

What is meant by a 'Group or Organisational profile'?

A profile is a written description that defines and describes the core work and interests of a group or organisation.

Having a written profile is one way of informing the public about the activities and interests of your group or organisation. In many instances, people in the community are aware that groups and organisations exist, but they often don't know what they do or how they operate. A profile that is clear, easily read and well written, will assist your group or organisation to promote what it is you are there to do in the community. This profile can be included in a marketing (see *information sheet*) and/or volunteer recruitment strategy (see *information sheet*).

What are the benefits of having a written organisational Profile?

Putting effort into profiling your organisation might seem like a luxury when you're strapped for time and resources; however, it is an important investment in shoring up the long term viability of your group, club, school or service. The process also provides an opportunity to reflect on and appreciate its achievements by the group as well as plan for the future.

Other benefits of a written profile may include any or all of the following:

- Informing the public of your existence: where your group or organisation is and what you do.
- Helping prospective volunteers who might have an interest in your activities become involved or become members.
- Informing other organisations and individuals how you fit into the community and what kinds of role you have in the community.
- Builds the credibility and legitimacy of your group or organisation with the general public.

- Informing funding agencies of your main mission and purposes.

A key reason for a written profile is that your volunteers will fully comprehend what your group or organisation does and why it exists, so they can tell others about what you do. This is because a written profile makes it "easy" for volunteers to know and pass on this information. This should help to increase your group's ability to recruit and retain volunteers.

What Information should be included in a Profile?

A profile should be kept to about one page and no more than two pages long. Plan what you will use your profile for, how you will present the information and how you will distribute it as this will help determine the look and tone of the final document.

The following question ideas will guide your group in developing your profile:

- What is the name of your group or organisation.
- Who is/are the main contact person/s? What is your group's phone number? Where do you meet and/or work from?
- What is your Mission Statement? What are your goals and objectives? *(If your group or organisation doesn't have a Mission Statement this could be a good opportunity to develop one. A Mission Statement is a one or two sentence summary of your main purpose.)*
- What do you do and how does this help the community?
- How many people are involved or benefit from your activities?
- Can you write a short summary of your group's history? When and why did your organisation start?
- Can you highlight one or two recent achievements?

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- What do you plan to do in the future?
- What is your organisation's legal status? For example are you incorporated or auspiced by another agency etc.? (See *information sheet*).
- What roles can people play in your organisation? Eg: volunteers for events or working bees, members for a management committee or for a project working group, maintaining office equipment, running street stalls or raffles etc.
- Are there particular times of the year or events for which you need extra help?
- Does your organisation have members? Who can join? For example, does your group or organisation invite anyone who is interested, or does your group or organisation have interest's specific to certain age groups such as youth, elderly, women or men only, people with a particular type of disability etc?
- Is there a membership cost? If so, how much and how can people join?
- What's in it for members and/or volunteers? What are the benefits of participating in your organisation eg: having fun, meeting people, feeling good about making a valued contribution, learning new skills, receiving training?
- How are decisions made in your organisation?
- What other community groups, institutions, businesses, networks or government agencies does your organisation work with or receive support from?
- Is your organisation a member of a peak body or a branch of a larger body?
- Can information about your group or organisation be found online? What social media tools does your group utilise to connect with and engage people?

Once you have put the profile together your organisation can use it in many different ways. It can be turned into a brochure or a flyer which can be distributed to other organisations. It can be used as a Media Release by sending it to a local newspaper, radio station. It can be incorporated into an Information Sheet or be included in a community newsletter. A good profile will be invaluable for supporting funding submissions. They are also useful for developing business plans or presenting proposals to financial institutions. A good profile is a pre-requisite for a web page if your group or organisation has one of these, alternatively, you can include the profile for your group or organisation on other community websites.

In conclusion:

A group or organisational profile is a valuable tool in promoting and marketing your groups or organisation's mission, purpose and activities to the wider community. It can help your group or organisation develop a range of useful marketing tools as well clarify your mission and objectives. A profile informs and assists your members to be your "voice" in the community which means it is much easier to promote your purpose, mission and tell others about the opportunities your group or organisation has available.