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AssociationsInfo

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Introducing AssociationsOnline

The Department of Commerce would like to announce the arrival of AssociationsOnline, a new online portal for incorporated associations.

AssociationsOnline allows associations to view information and submit requests online through the Department's website. Submitting forms online saves time, money and paper, so time can be better used to run your association and participate in its activities.

Once enrolled, incorporated associations will be able to:

- lodge changes to the rules/constitution;
- update contact information;
- request an extension of time to hold the annual general meeting;
- purchase a replacement certificate of incorporation; and
- view the progress of documents lodged with this office.

Members of the public and unincorporated groups will also be able to use the services to check whether an association is registered, purchase copies of documents and apply to become incorporated.

While there are now a range of online services available, hard copy forms are still available for associations' that do not have access to the internet and applications can still be submitted by fax or post.

For more information about enrolling to use **AssociationsOnline** and the services available please read the enclosed information sheet and visit **www.commerce.wa.gov.au/associationsonline.**

Don't miss out – update your contact details

Keep up to date with the current Association Newsletters, important information and notices we send you. Make sure you update the address and contact details of your association so you don't miss out. If you belong to more than one association, make sure that their contact details are up to date too!

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Did you know...

Notice of any amendments to the rules of an association must state that the resolutions will be proposed as "special resolutions" and must be sent to all members in accordance with the association's existing rules.

Membership matters

Recent enquiries by members suggest that some associations may be having difficulties managing their membership register and processes. Consumer Protection would like to highlight the importance of keeping your association's membership records up to date.

An association's rules, (often called the constitution), should detail all the necessary processes to apply for and maintain the membership of an organisation. Looking to the rules first, an association should think about:

- **Becoming a member** - ensure that new applications are completed and considered in accordance with the rules.
- **Eligibility** - if your association has different member categories, check that new members are eligible for the category they've applied for.
- **Subscriptions** - if members are required to pay annual subscriptions, make sure renewal letters are sent and payments made within timeframes specified in the association's rules.

If memberships are not managed properly there can be flow on effects to the rights of members to attend meetings, vote and nominate for committee positions Associations also need to maintain an up-to-date Register of Members so if for example; a person ceases to be a member, remember to remove their details from the Register.

Education still a hot topic

Every year Consumer Protection staff travel far and wide delivering information sessions to associations and clubs about the rights and obligations of the members'. These free sessions are always well received and we would like to thank all those who have taken the time to attend in the past.

So far this financial year, Department of Commerce, Consumer Protection have visited the Pilbara, Wheatbelt and Goldfields regions and were also invited to try associations, "speed dating" at an event run by the City of Joondalup. In coming months sessions are being proposed for the **Great Southern** region as well as two metropolitan presentations.

Invitation letters will be sent directly to associations in presentation areas but you can also keep an eye on our website for details of upcoming sessions.

Account keeping made easy

Associations are required to keep true and correct records of all financial transactions. Developing a suitable set of accounts that will fit the needs of your association can sometimes be a daunting task but the introduction of a National Standard Chart of Accounts (SCOA) may offer a solution.

The SCOA is an agreed list of account categories most likely to be used by not for profit organisations to record accounting information. In July 2011 all Australian government agencies agreed to adopt the SCOA to reduce the burden on not for profit organisations that report for funding and grants.

While it is not mandatory for associations and clubs to adopt the SCOA, it may be useful in improving your association's internal accounts and reporting systems, making it easier to meet the legal obligations under the *Associations Incorporation Act 1987*.

The National SCOA:

- is suitable for organisations operating on both cash and accrual accounting basis;
- includes a data dictionary that explains each category item in plain English;
- was designed to meet the needs of small to medium size not for profit organisations; and
- is generic and can be used with any accounting packages.

In Western Australia, the implementation of the National SCOA is supported by the Department of Treasury. For more information and resources visit the Regulatory Reform section of Economic Reform at **www.treasury.wa.gov.au.**

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