



Neighbourhood Watch

Let's watch out for each other

Volunteer Operations Manual

Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Inc

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Neighbourhood Watch Volunteer Operations Manual

1. Introduction

This Volunteer Operations Manual (VOM) has been produced to provide new and existing NHW groups with the basics of operating NHW in Victoria. The contents will be progressively modified based on feedback from users.

2. The Structure of Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) is a not-for-profit community-based organisation where volunteers come together to support Victoria Police to make their local communities safer by promoting crime prevention initiatives and closer community ties.

Where possible NHW is managed on a Local Government Area (LGA) or Police Service Area (PSA) model. NHW groups can operate individually or in conjunction with their LGA committee.

2.1 Local Government Area (LGA)

An LGA is aligned with the local council boundaries and if there are various groups in an LGA, it is preferable to have a committee at this level (eg NHW LGA name = NHW Whitehorse). An LGA Committee should provide benefits with local groups working together and may appoint one Delegate to represent their LGA at State Forum Meetings and the Annual General Meeting. In some rural areas where groups are long distances apart, these committees may be adjusted to suit the local area (ie town based arrangements).

An LGA should ensure they advise NHW Victoria of their committee members on the LGA Area Information Report.

2.2 Groups

Within any LGA there may be groups operating that can be any size deemed appropriate or suitable by the LGA Committee members and is solely at the discretion of the LGA Committee. For example, in regional locations, a group might cover the whole town. Historically, these areas are often numbered, but most are now renaming according to their geographical location.

Groups will be required to submit an Area Information Report and an audited financial statement on an annual basis. NHW state office will provide advance notice of reporting requirements and the due dates.

2.3 Zones

NHW groups may choose to further divide their location into zones. This can be any size deemed appropriate and suitable to the area and is solely at the discretion of the committee. Historically, zones have often been numbered and reflected newsletter delivery zones by the Zone Representative who would also attend the group meetings to represent their group of neighbours.



2.4 Volunteers

The NHW Victoria Board approved a new Membership Policy for volunteers from 18 August 2016. It is the responsibility of the Chairs, Managers and Coordinators of the relevant NHW groups and the staff of NHW Victoria, to ensure compliance with this policy. For more information on the volunteer process refer to Section 3.

3. New Volunteers

3.1 NHW is a Team of Volunteers

NHW relies on its team of volunteers to implement its programs and work together to support Victoria Police in its efforts to reduce crime in the community. Much of our work involves encouraging, advising and educating the public on ways of preventing crime. In doing this, we free up Police members to undertake the more technical crime prevention and detection work for which they are trained.

3.2 What Would I do if I Joined NHW?

There are roles for you in NHW that can cater for your skills, energy and interests.

Some of the things you could do include:

- Directly supporting the Police in reducing crime.
- Delivering newsletters to the houses.
- Helping at community events with distributing brochures to the public on home security and crime prevention.
- Assisting with crime prevention activities such as installing theft-resistant screws in car number plates.
- Editing a newsletter or managing the social media page.
- Taking a management role in NHW including being Secretary or Treasurer of a local group.

3.3 Membership Classes

The following describes the manner in which applications for membership of NHW Victoria are to be handled:

There are three classes of members:

- Accredited Members
- Community Members
- Community Supporters / Followers

It is important for the reputation of NHW and its programs that Accredited members complete a National Police Check (NPC) for the role they are to perform within the organisation.

Every volunteer is encouraged to become an Accredited Member of NHW Victoria, however, this is not compulsory for Community Members or Community Supporters / Followers.



3.4 Accredited Members

Volunteers holding any of the following positions must be accredited, which involves obtaining a National Police Check (NPC) (often called a CrimTrac check).

- Chair, Area Coordinator, Manager
- Committee
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- State Forum Delegates from LGA Groups
- Social Media Manager
- Web Administrator
- Project or Event Coordinator
- Spokesperson
- Members of the NHW Victoria Board
- A volunteer engaged in any other activity for which the local group or the Board determines that a NPC is required.

The name of the Accredited Member shall be recorded on the group Member Register with an 'A' in the status column.

Volunteers who had successfully completed a LEAP Police Check prior to 18 August 2016 will not require any further check and will be classified as Accredited Members.

It is now necessary to obtain a NPC through one of the Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC) accredited 'broker' organisations.

The local group shall arrange for the NPC to be carried out on the volunteer to be accredited. The cost of the check will be funded locally.

A person who provides evidence of a standard NPC obtained in the past 12 months will not require a further check.

Unfortunately, Working with Children checks and those undertaken by the Business Licensing Authority, i.e. a Real Estate Agent Licence, will not suffice as they do not involve a full NPC.

NHW Victoria has entered into an agreement with the not-for-profit broker CrimCheck, to process NPC's at the lowest available cost. Whilst CrimCheck is our preferred broker, NHW groups are free to use any of the 60 or so approved brokers to carry out the checks.

To view a full list of ACIC accredited brokers, use the path:
<https://www.acic.gov.au/our-services/national-police-checks>



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CrimCheck

Email process to Authorised User (AU) - \$16

The NHW group or Volunteer applicant requesting the NPC sends an email to the appointed Authorised User at crimcheck@nhw.com.au, providing their full name, email address and telephone contact details. The applicant later receives an email with full instructions.

Scanned copies of Certified ID documents which constitute 100 points are required; i.e. Drivers Licence or Passport, Medicare card and Rate Notice. This is then validated and submitted to CrimCheck.

The applicant is also then required to pay the \$16 fee by credit card. Whether the fee is reimbursed is a decision for the local NHW group.

When the result of the Check is received by the Authorised User, an email is sent to the applicant. This email is to be held as evidence of the NPC being successfully completed by the Chair of the NHW group.

NHW treats the names, addresses and any information submitted for the NPCs of volunteers within NHW as confidential and details are not disclosed outside of NHW Victoria.

NHW CrimCheck Online Service - \$21

Volunteers can submit an application direct to CrimCheck by using the online Self Service process.

The applicant logs in to <https://www.crimcheck.org.au/check/NHWWicCP> and follows the instructions.

The local group holds evidence of the NPC being successfully completed.

Using Other Brokers

The applicant accesses their own broker and follows the instructions.

The local group will hold evidence of the NPC being successfully completed.

A copy of the NPC must then be scanned and emailed to the NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) for record purposes.

PLEASE NOTE: *In accordance with the **Privacy Regulations**, a copy of a NPC can only be retained by an organisation for one year and then must be destroyed and removed from the database.*



3.5 Community Members

This is a volunteer who:

- Only undertakes newsletter or similar delivery roles; or
- Does not work on NHW projects unless those projects are supervised by an Accredited Member.

National Police Check Process

- None unless the volunteer wishes to become an Accredited Member.
- The name of the Community Member shall be recorded on the group member register with a “C” in the status column.

3.6 Community Supporter / Follower

This is a person who is:

- An interested member of the public eg attends NHW meetings and events.
- A supporter/follower on social media eg Facebook.
- A resident who is signed up on an email distribution list.
- A local business which supports NHW.

National Police Check Process

- Nil

A local list is to be maintained as appropriate for communication purposes.

3.7 Member Application Process

Online Applications

- Online applications are submitted to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au)
If there's an active local NHW group in the area the applicant's details are then forwarded to the group committee Secretary who then makes contact.
- If there's no active NHW group in the area, Getting Started options are;
 - Follow – keep up with NHW or your local group on Facebook
 - Subscribe – sign up for our regular Crime Prevention Newsletter
 - Start – lead the way for your community by starting a NHW group and a NHW 'champion' will help you every step of the way.

Hard Copy Applications

- When NHW group committee volunteers hold community meetings they can provide new visitors with hard copy applications.

Please note that NHW state office has no involvement in the processing of these volunteer applications as they are only for committee use.

Anyone completing a Member Application form also agrees to follow the guidelines of NHW as detailed in the NHW VOM or any other document issued from NHW Victoria.



3.8 Suitability of a Volunteer

- The Chair of the LGA or the local group (if there is no LGA Committee), must be satisfied of the suitability of a volunteer, based on the information in the Member Application form.
- Having a criminal record does not necessarily mean a person will not be considered suitable to be a volunteer. All applications are considered on their merits.

3.9 Confirmation of a Volunteer

NHW state office provides the Chair of a new group with a Letter of Authorisation before they can start approving their own new members.

The LGA or Group Chair is provided with NHW approved Authorisation Letters.

Upon completion of a satisfactory NPC (if required), the LGA or group Chair would add the Accredited and Community Members name, contact and class details to the local group member register.

If you are considered suitable to be an Accredited or Community member in an existing NHW, the LGA or group Chair will provide you with a Letter of Authorisation. This authorisation allows you to serve as a volunteer within NHW.

3.10 People Found Unsuitable to be a Volunteer

If you are considered to be unsuitable to become or to continue as a volunteer, NHW may refuse, remove or suspend your membership and you must not continue to perform volunteer duties.

If membership is removed or suspended, a volunteer has a right of appeal to the Board of Management.

4. New NHW Groups

4.1 Establishing a New NHW group

For a new NHW group to be established, the local residents must demonstrate community commitment to the program. They also need to define the area (geographical or interest) they wish to target (eg rural, residential, business area, boating club or community gardens etc).

The format of the group and its operations are set up within the guidelines and constitution of NHW Victoria but are flexible enough to accommodate community differences.

Following these steps will help you to establish a new NHW group:

1. Become a volunteer of NHW by visiting www.nhw.com.au/getting-started/. Click on one of the four options provided – Follow, Subscribe, Volunteer or Start.



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2. Follow up with an email to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) to express your interest in establishing a group in the area. Describe the area of interest so a check can be made for other nearby NHW groups.
3. If you are starting a new NHW group in a LGA that already has a NHW LGA Committee, your details will be passed on to the Chair of that committee so local support can be provided.
4. If there is no LGA Committee in your area, then you can determine community interest in the establishment of a NHW via social media, an already established community group or through a letter drop in the proposed area advertising a public meeting to discuss the program. For more information view the NHW Victoria Communications Policy at <http://www.nhw.com.au/about/policies/>
5. To spread the load, it would be desirable to identify other local volunteers to assist in the establishment phase in the letter drop and/or at the meeting.
6. The meeting needs to be widely advertised via avenues such as local media, social media, shops, schools, libraries, and local Councillors. Council distribution points may also be able to assist in displaying the information. Ensure all information regarding the meeting is emailed to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) so the meeting can be advertised on the NHW Victoria website and Facebook page.
7. NHW Victoria will make every endeavour to have either the state CEO or an appropriate representative (eg Board Member or other volunteer who is extensively involved in the program) in attendance at this meeting to assist you and answer questions.
8. Contact your local Police Station to ensure your local Police Liaison Officer or Crime Prevention Officer is invited to attend the meeting or to send a representative. This will also demonstrate the community's initiative and encourage support from Victoria Police at the local level.
9. The venue chosen for the meeting should be located either within or very near to, the proposed group area. School and church halls are generally suitable for these meetings, as they are equipped with appropriate facilities (eg tables, chairs, parking, and basic kitchen facilities).

4.2 First Public Meeting

1. Ensure NHW Member Application forms are available for completion and collection at the meeting. The forms should be collected by the organiser of the meeting.
2. Ensure there is sufficient interest to establish the NHW group. A minimum of six and preferably ten volunteers are required to enable the various activities involved in establishing the NHW group to be shared without overloading any person.
3. The meeting organiser presents an overview of NHW and an agenda to include the following:
 - Various classes of membership – Accredited Members, Community Members, Community/Supporters as per the NHW Victoria Membership Policy. www.nhw.com.au/about/policies
 - Roles and responsibilities of volunteers.
 - Calls for the election of the NHW Group Committee.
4. Attendees nominate the names to form the committee. One resident may be elected by majority vote to lead the new NHW group. Police representatives may make a recommendation but cannot vote.



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5. A follow-up meeting is scheduled with the elected volunteers as soon as practicable. The aim of this meeting is to establish the structure within which your NHW group will operate. Ideally, this meeting is held within one month of the first public meeting.
6. Advise NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) of the outcome of the meeting, the names of the proposed committee members and planned actions.
7. Volunteers holding any of the positions requiring them to be an Accredited Member then organise a NPC.
8. NHW state office authorises access to our Member Resources area on the NHW Vic website where you will find information and useful tools to help operate the new NHW group.

4.3 Already Part of a Community Group?

If you are already part of an established community group interested in being involved in NHW there are two main options:

1. As you have already established a community group you could use this committee to carry out NHW business as part of your meeting procedures keeping the NHW records and finances separate; or
2. Start a separate NHW group from your community group.

Whichever option you choose, you will need to establish a committee and email NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) a list of the proposed committee members. You need a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer as the minimum.

Volunteers holding any of the positions requiring them to be an Accredited Member then organise a NPC and email a copy to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au).

4.4 Merging Groups

Groups may decide to merge so they can become a single entity and continue running across a broader geographical location.

When multiple groups decide to merge, the following steps must be undertaken:

1. Contact your LGA Committee or email NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au) to advise of the intended merger.
2. Organise a meeting with the merging groups. If required, NHW Victoria will make available the CEO or an appropriate representative (Board Member or other Accredited volunteer) to attend the meeting to provide advice and answer questions.
3. At this meeting, the individual groups must minute:
 - Their intention to merge to one committee.
 - Calls for the election of the NHW group committee.
 - Agreed operational arrangements for bank accounts, newsletters/social media and meetings.
 - Planned actions.
4. Email a scanned copy of the minutes, including the names of the proposed committee members, to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au).



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5. If a volunteer is not already an Accredited Member and is holding a position requiring them to be an Accredited Member, they organise a NPC which after completion is scanned and emailed to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au)

5. NHW Committee

5.1 NHW Committee

NHW Victoria recommends that your NHW Committee consists of at least the following:

- Chair
- Secretary
- Treasurer

If there is no LGA Committee the following roles are also recommended but are optional:

- State Forum Delegate
- Local Web Administrator
- Social Media Manager
- Events Co-ordinator
- Resident and Volunteer Support
- Zone Representatives

5.2 Chair

All organisations require a Chair to maintain and organise an effective group. In NHW this person can also be known as the Area Coordinator or Area Manager. Their role is to coordinate the activities of NHW within the local area.

This person chairs local group meetings and is the main point of contact with the LGA Committee. If there is no LGA Committee, the Chair will also be the contact for NHW and the local Police. This person sets up the structure to enable good communication and the delivery of local activities.

Responsibilities include:

- Coordinating the agendas for group meetings and arranging any special meetings.
- Providing maps to Zone Representatives showing area and zone boundaries.
- Developing a list of skills available through your Zone Representatives.
- Ensuring a representative from your area attends LGA or Divisional meetings where applicable.
- Maintaining communication with the Chair of any established Area Sub-Committees such as Newsletter Sub-Committee or Finance Sub-Committee. You are an ex-officio member of these Committees.
- Informing your contact of any changes in meeting dates or places.
- Ensuring an up to date list of all volunteers is maintained.
- Ensuring information from the NHW Victoria magazine, Sentinel, is distributed to the editors of your newsletter and social media pages. It is a good source of



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material, much of which can directly be copied into group newsletters from the NHW Victoria website.

- Coordinating the replacement of Zone Representatives if they should move from the group or withdraw for other reasons.
- Ensuring all volunteers are offered Personal Accident Insurance cover.
- Giving effective recognition to any sponsor of NHW Victoria and local supporters of your NHW.

If you are the only NHW group in your LGA or there is no LGA Committee, your responsibilities could include the following:

- Keeping regular contact with your local Police representative. They will explain the support available to you and indicate the assistance required by the Police to implement their programs and strategies.
- Introducing yourself to the Inspector and/or Officer in Charge of your local Police Station.

5.3 Deputy Chair

A Deputy Chair should be elected where possible. In NHW this person can also be known as the Deputy Area Coordinator or Deputy Area Manager. Their role is to act as a resource for the Chair and to take over the role when and if required.

5.4 Secretary

The Secretary takes the minutes of each meeting. This position is also responsible for processing the minimal correspondence handled by the group.

5.5 Treasurer

The Treasurer keeps accounts and assists in completing the requirements for the Annual Reporting including arranging for the review/audit of the group's financial statements (see also Section 15 on Financial Reporting for NHW Groups).

The Treasurer records the income and expenditure of the group and manages the community money in line with NHW Victoria guidelines. It should be noted that all NHW bank accounts must be set up with at least three signatories and any two to sign to authorise a transaction.

5.6 Newsletter Editor

Produce the local newsletter (printed or electronic).

5.7 State Forum Delegate (Optional)

Each LGA should have a State Forum Delegate to represent them at State Forums and the Annual General Meeting of NHW Victoria (an alternate may also be appointed but only one vote is available at the State Forum).

5.8 Web Administrator (Optional)

This person will generally maintain the LGA component of the NHW Victoria website. The Web Administrator (WA) must have an email address and access to the internet.



5.9 Social Media Manager

Manage any Facebook, Twitter or website input on behalf of the group.

5.10 Events Coordinator (Optional)

Coordinator of events planned and undertaken by the NHW.

Please note the Media, Newsletter and Events positions can be groups of people or individuals. The committee should be formed to meet local needs.

5.11 Zone Representative (Optional)

In NHW groups that use printed newsletters to keep their community informed of local crimes and how to combat them, there is a need to organise volunteers to deliver the newsletters.

An urban area of more than 200 houses may be divided into any number of zones each consisting of approximately 25 to 50 premises. The number of premises in a zone is based upon what is reasonable for one person to cover effectively. Zones with more than 50 premises are generally avoided, as they become difficult to manage.

In rural areas where distance is a significant issue, the size of the zones (if there are any) is determined by what is necessary and practicable for NHW to keep in touch with its residents.

Their role includes:

- Distributing the group newsletter to each household in your zone and where possible, speaking to the resident/s.
- Liaising with the residents in the zone and ensuring they are aware of NHW.
- Encouraging residents to participate in NHW and strategies.
- Encouraging cooperation between residents in the zone.
- Providing the communication link between the residents, the NHW Group Committee and the Police Liaison Officer.
- Attending group meetings.
- Assisting with group projects, programs and events.
- Maintaining communication with residents and passing on resident concerns at group meetings.
- Complying with NHW Victoria policies and practises.

Zone Representatives should not feel daunted by the responsibilities listed above as if properly organised, they will not take up much of their time.

5.12 Resident and Volunteer Support

For NHW to function successfully, an element of community spirit amongst neighbours must be developed. The cheapest and best security device we have is friendly, cooperative and concerned neighbours. To foster this feeling much depends upon the energy and dedication of the volunteers who manage the group. By participating in the strategies of NHW, residents will earn the right to display NHW material and will profit from their improved quality of life.



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Delegation is important within NHW, to ensure that the workload is equally distributed over all of the volunteers in the group. A person who has been delegated a task and is being relied upon by others, feels they are of value to the group.

6. Meetings

6.1 Group Meetings

In your first year, it is recommended you have a group meeting each month (except possibly for December and/or January). After this, base how often you need to meet on the needs of the residents and the time required to successfully conduct the business of your group. Discuss with your LGA Committee or local Police any variations to the monthly meetings and future group meeting dates.

At all levels of the organisation, meetings should be carried out professionally, with courtesy and manners shown at all times to all attendees.

Meetings should be carried out following the same basic procedures to ensure proper management and record keeping.

The following steps should be adhered to at all meetings of the organisation:

- Venue, date and time of the meeting to be advertised to the wider community (eg via newsletters, LGA website article and/or event listing, email distribution lists, public notice boards).
- Meetings should start on time and good manners should always be used.
- The Chair of the meeting should ensure someone is available to take minutes of the meeting (eg the appointed Secretary or replacement if they are not available). The minutes should be a true and accurate record of the meeting and reflect all decisions made at the meeting.
- Heading should reflect date, venue and time of advertised start of the meeting.

The following suggested meeting agenda outlines a meeting that will be enjoyable and yet highly productive:

- Open the Meeting
- Introduction and Welcome
- Apologies
- Confirmation of Previous Minutes
- Business Arising
- Police/Crime Report (if Police are available to attend)
- Treasurer's Report
- Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence
- LGA and State Reports
- Sentinel and Group Newsletter Articles
- Guest Speaker on a relevant topic of interest – if desired
- General Business (Including items raised by residents)
- Close Meeting



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Try and keep formalities to a minimum. The meeting should run for about one hour, depending on discussion and guest speakers. If Police attend the meeting, rearrange the agenda to have the Police report at the beginning, as this gives the attending Police the opportunity to return to other duties if required.

6.2 Expenditure

All financial expenditure should be presented/discussed at the meeting and approved by a mover, seconder and carried before the expenditure is undertaken. This decision must be clearly documented in the minutes as this then provides permission for the Treasurer to make the necessary payment. This also explains in a transparent way why an amount of public money was spent on particular items by NHW.

6.3 Significant Decisions

Occasionally there will be decisions to make that are significant and the consequences can be far reaching. When these issues and subsequent decisions arise, they must be fairly discussed at the meeting, remembering that participants must show courtesy to allow all views to be canvassed. The Secretary must ensure the main points of discussion are noted and the final decision is clearly documented, moved, seconded and carried.

Such 'significant decisions' could be but are not limited to the following examples:

- Expenditure of more than \$500 on a single item/activity.
- Proposal to seek financial support from another organisation.
- Closure or merger of a group.

Annual General Meetings (AGM) and Reports

An AGM should be held each year at which the committee is elected and the previous year's audited accounts are presented. The financial year-end is 30 June and the AGM must be held within five months of this date. From this meeting, the Annual Report for the group is to be completed and emailed to NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au).

6.4 Guidelines for Successful Meetings

The guidelines in this section are provided to give you some ideas in how to set-up and run group meetings which are positive, interesting and a success in achieving the aims of NHW. People need to have a reason to attend meetings on a regular basis – often they will ask, 'What's in it for me if I attend these meetings?' Therefore, you should make your meetings:

- Interesting
- Visibly successful.
- Well publicised.
- Address the problems important to residents.

Some common factors that have shown to decrease the effectiveness of the group meetings are:

- Meetings not commencing at the nominated time.
- Excessive formality.



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- Low participation level and minimal delegation.
- Residents' negative perception.
- Repetitiveness in meeting content.
- An autocratic and authoritarian leadership style.
- Comments that are defamatory, indecent, offensive, abusive, irrelevant, trivial or objectionable in language or nature.
- Lack of respect from persons at the meeting to others at the meeting.
- Lack of respect for the right of each person to speak and to hold individual views.

In order to overcome these, here is a list of suggestions designed to stimulate attendance and the effectiveness of your group meetings:

- Greet and welcome people as they arrive.
- If possible provide light refreshments, this helps to break the ice and encourages a team spirit at the beginning of each meeting.
- Commence the meeting by publicly welcoming new faces.
- Ensure the venue suits your requirements for size, seating, privacy and comfort. A school classroom or small conference room will have more atmosphere than a huge gymnasium. If possible arrange your seating in a way that encourages participation from everyone (eg round table or horseshoe).
- Endeavour to achieve some friendly banter going to and fro, this seems to do a great deal towards breaking down people's inhibitions. They become more comfortable and more willing to participate.
- Have a whiteboard / blackboard available for use during 'problem solving' sessions, this assists in focussing attention on the current challenge and discourages the tendency to get off the subject.
- Nominate someone to greet your Police Liaison Officer (PLO), they often feel uncomfortable in front of groups and being met by someone familiar will help ease that feeling. Note their name and use it.
- Involve everyone in discussions, if residents believe they can achieve results by being directly involved, it will encourage them to attend regularly and perhaps bring others with them.
- Involve many people in the allocation of tasks. There are usually people with a lot of skills in a NHW group and these shouldn't go untapped. Most people are willing to help if asked the right way. Your list of expertise and skills available will assist you to know who to ask.
- Involve your PLO in group discussions. This develops a sense of being 'your' Police member and part of the team.
- Make use of guest speakers or videos to add variety and interest to your meetings. Be sure they deal with subjects important and relevant to your residents.
- Always try to be positive in your communication whether oral or written. Avoid turning meetings into 'whinge sessions', which are counter-productive and discourage attendance. Recognition of effort and involvement is a healthy and productive strategy.
- Publicise your successes, people love to back a winner. If they believe they are achieving success they will be more inclined to support their meetings actively.



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- Ensure meetings are purposeful and constructive. NHW groups are action groups not administration groups. You are looking for results, not keeping records or running a bureaucracy.

7. Communication

The group newsletter, web page and/or social media are the communication links to the residents in the area and as such are a vital component to a successful NHW group.

The NHW Committee should determine its objectives for the chosen communication tool/s as early as possible. Here are some suggested objectives:

- To identify the area and provide contact information, eg telephone numbers and/or email addresses, for residents to make contact with the NHW group and local Police.
- To advise of crime trends in the area.
- To provide security and crime prevention tips.
- To foster improvement in relations between Police and the community.
- Any other objectives considered relevant by the NHW Committee.

7.1 Media Content

Group newsletters, the web page and social media need to be readable and interesting if they are to prove valuable to NHW. Contents of these publications could include:

- Local crime trend information has been found to be important to residents; they are keen to know about crime in their general area. This information is normally provided by your local Crime Prevention Officer. Under no circumstances can you publish any information that may identify a victim of crime or details of a crime that may be of a sensitive, family or sexual nature.
- Information on ways to prevent crime and keep homes and property secure. This information should be drawn from the NHW Victoria website and publications, and information provided by the Police.
- Acknowledgement of sponsors and supporters of NHW. The amount of space that can be given to supporters (advertisers) must not exceed 25% of the publication.
- Take care not to breach copyright. You must acknowledge the source of any material you obtain from other publications, an example of a suitable acknowledgment is 'Reproduced from the July 2015 Sentinel'. Sometimes you may also need permission from the author or publisher. If you are unsure about using something from another source, email NHW state office (admin@nhw.com.au).
- Ensure material that may be offensive to individuals, or members of ethnic or religious groups, is not published by NHW.

Other suitable media items could include:

- An editorial on some aspect of NHW.
- Extracts from Sentinel (which can be directly downloaded from the NHW Victoria website, or from other group newsletters).



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- Items on home security – most residents find this interesting, particularly when the information relates to how crimes are being committed in their local community.

7.2 Political comment

While recognising that ‘freedom of speech’ is a fundamental tenet of democracy, it is also vital NHW is apolitical. The following guidelines are presented to minimise problems and to assist Police and Area Managers to select appropriate guest speakers and in preparing their own presentations.

NHW speakers should be selected for their ability to:

- Expand upon or explain matters specifically related to NHW Victoria objectives.
- Address problems similar to, or arising from, activities within a particular NHW group.
- Provide information of interest to the residents of the local area.
- The use of NHW for political purposes is strictly forbidden. Speakers should not use NHW as a vehicle for attack upon, or denigration of, the parliamentary institution or its processes.
- These guidelines are offered purely by way of assistance and should not be interpreted as unnecessarily restricting the right of NHW committees in their selection of guest speakers. It is, however, in the interest of everyone for NHW to remain strictly apolitical and non-partisan.
- To ensure the integrity of NHW Victoria any correspondence from a NHW participant, area, or division which is to be sent to Victoria Police or a government member in relation to NHW and its programs, should be initially directed to the Board of Management. This does not prevent a person who is a NHW volunteer, writing to anybody on a matter of concern that does not relate to NHW.

7.3 Social Media

Facebook

Follow our NHW Facebook page and/or a variety of locally based Facebook pages. When visiting, please ‘Like’ the page and receive various updates via your newsfeed from the NHW Timeline.

Search Facebook for ‘NHW Alliance’ and request to join. This is where other NHW Facebook Group Admins gather to share posts, images, ideas and general information.

7.4 Website

The NHW Victoria website (nhw.com.au) is the only website address that should be advertised unless LGAs wish to advertise their component of the website in local newsletters.

If your NHW group would like to setup your own ‘customised’ website please email admin@nhw.com.au.



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The website is constantly monitored for content additions and changes and regular security audits are carried out to ensure security of the site.

7.5 State Newsletter

Our CEO emails a monthly Newsletter to all NHW members. If groups want to setup a template for their own newsletter they can check in with state office and we can provide a template suited to our branding for emailing to subscribers.

7.6 Sentinel

Sentinel was a quarterly magazine published until November 2017 showing news from NHW Victoria and information on NHW group activities around the state. Publishing of the magazine ceased in April 2018 – however – if groups would like previous editions sent to them they can be requested from admin@nhw.com.au.

7.7 Advertising

The group should consider as a matter of policy whether it wants to invite residents or companies trading in the area to advertise in the area media. Any advertising revenue of this nature has to be recorded in the group accounts.

Any organisations that advertise with NHW must be compatible with normal community standards. Therefore, it would not be acceptable to advertise cigarettes but it would be reasonable to advertise the milk bar from which cigarettes might be sold, provided they are not specifically referenced.

Please refer to the NHW Victoria Communications Policy for further information at: <http://www.nhw.com.au/about/policies>

8. Program Material

Over the years, a number of brochures and other informative materials have been developed to support NHW programs. This information can be viewed on the NHW website at <http://www.nhw.com.au/Volunteer-Toolkit/Other-Resources>.

If you have a need for any of this material, email NHW state office at admin@nhw.com.au. There may be an opportunity to combine your order with one from other groups and so reduce the unit cost for the material.

9. Fundraising

There are some costs involved in running a NHW group. These can include, but are not confined to volunteer accident insurance, the printing of information materials, meeting room hire, fluorescent safety vests and street signs.

NHW groups have a variety of ways they can raise the required level of funds, including donations, advertising and fundraising events such as sausage sizzles.



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In regard to obtaining funds to start a NHW group, you are not expected to use your own money. Most new groups obtain donations from local businesses in return for acknowledgement of their support for our community organisation. Some areas seek financial support from real estate agents, locksmiths, cafes, electricians, banks etc, as they see NHW as beneficial to their clients.

You might also talk with local press to see if they are prepared to publish an article about the establishment of the NHW group and your proposed public meeting time. Potential financial supporters may be more interested in helping you if they think they might get mentioned in an article, and they would certainly get mentioned, if they were to provide funding.

Some municipalities, state government departments and charities have grant programs which are another source of funds to NHW groups. However, generally the grants are provided for specific projects and they won't normally pay for the operational expenses, eg volunteer insurance required to run a NHW group.

Should you have any questions relating to possible approaches to fundraising activities, please email NHW state office at admin@nhw.com.au.

10. Volunteer Certificates of Service

The following Certificates of Service can be ordered via the state office for the 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 years.

Appreciation Certificates are also available.

10.1 Order Process

- To obtain an Order form please email (admin@nhw.com.au).
- The NHW group MUST indicate the name, rank and title of the Victoria Police officer who is going to sign the certificate (this would normally be the Inspector in the Police Service Area).
- The NHW group completes the Order form and sends it back to (admin@nhw.com.au).
- NHW state office confirms the volunteer/s are recorded on the NHW State Member Register and provides the NHW group with an authorisation Order number to provide to Creative Branding Solutions (CBS).
- NHW state office returns the Order form to the NHW group for actioning directly with CBS.
- The NHW group forwards their Order form with allocated authorisation Order number, to merrell@brandingthings.com.au to arrange the printing.
- The printer will email a proof to the NHW group. The local group is responsible for proofreading, checking, and giving the printer approval to undertake the printing.
- The NHW group then manages the rest of the process and payment directly with Merrell at CBS.



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- The printer produces the certificates as requested and dispatches them to the NHW group.

NOTE

Please allow at least 30 days for the printing of the certificate/s.

The cost for Long Service or Appreciation Certificates is \$2.00 per certificate and \$3.00 for the total freight (postage) charge unless express post is required.

For 5, 10, 15 and 20 year certificates, the signatory will be NHW Victoria CEO, Bambi Gordon.

For 25 and 30 year certificates, the signatory will be NHW Victoria President, Brian Welch.

11. Street Signage

11.1 Purpose

The purpose of the signage is to promote an active NHW group, a sense of community safety and to 'advise the burglars' that the community is aware of the NHW message and reports suspicious activity and crime.

11.2 Approval

It is recommended (although not always possible) that NHW signs be placed on poles on major streets that enter the area.

Approval of the local council is required before any NHW signs can be erected in a public road in Victoria. In addition, due to Occupational Health and Safety issues, council staff would be required to erect the signs. It is recommended (although it is not always possible), NHW signs be placed on existing poles on major streets that enter the area.

Where the use of power poles is being considered for mounting the signs, approval of the power company that owns the asset will be needed. Your local council may be able to help with obtaining approval from the power company for use of its poles.

11.3 Ordering

Supplier

De Neefe Signs
25 Brisbane Street
PO Box 132
Eltham VIC 3095
Phone: 03 9430 0222

De Neefe Signs is the preferred supplier for NHW signage.



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The NHW contact is Lois Marsh (03) 9430 0253.

Pricing

PS NW300	300mm X 450mm (standard)	\$16.50
PS NW450	450mm X 600mm (large)	\$19.50
PS NW	600mm X 800mm (extra large)	\$34.30

* Prices are correct as at 1 July 2018 and do not include GST or freight.

* Brackets, poles, bolts can be ordered, however, some council's supply these at no cost.

To order your street signs:

1. Only members of a NHW group or Administrators of an accredited NHW Facebook page can order NHW street signs.
2. Call De Neefe Signs to get an idea of what you want to order and how much it will cost.
3. Email NHW state office at (admin@nhw.com.au) requesting an Order Number so you can place your order directly with De Neefe.
4. De Neefe send the street signs to the NHW group and invoice NHW state office for the goods (including GST).
5. **For Facebook groups, De Neefe's invoice will be paid in full by the Administrator of the Facebook page so these invoices will be sent straight to the Administrator.
6. For Real World groups, NHW state office pays the invoice to De Neefe (including GST).
7. NHW state office invoices the NHW Real World group (excluding GST).
8. The NHW group deposits the funds to the NHW Vic bank account.

Installation

Due to Health and Safety regulations, NHW Volunteers cannot install signs. Please contact your local council to arrange the installation. Signs can often be installed free of charge.

Policy

To provide guidance on the maintenance of NHW signs please refer to the NHW Street Signs Policy on our website at:

<http://www.nhw.com.au/about/policies>

12. Member Forums

It is important all NHW groups are kept informed of the policies and directions of NHW Victoria. This is generally achieved by the distribution of emails from NHW state office, a monthly newsletter from the CEO and social media. There are also benefits from NHW groups exchanging information on activities, programs and achievements to ensure successes are shared and mistakes avoided.

NHW Victoria holds Member Forums to allow representatives from all NHW groups to meet and discuss policies and procedures and learn about the activities of NHW groups



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throughout the state. At the forums, each LGA of NHW is represented by a delegate elected from the NHW group within their municipality.

Any NHW volunteer is welcome to attend a forum but only the State Forum Delegates are entitled to vote. State office advises re Member Forums via their monthly newsletter and an email to office bearers for distributing to their members.

13. Insurance

There are two types of insurance:

- Personal Accident covers injury to a NHW volunteer in the course of their duties.
- Public Liability covers liability to others who may sue NHW for negligence. This is required to hold meetings and run events.

13.1 Personal Accident Insurance

It is recommended Accredited Members and Community Members are insured under the Volunteer Accident Insurance Policy, however, this decision is to be made by the local group and any premiums funded by the local group.

No volunteer insurance is required for Community Supporters / Followers.

NHW Victoria arranges a bulk annual Personal Accident Insurance policy for NHW groups to be included at a cost of .90c. An expression of interest is emailed to NHW groups and confirmed by 30 June annually.

For further information, please email NHW state office at (admin@nhw.com.au)

13.2 Public Liability Insurance

Public Liability Insurance covers NHW Victoria and local NHW groups against claims from the public for damage to persons or property. The NHW state office negotiates the annual Public Liability Insurance policy. This policy is taken out and paid for by NHW Victoria.

Advance notice needs to be given if you are planning a major event with special requirements (eg family days, dinner dances, barbeques, bicycle marking days).

The NHW state office distributes a copy of the Certificate of Currency (policy) to all NHW groups at the start of each financial year. If you require a copy of the policy for an event, email the NHW state office with your request at (admin@nhw.com.au)

14. Annual Reporting for NHW Groups

The Annual Reporting requirements include the following:



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- Area Information Report
- Contains details of the NHW group, including the number of volunteers, bank balance and committee members.
- Member Register
- Contains the details of volunteers (Accredited Members and Community Members) in the group in the standard format.
- Activity Report
- Provides a summary of the activities of the group.
- Financial Report – the ‘audited’ report of the group.

NHW state office will provide advance notice of reporting requirements and the due dates.

15. Member Register

It is important to have a current list of the local NHW group volunteers. This enables contact to be maintained with the volunteers to advise them of local activities and to obtain their help when it is required. The list is also needed for insurance purposes because a volunteer must be on the list to be covered by the NHW Volunteer Accident Insurance policy.

The lists are regularly used to up-date the volunteer list for the LGA NHW (if there is one) and the NHW Victoria Member Register – a legal requirement. To facilitate this, it is important that the local volunteer list is kept in the required format.

Below is an example of a Member Register template which is provided and emailed by the NHW state office.

REGION / DIVISION	PSA	LGA	AREA	GROUP #	POSITION	FAMILY NAME	GIVEN NAME	SECOND NAME	PREFERRED NAME	JOINING DATE	FLAT	STREET NO.
RWD5	CAMPASPE	CAMPASPE	RUSHWORTH	RSH	ZONE REP	FLINTSTONE	FRED	REX	FRED	20/02/2012	1	99
RWD5	CAMPASPE	CAMPASPE	ECHUCA	CAP 5	TREASURER	FLINTSTONE	WILMA	ANN	WILMA	20/02/2012	1	99

(The section of the table below joins to the right of the section above)

STREET NAME	STREET TYPE	TOWN	POST CODE	HOME PHONE	E MAIL	MOBILE NUMBER	DOB	GENDER	OCCUPATION	INSURANCE	MEMBER STATUS
ROCK	ROAD	BEDROCK	9999	03 9999 9999	fred@bedrock.tv	0412 345 678	19/09/1949	M	CRANE DRIVER	1	A
ROCK	ROAD	BEDROCK	9999	03 9999 9999	wilma@bedrock.tv	0412 345 678	19/09/1991	F	HOME MAKER	1	C

16. Financial Reporting for NHW Groups

In order to comply with relevant legislation and the terms of our funding agreement with Department of Justice, it is a requirement that all NHW groups adhere to the following instructions regarding the maintenance of financial records and annual reporting.

The absolute control of the funds remains with the local groups. The Board only requires the financial information to comply with its reporting requirements.



16.1 Incorporation of Neighbourhood Watch

Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Inc ('NHW Victoria') is incorporated under the provisions of the Associations Incorporations Act ('the Act'). It is a requirement of our funding agreement with the Department of Justice that NHW Victoria be the only incorporated entity operating as NHW in Victoria.

Details of the incorporated entity are:

- Name: Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Inc
- Registration No: A0018739R
- Australian Business No: 41 586 657 273
- Financial Year: 1 July to 30 June

All NHW groups within the state, including LGA Committees, local areas and town committees, are included in the NHW Victoria structure and all are therefore subject to the provisions of the Act. It is essential that good governance be maintained in relation to all financial dealings across all the groups within NHW Victoria.

16.2 Financial Records

Every NHW group must maintain proper financial records which are reviewed / audited and balances are required to be submitted to the NHW Victoria State Treasurer annually. For further information on the review/audit and the reporting requirements see Sections 15.6 and 15.8.

It is a requirement of the Act that the financial records of all NHW groups within Victoria are consolidated and included in the NHW Victoria Annual Accounts.

The Board of NHW Victoria has no intention of taking control of the funds of local groups, but the Annual Report of every group must be submitted in accordance with the law.

Note: An audit is a review of the financial accounts by an independent and suitably qualified person. See further information in Section 15.6.

16.3 The Treasurer's Role

Each NHW group must have a Treasurer to be responsible for the correct and accurate handling and recording of that group's funds and other assets.

The basics of the role include:

- Banking of monies received.
- Ensuring all payments are made as and when due.
- Reporting the group's financial position at all meetings.
- Keeping accurate accounts of all income and expenditure.
- Preparing the group's annual financial statement.
- Having the financial statement reviewed/audited.
- Ensuring the group is solvent at all times.



16.4 Types of Accounts

The group's bank accounts must be held with mainline banks, building societies and/or credit unions as approved by the NHW Victoria Board of Management. If in doubt as to the suitability of your chosen financial institution, please email the NHW state office at (admin@nhw.com.au).

When opening an account, it should be designated as 'Neighbourhood Watch Victoria Inc A0018739R' followed by the name of the group. This can be abbreviated to 'NHW Vic Inc A0018739R'. Quote the ABN 41 586 657 273 and advise the financial institution that NHW Victoria is a Charitable Institution and is exempt from Income Tax.

Two signatories are required for all transactions on your account and it is recommended that at least three authorities are maintained with the financial institution at all times.

Investments of surplus funds may only be made by way of term deposits or cash management type accounts. Funds must not be invested in stocks, bonds or debentures.

Full details of all bank and investment accounts are to be set out in the annual financial statement, including the name of the financial institution, branch and account number.

16.5 Keeping the Accounting Records

The Act requires that an incorporated association must maintain adequate and accurate accounting records.

The basic record could be a simple Cash Book which may be handwritten or in the form of a computer spreadsheet.

The Cash Book should include:

- Date and description of item.
- For income records, the dollar amount and receipt number.
- For expenditure records, the dollar amount and cheque number or bank reference.
- A column for the resulting balance.

Additional columns should contain the different types of income and expenditure (eg Income from donations, grants, bank interest, advertising etc and expenditure for printing costs, insurance, venue hire).

Documentary evidence must be kept for all transactions.

16.6 Having the Accounts Reviewed (Audited)

The accounting records and annual financial statements of all NHW groups must be audited each year.



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The audit should be carried out by a qualified accountant, or if one is not available, by an independent person with financial knowledge and experience, such as the manager of a financial institution.

The auditor may be a volunteer of NHW, but must not be a committee member or a relative, business associate or employee of a committee member of the group being audited.

The auditor should be given:

- The current financial statement – comprised of a Statement of Income and Expenditure and a Statement of Financial Position (Balance Sheet).
- The previous years' audited statement.
- Cash book
- Bank statements
- Cheque books
- Copies of all vouchers, invoices, receipts, etc providing evidence of the cash book entries.

16.7 Closure of a NHW Group

In accordance with Section 18 of the Constitution, the balance of any funds of a NHW group which ceases to operate are to be transferred to the relevant LGA to be held in trust for up to three years.

If there is no LGA the money is to be transferred to NHW Victoria to be held in trust for three years.

As the funds have been raised from the public for use by NHW, it is not legally allowable that they be donated to any other organisation or charity on the winding up of a group.

16.8 Reporting Requirements

For management purposes, each LGA is required to prepare a list of the bank balances of all NHW groups within the LGA as at 31 March each year. However, only the total balance for the LGA as at 31 March is to be emailed to NHW state office.

Those groups, which are not part of an LGA Committee, are to report directly to the NHW state office for their individual committee.

Once accounts have been audited at the end of the financial year, a copy is to be scanned and emailed to NHW state office by 30 September each year.

17. Further Information

The NHW Operations Manual (VOM) has been produced to provide new and existing NHW groups with the basics of operating NHW in Victoria. The contents will be progressively modified based on feedback from users.



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If you have any questions not answered by this manual, in the first instance please email the NHW state office at: admin@nhw.com.au

The office can also be contacted by phoning 03 9247 5492.