Community Group Welcoming Health Check

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Having a community group that is welcoming and inclusive not only provides local activities, but it also contributes to building the social connections in your community, which contributes to making it more resilient and able to cope in times of emergency.

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The Welcoming Health Check is a checklist to help your community group identify opportunities to grow your membership.   It is not designed as a test, but a tool to help implement new strategies to recruit and retain members.

Benefits for your group of being as "welcoming" as possible:

- Able to attract new members easily.

- Grow the diversity of your group's skills and knowledge base.

- Opportunity to bring in new voices, experiences and approaches.

- More people to share the workload.

- Meet new people.

- Increase the connectedness of your community that is important before, during and after emergencies.

Increasing the variety of people who participate in your community group can offer

the opportunity to tap into a rich pool of talent, bring in new voices, experiences

and approaches, and add depth to existing skills and ideas.

Our Community: www.ourcommunity.com.au

Building the connections of people within communities plays an important role in building their capacity to prepare for, withstand and recover from emergencies.

What is a "Welcoming" Community Group?

"Welcoming" is the initial set of actions that provides a positive early experience for potential new members. It might include:

Promotion & Marketing	Being able to easily find out about your community group and that everyone is welcome to join, including information about: • When, where and how often meetings occur. • What might be expected of a new person when they come along. • How do you join and how much will it cost. *How do potential new members become aware of your group?*
Personal Interaction	People are an important ingredient in creating an inclusive club by creating a warm, friendly, open-minded environment for all members. *How does your group look after a new member to ensure they are welcomed, feel comfortable and settle into your club?*
Comfortable & Clean Facilities	Many groups don't have access to modern facilities, but is the facility your group is using suitable in terms of; parking, accessible entry, suitable amenities, safe, clean and comfortable? *Are there any small changes your group could make to ensure the facilities are a nice place to be?*
Affordability	A range of payment options or loan equipment can be helpful for new members to avoid any upfront costs being a barrier to their ongoing participating. *What payment options are available for new members to be able to meet any costs required with joining your group?*
Participation Opportunities	Providing information regarding what level of participation and skills that might be required of the new member. *Are different levels of participation offered for a variety of skill levels?*
Encouragement	Sometimes people need some support or persuasion to step outside of their comfort zone to try something new. *Does your group encourage existing members to bring a friend or offer a small incentive for potential new members?*

Community Group Welcoming Health Checklist

The following actions can make a difference to people coming along to your group for the first time and provide a greater chance of them coming back again.

Complete the following checklist using the code below:

Y - Already in place
NA - Not applicable to type of community group
A - Is something the group could action

Y, NA or **A**	Strategy	Benefit	Supporting Material & Link
	Marketing	Make it easy for potential members to find out about your group. Provide information that will help them decide if it is a good fit for them.	Council Community Directory: www.pyrenees.vic.gov.au Raising Awareness & Recruiting New Members VicHealth: http://bit.ly/1rsrWav Image Generator Tools Our Community: http://bit.ly/1qfkCDG Ideas to Attracting New Members: Club Help: http://bit.ly/1uvaypx Marketing Your Club WA: http://bit.ly/1uHR9AP
	Welcome Kit /Members Handbook	Provide written information to answer frequently asked questions that new members may have upon joining.	Welcome Kit Template ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/Ze8ibn Members Handbook Template ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1uvaypx
	Welcoming Officer/s	Having a designated Welcoming Officer ensures that someone is responsible for looking after new members to ensure that they feel comfortable and are able to ask questions if they are unsure of anything. Help them settle into the club.	Sample Role Descriptions VicHealth: http://bit.ly/1pGOo44 ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1ohEUXs
	Membership Fee	A range of payment options to avoid upfront cost being a barrier to participating. E.g. Instalments, discounted fees categories – early payment, health care card holders, sponsorship or family membership.	Payment Options ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1A3PmYk Membership Options ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1xFWMoN
	Joining Cost Support	To help new members meet the cost of any equipment required for them to participate. Eg. Second Hand Shop /Donation Drives, Loan/club supplied equipment	Ways to subsidise equipment costs ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1A3PmYk
	Suitable Facilities	Physically Accessible? Can work out easily where to enter/exit? Are comfortable and clean?	Facility Audit Usability Check ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/W9iPm8 Female Friendly Facilities QLD: http://bit.ly/1uh3z4e

Y, NA or A	Strategy	Benefit	Supporting Material & Link
	Welcome Sign	Using different languages to show that everyone is welcome to join.	Universal Welcome Door Sign ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1nFbgvf
	New Member Induction Checklist	To ensure that new members meet any key people in the group, are aware of any procedures, where they can find relevant items to help them settle in easily. A list helps to ensure nothing is missed.	Club Induction Checklist ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1ohEUXs Process to develop Induction Checklist Our Community: http://bit.ly/1uhcq68
	Code of Conduct	A set of guidelines that set out what your group considers being an acceptable standard of behaviour so new members are aware what is expected of them.	Sports Club Code of Conduct WA Sport & Rec: http://bit.ly/1qyY8wz VIC Code of Conduct for Community Sport: http://bit.ly/WJ9v9h Committee Code of Conduct ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1lOFIHG
	Buddy System	Appointing an existing member to look after a new member to ensure they feel part of the club. For example, introducing them to other members, showing them around the facilities, and making sure they know where the venues are. Alternatively you could link two new members together who are both finding their feet so they can support each other.	Setting up a buddy system VicHealth: http://bit.ly/1omqPbj
	"Come & Try" Days	An opportunity to come along to find out about the group, without having to commit upfront.	Holding a Come and Try Day Info Sheet VicHealth: http://bit.ly/1q5gE0i Come & Try Day Checklist VicHealth: http://bit.ly/1tDXosb
	Introducing New Members to the group.	Placing an official welcome to newcomers in the club newsletter, noticeboard and/or website.	Parent Introductory Letter ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/WQ39oz
	New Member Personal Welcome	☐ Emailing new members to welcome them personally. ☐ Developing a club postcard to send to new members. ☐ Having a membership card or keyring.	

From Ideas to Actions

Choose one (or more) of the actions your group would like to implement from the checklist that you marked with an A. Use the table below to plan how your community group can put the idea into action and incorporate it into your groups/community action plan.

Action Plan:

What	How	When	Who	Resources Required
Example: *Member Handbook*	*Use template to develop a booklet. Information needed from Pres/Sec/Treas.*	*Draft by:* *May 2015* *Ready by:* *June 2015*	*Leader:* *Other Helpers:*	*Template* *$ Budget for Printing* *Relevant Information*

Retaining Existing Members

Being mindful of the needs and values of your members and adapting your group's practices and activities where possible can help to ensure your members are satisfied, any workload is being shared and they are more likely to stay.

Happy members also provide good promotion for your group via word of mouth.

Complete the following checklist using the code below:

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Y, NA or A	Strategy	Supporting Material & Link
	Conducting effective meetings	Conducting Meeting Hints ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1weG6A9 WA: http://bit.ly/1oqnOGT
	Meeting member expectations	Membership Survey Example ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/ZfoTf7 Retaining Members Softball Australia: http://bit.ly/1CPBaGm
	Handling of issues/complaints	Conflict Management ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1AtdXFW
	Good communication	Using Technology ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1rUocVg Publicity Officer Role Description ClubHelp: http://bit.ly/1uGOW8G
	Group branding/apparel	Builds feeling of affiliation/belonging: Group Logo/Merchandise/Clothing
	Non-attendance follow-up	Exit Interview Example Softfall Australia: http://bit.ly/1CPBaGm

Use the From Idea to Actions table to plan how your community group can put the idea into action.

If you are not able to access the templates etc online, please contact
Sports Central on 5331 6966 and they will be able to assist your community group.

PYRENEES SHIRE

Emergencies Happen
Think ahead, know what to do

State Government
Victoria