaries
- Professional development, such as the programs offered by the [Australian Indigenous Governance Institute](#), the [Australian Institute of Company Directors](#), [Institute of Community Directors](#) and other governance focused organisations
- Computing focused professional development

Quick Tips

- The Secretary will often work closely with the organisation's operational leader (eg: Manager) to ensure documents are distributed or shared prior to meetings.

This information has been provided for community services in Queensland as a guide to support governance. All organisations should check relevant legislation and seek independent advice for clarification.

QCOSS thanks Greater Whitsunday Communities for their contribution to this work.
