

# **The Croquet Club Committee Guidelines**

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## **Incorporating a Club:**

If they are not already, Clubs are strongly advised to become Incorporated to protect the Office bearers and members against the possibility of becoming personally liable in the event of the club being sued.

Details of how to become Incorporated are provide on the Office of Fair Trading website at: [http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/Incorporating\\_an\\_association.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives_and_associations/Incorporating_an_association.html)

Becoming incorporated makes the club a legal body in its own right which means that:

- The club can enter into contracts on its own behalf
- It can sue or be sued
- It can continue, regardless of membership

This means that claims made against the association, either as debts or compensation for negligence, are answerable by the Association and not the individual members (as applies at present) It means that club members have limited liability in the event of the club being sued for damages. Member liability is limited to the amount each member owes the club - mainly the annual fees. With society becoming more litigious, clubs may need this protection in the future.

Being Incorporated also makes the club eligible to apply for Government grants because such grants are usually conditional on a club being incorporated.

All Incorporated Croquet Clubs are required to have a Constitution which defines the rules by which the Club will operate. Most Clubs base their constitution on the model provided by the NSW Office of Fair Trading see:

[http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives\\_and\\_associations/Incorporating\\_an\\_association/About\\_the\\_constitution/Model\\_constitution.html](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/Cooperatives_and_associations/Incorporating_an_association/About_the_constitution/Model_constitution.html)

The Constitution requires the Club to have a Management Committee whose role is:

"To control and manage the affairs of the association" (*Ref: Office of Fair Trading*)

The Constitution of the club defines the composition of the Committee which, for a small club, will just include a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and Club Captain. Larger Clubs will require more positions to help spread the workload and this document lists some of the positions that may be included on the Committee. Committee positions must be defined in the Club's Constitution but not all positions need to be committee positions.

Clubs often find it difficult to fill all the Committee positions but having a good committee is essential for a club to be successful. As with most voluntary positions, the more a person puts in, the more that they, and their Club, benefit.

### How does a Club measure "Success"?

The degree to which a club can be considered to be successful depends on a number of inter related factors, as indicated in the table below:

Factor	Measurement or assessment
<b>Finances</b>	Well controlled with a slight surplus of receipts over expenditure. Positive balance sheet at all times. Adequate reserves to cover planned capital expenditure.
<b>Facilities</b>	Well maintained and continually being improved where required. Includes lawns and surrounds, buildings and equipment
<b>Player numbers</b>	Gradually increasing without any major recruitment drives. Word-of-mouth recommendations
<b>Culture</b>	Welcoming, friendly, supportive. Members enjoy coming to play and have a sense of 'belonging'.
<b>Member Contribution</b>	Club members willing to help at club events, fund raising and working bees
<b>Player ability</b>	Continually being developed and improved. Main measure of success being the number of players entering tournaments and their success in such tournaments
<b>Committee</b>	Active, progressive, capable and cohesive, always working for the best interests of the club
<b>Safety</b>	No person (Club member or Visitor) has sustained a

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serious injury as a result of playing or visiting the club

**External relations**

Recognised as being a positive influence in the community at all levels (Local community, local and State governments and state sporting organisations)

This document attempts to define the role of the Committee and the duties required of the various Office Bearers.

**How to select office bearers:**

Ideally there are three main requirements for selecting a person for a position on a Committee:

1. The person should want to do the job. This probably means that he/she will learn the requirements and apply them well.
2. The person should have the necessary skills: These days with an increasing amount of communication and banking being carried out electronically (eg e-mail, web sites, direct bank transfers etc) both the Secretary and Treasurer need to be able to use a computer. A treasurer also needs at least a basic understanding of book keeping.
3. The person must be prepared to spend the time necessary to carry out the duties required of the position.

**Position Duties:**

The following recommended list of duties for each of the Committee positions provides a broad overview of what duties are required. Each club should review the list and modify it according to the way they want to operate. It is highly recommended that each club should maintain a written list of duties so that new office bearers know what their position requires.

The Positions of: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Club Captain are essential for a successful Committee. Clubs may find that some or all of the other positions defined below may help spread the workload, particularly as the size of the club increases.

***President:***

The duties of the President are summarised as follows:

- Should be familiar with the Constitution, By-Laws/ Standing Resolutions and have a copy available for reference at all meetings;
- Chairs the Club meetings using a prepared agenda
- Welcomes visitors and opens major events organised by the club (eg Tournaments, Friendship days etc)
- Takes the opportunity to meet all members, guests and visitors on a fellowship basis;
- Resolves any conflicts that may arise within the club
- Ensures that Committee recommendations are brought to the membership for acceptance and ratification;
- Recognises good efforts by Club Members
- Inducts new members into the club.

- Actively seeks ideas and promotes initiatives to improve the way the club operates for the benefit of its members.
- Develops/maintains good relationships with the local community and government (local and state) officers

### ***Vice President:***

The duties of the Vice President are similar to the role of the President and can be a good training position for the next President. Although the Vice President should deputise for the President when he/she is absent, it is also desirable that he/she can stand in for any of the other committee members who may be absent. By doing this the Vice President can obtain a good appreciation of each of the committee duties. Duties are:

- Should be familiar with the Constitution, By-Laws/ Standing Resolutions and have a copy available for reference at all meetings;
- Chairs Meetings in the absence of the President
- Works closely with the President to become familiar with the role and responsibilities of the Presidency;
- Should take the opportunity to meet all members, guests and visitors on a fellowship basis.
- Deals with any Presidential issues that may arise in the President's absence.
- Takes over the duties of any Committee member in their absence or arranges an alternative assistant.
- Assist any Committee member who has a heavy work load.
- May chair a short - term subcommittee formed for a specific duty

### ***Secretary:***

The Secretary's role is one of the most important positions on the Committee. With an increasing amount of correspondence being carried out electronically it has become important for the secretary to be accessible by e-mail. The Secretary's duties include:

- Should be familiar with the Constitution, By-Laws/ Standing Resolutions and have a copy available for reference at all meetings;
- Record minutes of Committee meetings and General meetings and ensure that they are signed by the President or Presiding Officer at the next meeting. The accuracy of the minutes or report is the responsibility of the Secretary.
- Prepare an agenda for each Committee meeting and General meeting, including the Annual General Meeting, for which written notice is to be given.
- Ensure that notice of the election of officers is given and nomination forms are available one or two months prior to closing date for nomination and that they are returned as specified in your Constitution.
- Keep an up-to-date register of Club Member's names, addresses and such other information the club may require. For incorporated clubs, the Public Officer is also required to maintain a list of members and it is often convenient for the Secretary to

also be the Public Officer (and point of contact between the Office of Fair Trading and the Club)

- Keep an up-to-date list of office bearers, Committee members and sub-Committee, with addresses and telephone numbers.
- Present new applications for membership at the first Committee meeting after receipt.
- Prepare a package of information to be presented to a new member at his/her induction. This package to include a welcome letter, name badge, a copy of the Constitution, an up-to-date list of members and list of the Club's Committee members.
- Provide the CNSW Membership Officer with information about new members and membership changes. Complete an annual membership review of members and remit the annual affiliation fees to CNSW.
- Answer all correspondence promptly. Correspondence should be presented to the Committee and files of all correspondence should be maintained.
- Maintain register of all insurance policies held by the club and ensure that they are maintained current.

### ***Treasurer:***

The role of Treasurer is important; and while it is not essential to have accountancy qualifications it is desirable that the Treasurer at the least be familiar with elementary book-keeping and banking procedures. The duties are not onerous but they should be discharged conscientiously.

- Ensure that the club has a bank account with cheque facility and keep control of the cheque book. Two signatories should sign all cheques, and there should be at least 3 signatories available; e.g. President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer.
- Attend all meetings of the Committee and submit a detailed monthly report; and present a summarised financial statement to Committee and General meetings. (If unavailable, arrange for deputy to present statement.)
- Prepare a budget each year, giving consideration to the annual financial commitments and the club's existing financial position, and recommend the amount of annual subscription.
- Collect annual subscriptions.
- Bank all monies received (to comply with insurance requirements).
- Pay all accounts promptly (by non-negotiable cheque or direct bank transfer).
- Arrange petty cash for small outgoings, (such as printing and stationery, postage, telephone calls, morning tea expenses), and record in petty cash book. Members incurring expenditure should submit itemised claims with receipts and should be reimbursed at each meeting.
- Reconcile cash book balance with Bank Statement and follow up on any un-presented cheques.
- Liaises with club Secretary to maintain a record of the financial status of members.
- Annually draw a cheque payable to Croquet NSW., in payment of annual affiliation fees for the club and its members

- Close books at the end of the financial year, submit accounts for audit (if necessary) and prepare a report for the Annual General Meeting.
- Arrange to update bank signatories after the AGM (and at any other time during the year should there be a change of signatories for any reason).
- Prepare a list of the club's assets including the following information:
  - Purchase or market value (include date of purchase)
  - Depreciated value (for inclusion in Annual financial statement)

### ***Club Captain(s):***

For small clubs one Club captain will probably be sufficient for all the codes of croquet played by the club but for larger clubs it may be desirable to have one captain for each of the main codes played. Whether one, two or more captains, the duties are:

- To have a good knowledge of the rules of the game(s) and ensure that club members play to the rules.
- Organise play on club days. There are many way of organising the draw for players and, although the Captain doesn't have to, personally, set the draw, he/she should ensure that a fair method of making the draw is established. In general the draw should be organised to provide players with a variety of partners and a variety of opponents.
- Arrange coaching for new players and for any players who need to improve their skill in a specific area.
- Organise club competitions and tournaments
- Organise visits to and from other clubs
- Chair, or at least be a member of, the Handicap Committee and ensure that each player's handicap accurately reflects their level of skill in the game
- Nurture players to help them to develop their skills and enjoyment of the game. Encourage players to enter external tournaments commensurate with their abilities

### ***Handicapper:***

Larger clubs may justify having a dedicated handicapper who will chair a Handicap Committee whereas smaller clubs will probably incorporate the duties into those of the Club Captain. Whichever way it is done, however, it is important for each player to have a handicap which directly relates to his/her ability. Even players who are just 'social' players should still have a handicap which, at its most basic level, is used to define which grade a player is in. The most objective way of determining a player's handicap is by using the handicap cards which are filled in for each singles game played. If this is not done then the handicapper needs to make a subjective assessment of the each player's ability. This can best be carried out if the handicapper regularly plays with club players. The duties are:

- Must have a good knowledge of the Croquet handicapping system and its limitations.
- Train players in the handicapping system explaining how to complete the handicapping cards, trigger points, how to determine bisques/extra turns etc.
- Sign off any handicap change on the player's handicap card
- Provide the State Handicapper with changes in player's handicaps at regular intervals.

### ***Groundsman/Grounds Officer:***

A club's croquet lawns usually account for the highest expenditure for the club and it is important that they are maintained well. Some clubs are lucky enough to have their lawns maintained by the local council and others might be part of a sporting complex or country club where their lawns are maintained by common green keeping staff. Most clubs, however, will be responsible for maintaining their own lawns. The Groundsman or Grounds Officer is responsible for ensuring that the club's lawns are maintained to an acceptable standard. The club may decide that the lawns should be maintained by a committee to spread the workload in which case the Grounds Officer will chair the committee. There are several methods of organising the maintenance of the lawns and the duties of the groundsman will depend on which method is chosen. The three main methods of carrying out the maintenance are:

1. Use a greenkeeping contractor to maintain the lawns (most expensive option)
2. Club members to maintain the lawns (requires purchase of necessary maintenance equipment eg lawn mower, fertiliser spreader etc. Requires sufficient able bodied members willing to do the work)
3. A combination of (1) and (2) above where some activities are done by contract and others are carried out by club members.

Depending on the way the lawns maintenance is organised, the Grounds Officer's duties will include some, or all, of the following:

- Gain a basic knowledge of the maintenance requirements of a croquet lawn (eg how high to cut the grass, type of lawn, seasonal variation in growth, mowing frequency, weeds, pests and diseases etc)
- If the club has its own mower, organise a mowing roster. Usually croquet lawns are mown twice a week in Summer and once a week in Winter. Ensure that the mower is maintained in good order and blades are sharpened regularly.
- Keep weeds to a minimum using a selective herbicide appropriate to the type of weed.
- Keep the lawns free of diseases and insect pests using appropriate fungicides and insecticides.
- Liaise with greenkeeping contractors where necessary to ensure that they are kept informed of the maintenance requirements, particularly with regard to work in preparation for a tournament.
- Organise a club member (or roster of members) to mark the boundary lines on a regular basis and to change hoop positions to minimise 'rabbit runs'.
- Organise regular working bees to carry out routine maintenance work
- Organise repairs when necessary on buildings and equipment belonging to the club.
- Prepare a maintenance budget as part of the club's overall financial budget for each year.
- Maintain an inventory of the club's equipment - necessary for insurance purposes.
- Report to the Committee on maintenance activities and issues requiring attention.

### ***Delegate to CNSW:***

Each club may be represented on the Croquet NSW council by a delegate (or Proxy Delegate)  
The Club delegate is the main communication link between the Club and Croquet NSW

The duties of the delegate are:

- To attend CNSW Council Meetings (held 4 times a year) and vote on issues according to the direction of the Club Committee.
- To raise any changes proposed by CNSW with the Club committee to obtain direction on whether to support or oppose the change.
- To communicate CNSW policy and changes to the Club Committee.

### ***Catering/Hospitality Officer:***

As a club grows, catering for functions such as BBQs, all day competitions, Friendship days etc. often requires a considerable amount of work. Clubs may find it beneficial to allocate someone to organise such functions involving the following duties:

- Organise club members to provide food and assist in Catering.
- Ensure that the necessary consumables (eg tea, coffee, milk, sugar etc) are purchased when required and stored appropriately .
- Organise the cleaning of the food preparation facilities and disposal of rubbish.
- As requested by the Committee, organise a venue for club functions involving food (eg Christmas Party etc)

### ***Publicity Officer:***

A club needs to keep its members informed of activities within the club and it is also desirable to publicise the club in local media and to CNSW (specifically the CNSW Newsletter and the CNSW web site)

For a small club, keeping members informed of activities can be done fairly easily by informal discussion but as the club grows a Club Newsletter may be worthwhile.

The duties may include:

- Editing and publishing and distributing a club newsletter to members and friends and other interested parties (eg other clubs)
- Arrange for media (Newspapers, Radio and Television) publicity of important club events (eg tournaments, opening of new facilities etc).
- Contribute articles to the CNSW Newsletter and the CNSW Web site related to significant club events.

### ***Welfare Officer:***

Most members of croquet clubs tend to be in the senior age group who often suffer from the ills related to ageing. Some of these clubs members may live alone without much family support and a caring club will try to offer its support. A Welfare Officer will:

- Contact members who are unwell or in hospital.
- Send cards with appropriate messages to sick or bereaved members
- Advise the Committee if a member needs support (eg transport, visits etc)



### ***Merchandising Officer:***

It is generally desirable for clubs to have their own unique uniform and these are usually cheaper if they are purchased in quantity by the club for the ongoing sale to members. The club may also have a range of other merchandise such as club badges (Metal or cloth), and other croquet items (eg ball markers, hoop counters etc). A Merchandising Officer will:

- Maintain the inventory of items for sale and arrange the purchase of more stock when the inventory falls below the minimum level.
- Sell items to club members or visitors from other clubs
- Provide sales information to the Treasurer.

### **Insurance:**

Clubs can be sued for liability just as a company can; in fact such organisations are often more of a target for law suits because in many ways a community organisation's activities are of a wider range than a company's, and often the activities are run by well meaning volunteers who might not necessarily have the necessary risk management skills.

As Australian society tends to become more litigious there is a greater possibility that a club or individual could be sued in the event of an accident that results in injury or property damage.

To guard against this, insurance companies now offer a wide range of insurance 'products' or policies which are often written in legalese and have many caveats, but croquet clubs must be aware of what they are covered for.

Croquet is not considered to be a dangerous sport, however, it tends to be played mainly by people in the senior age group whose reflexes are probably a bit slower, who may be on blood thinners (so a minor injury will bleed profusely) and whose bones are brittle. As a result, a relatively minor accident can result in a major injury.

The following table provides a summary of the types of insurance cover available:

<b>Type</b>	<b>What/who is covered</b>
<b>1</b> Public Liability (Legal Liability)	Necessary for any organisation as it protects against claims from third parties as a result of negligent acts.
<b>2</b> Personal Accident (Death or disablement)	Injury to any member of the club while involved in a club activity including travel to and from the activity. Should also cover visitors to the club.
<b>3</b> Volunteer Workers	Covers volunteers working for the club in a official or recognised capacity
<b>4</b> Professional Indemnity	Committee Officials, coaches - against being sued for negligence due to their advice or actions.
<b>5</b> Special Events	Many Clubs run special events several times each year, whether for fund raising or as a community service, the liability exposures can be quite different to ordinary public liability especially where alcohol, beverages and food are provided to an 'invited' public.

6	Product liability	Applies if the club manufactures a product for use by club members or visitors. The liability may cover a manufacturing defect, design defect or a failure to warn the user which results in injury.
7	Property Contents	Covers damage or theft of equipment housed on the Club's premises. Can be insured for market value or replacement value.
8	Building Insurance	If the Club owns its buildings then they need to insure them against fire or damage caused by severe weather. It may be desirable to insure glazing that could be broken either accidentally or by vandals

For affiliated clubs, some of these areas of insurance are covered by Croquet NSW through the Australian Croquet Association (ACA).

See: <http://www.croquet-australia.com.au/Governance/insurance.html>

### **Club Finances:**

A club needs to have a regular income in order to pay its operating costs including:

- Maintenance of lawns and equipment
- Purchase of new equipment and facilities
- Supply of consumables (eg cleaning products, fuels etc).
- Payment of affiliation and statutory fees

A club may be able to obtain funds from other sources (see below) but most of the funds will usually be obtained by charging club members fees. The two main methods of structuring member fees are:

1. An annual fee that allows a club member to play without further playing charges
2. A combination of an annual fee and a 'green fee' which is paid by the member each time he/she plays.

Option 2 is a 'user pays' system where the heaviest users, pay the greater amount and is a fairer system. Option 1 disadvantages a light user who may only wish to play occasionally but who has to pay the same amount as someone who may play several times a week.

For the second option the annual fee component is usually set to provide the funds needed to provide the fixed costs component of the expenditure (eg Affiliation, statutory charges) and the green fees cover the variable or operating costs of the club (eg maintenance, consumables).

Purchase of new capital equipment (eg croquet equipment, Maintenance equipment, building modification etc) can be funded by:

- Increasing the annual fee
- Organising fund raising activities
- Obtaining for a grant (eg from the Government - see: <http://www.dsr.nsw.gov.au/grants/>)

In practice a progressive club will probably use all these methods to obtain the funds required to provide for the ongoing development of the club's facilities.

### **Duty of Care:**

Under the '*Civil Liability Act 2002*', clubs are responsible for a 'duty of care' to club members and visitors. Under this legislation a club can be considered negligent (and hence could be sued) if:

- They didn't take precautions to prevent harm due to a foreseeable risk
- In the circumstances, a reasonable person would have taken the necessary precautions
- The risk was not insignificant.

The best method of ensuring that a club meets the requirements of the 'Duty of Care' legislation is for the club to have a risk management policy. This policy requires the club to identify risks and assess them according to their likelihood of occurrence and the consequence if they did happen. Once the risks are identified and assessed, actions should be taken to either minimise the risk or ensure that club members are aware of the risk so that they can avoid the danger.

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