



Australian Government
Department of Education



CIVICS AND
CITIZENSHIP
EDUCATION

Discovering Democracy unit:
Upper Primary

Joining in

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Education
Services
Australia

Joining in

Introduction

Students investigate the kinds, structures and functions of groups in a community. They examine how and why people participate in these groups. Through organising and participating in their own group, students explore the characteristics of community groups. They make links between community groups and how local government supports them. Students investigate ways that other people can participate in community groups.

By the end of this unit, students will be able to ...

- describe the roles and purposes of community groups
- evaluate benefits and costs of membership in community groups
- actively participate in project planning and decision making.

Australian Curriculum links

Year 5	
AC9HS5K07	How citizens (members of communities) with shared beliefs and values work together to achieve a civic goal
AC9HS5S01	Develop questions to investigate people, events, developments, places and systems
AC9HS5S02	Locate, collect and organise information and data from primary and secondary sources in a range of formats
AC9HS5S06	Propose actions or responses to issues or challenges and use criteria to assess the possible effects
AC9HS5S07	Present descriptions and explanations, drawing ideas, findings and viewpoints from sources, and using relevant terms and conventions

Background notes

In a civil society, people form links with others in many ways. We are members of families, friendship groups, neighbourhoods, political and sporting groups, church and social groups. These links create networks which allow us to participate in the rich and diverse social life of a community. Citizenship includes involvement in the civil life of a community whether it's through formal membership or informal association.

The purposes of these groups vary and reflect the needs and interests of the community they serve. Groups undertake a wide range of activities including service-based projects such as Meals on Wheels, conservation and heritage projects, and cultural and recreational activities. Whatever the purposes of such groups, they result in people working together in a social context that extends beyond their own home. It creates the bonds of trust, the skills of cooperation and the values that bind communities together. Democracies rely on this interaction.

Community groups organise themselves in ways best suited to help them achieve their purposes. Some use formal structures with elected office bearers, others prefer a system based on consensus or group decision-making. Democratically run organisations have rules, which are often written in a constitution, so that everyone in the group knows what is expected and how they can make decisions as a member of the group.

The internet and social networks have enabled the growth of virtual communities. Communities are no longer solely bound by geography but by shared ideas and connection, so people have new ways to participate and 'join in'.

Other resources

The groups mentioned in the student resource pages (including local councils) often have local branches that could be used as examples in this unit. Many have website information that is suitable for students, and may have representatives willing to speak with classes about their work.

KEY TERMS

agenda, citizen, community, consensus, constitution, decision making, member, minutes, organisation, participate, project, responsibilities, rights, rules, volunteer, vote

Note: You can refer to the glossary if necessary.

Focus question 1: Why do community groups exist?

Additional resources: pamphlets and advertising information from local community groups and from newspapers and magazines

Activity 1: Introduction (30 min)

- a. Introduce the concept of groups of people living, working and playing together; for example, families, class groups and, in an area, community groups. Students identify the groups they belong to and list them on the board. Put an asterisk next to the community groups. Explain that the focus of this topic is on the community groups and the idea of people in the community joining in.
- b. Introduce the idea of the class organising a community group, and ask them what they think the group could do. Explain that in order to have a wide range of choices, they are going to investigate a range of community groups and their purposes.

Activity 2: Other groups in the community (60 min)

- a. As a class, view *Discovering Democracy: Joining in* slideshow and discuss the groups and individuals described.

Note: The activity on the final slide will be used later in the activity.

Kick off the activity by listing the community groups from the slide show on the board. Conduct a whole-class Think-Pair-Share to brainstorm a list of community groups (by name or by type) students know. Join in the process to extend the ideas being offered.

- Think: Each student writes a list of community groups they know.
- Pair: They share their ideas with one other student and eliminate duplicates; they might also add groups.
- Share: Pairs join to make a group of four, and repeat the step above. Each group adds their note to the board. Duplicates are placed on top of each other.

Discuss the purposes of the groups represented and the people who might participate in each of the groups. Students propose categories according to purpose and arrange the notes under those groups.

The purposes of groups in the community are usually based around:

- health, welfare and community services; e.g. Meals on Wheels, Red Cross Australia (see **Resource 1**), RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals)
- emergency and safety services; e.g. State Emergency Services (see **Resource 2**), St John Ambulance
- service clubs; e.g. Apex (see **Resource 3**), Lions, Rotary, Soroptimist, Country Women's Association
- environment and conservation; e.g. Landcare Australia (see **Resource 4**), 'Friends of ...' groups
- heritage; e.g. local history groups (see **Resource 5**), local museum groups
- sport and recreation; e.g. tennis clubs (see **Resource 6**), walking groups

- the arts; e.g. craft, art, drama (see **Resource 7**) and cinema groups
- culture; e.g. Aboriginal Reconciliation Network (see **Resource 8**), Vietnamese Community groups, Greek Women's Action Group.

Note: Groups also form online via social media; e.g. locality-based groups or groups that form around events such as bushfires.

- In order to find out more about the purposes of the groups on the list, students choose some of these groups to research. Students can investigate a particular community group and report back to the class on different aspects of that group because community groups often have a range of ways to achieve their purposes.
- Negotiate the research questions with students, such as:
 - What is the purpose of the group?
 - Who can be a member of the group?
 - How does the group work?
 - How do they achieve their purpose?
- Provide each group with information on the community group they have chosen. Alternatively, students could use the groups in **Resources 1–8**.
- Each student group should complete the following to summarise their findings:
 The aim of _____ (the community group) is to _____ (purpose) by _____ for _____.
 For example: 'The aim of Red Cross Australia is to help people by such things as fundraising for research into diseases.'

Activity 3: Community groups (30 min)

- Identify that some of the community groups researched exist to achieve benefits, not only for themselves, but for other members of the community. Circle the groups that help other members of the community. Discuss the people who may be members of the community groups, considering factors such as age, time available and interests.
- Ask students why they think people join these groups. If students need extra prompts, the commonly listed reasons that people identify for joining are:
 - to make friends
 - to share an interest
 - to learn something new
 - to help someone or something
 - to feel good about themselves
 - to have fun.

Note: Care must be taken to avoid reinforcing stereotypes.

Activity 4: Community poster (45 min)

- a. Students start a journal to record their learning. They summarise what they have learned so far and use the journal to design a poster of the community group they researched.
- b. Remind students that a poster is bright and eye-catching, has large lettering that can be seen from a distance, has attractive pictures and other illustrations such as logos and photos, and explains information in both a few key words and the illustrations. If posters are designed and developed by groups of students, the teacher may wish to discuss the criteria with each student as they work to determine and record their level of understanding.
- c. Each student should then make and display a poster of the community group they researched.

Assessment

Assess each student's posters using the following criteria. The student can demonstrate:

- the purpose of the community group
- the benefit of the group to the community
- who is likely to be a member of this community group
- reasons to join the group
- information that is appropriate and correct
- information that is clearly and logically presented.

Activity 5: Forming the student group (30 min)

- a. Using the information gathered, discuss the possibility of a class group being formed to undertake a community or school-based project. Divide the class into small groups to discuss possible projects. Provide discussion starters about, for example, how much time is available for the activity or how everyone will be involved (they will have choices about their level of participation). Ideas proposed will need to be realistic and teachers will need to develop clear parameters for the students.
- b. The student groups decide what they believe is possible for them to undertake in a class setting, within a nominated time frame. Each group presents their argument as to what they would like to undertake and why. The class votes to achieve a result.
- c. Select a name for the class group; the purpose of the group will help to determine its name. For this unit of work, an environmental clean-up activity in the school and/or community has been used as a model.

Note: A clean-up may not suit your group. Select an activity that is appropriate for your class's available time and skill level, and the school setting and community.

- d. The purpose of the class group is to be agreed, then written and displayed. For example: 'The aim of (the Environmental Clean-Up) is to (beautify the worst area of the school) by (planning and undertaking a rubbish clean-up) for (the school community).'

Activity 6: Seeking approvals (30 min)

- a. Explain that proposals from community groups need to be approved, usually by a local government that works within decision-making structures called by-laws and regulations. In school there are several levels of decision-making, for example the student council, the parent council and the principal. For this activity the principal (and school council?) will be asked for approval to hold the proposed class activity.
- b. As a class, draft a letter seeking permission from the principal for the Environmental Clean-up. The letter will need to outline:
 - who is asking for approval to undertake the Environmental Clean-Up
 - the proposed aims of the clean-up
 - where and when it will happen
 - who will be organising it
 - what kind of project the clean-up will undertake
 - the kind of support being asked of the principal; e.g. newsletter space for promotion.

Focus question 2: How do groups function?

Activity 1: Looking at other groups (30 min)

- a. Explain to students that in order to get their group organised, it is useful to know how groups function. From the information gathered in Focus question 1, Activity 2, ask students to identify how the community groups get together and make decisions. Through discussion it can be concluded that these particular community groups get together at meetings and members usually vote to make decisions. Explain to students that most community groups are organised this way, although they range on a continuum from ones where a leader tells everyone else what to do through to groups who reach decisions through consensus, meaning that everyone has to agree to a proposal.
- b. Display **Resource 9** and discuss the pluses and minuses of three models of community group function. The model of majority rules is used for the class activity in this topic.

Note: Teachers may wish to role-play the three models and ask students how they felt they were able to contribute using each model.

Activity 2: Developing a constitution (30 min)

- a. Discuss rules. Illustrate with examples from the class, school and traffic.

Why do we have them? Rules determine the rights and responsibilities of being a member of a group. This applies to families, class groups and citizens in a community group. So that everyone in the group can be a contributing member, there are rules about how the group will work. Families usually don't write down their rules but other, more public, groups do.

Explain to students that most public groups have a set of rules, called a constitution. This is a public document that everyone agrees to follow when they join a community group. The constitution also explains how changes can be made.

- b. Display **Resource 11**, a sample constitution, and discuss the format as a class group. Explain that the class will develop a constitution to describe how the class project will operate.
- c. In small groups, students discuss and note their thoughts on how the tennis club constitution can be adapted to incorporate the Environmental Clean-Up constitution. Only some sections can be noted at this time; the rest will follow when the structure for the class group is decided. Through discussion of the notes and agreement by the students, start to draft the constitution.

Note: Australia has a constitution which sets out the rules of government, including law-making by parliament.

- d. As a class, discuss how groups interact online and the rules that govern their behaviour. For example, some sites have moderators who review or manage what is said and shared online, usually with stated behavioural values. Conduct a Think-Pair-Share activity that asks students to create a list of rules that would govern an online group for young people.

As a class, agree to a set of rules that the class could use to moderate an online community it might form.

Activity 3: The suggested model (30 min)

A model that includes all class members has been included for the purposes of the activity.

Note: Teachers may prefer to use existing decision-making structures in the school, e.g. the student representative council, to simplify the task.

- a. Create and display the following committees chart and discuss the committees with the class.

Each of the five committees will consist of approximately seven students. (Five committees should accommodate an average class size.) Parent or staff support could help to support the committees. Replace any of the committee titles and roles as appropriate.

Note: Alternatively, run this activity as a whole class, with all students participating in all committees in turn.

Committee	Data Collection Committee	Communications Committee	Finance and Facilities Committee	Support-Raising Committee	Management Committee
Consists of	Leader and team	Secretary and team	Treasurer and team	Leader and team	Chairperson and team
Role	Our Committee is responsible for 1 2 3	Our Committee is responsible for 1 2 3	Our Committee is responsible for 1 2 3	Our Committee is responsible for 1 2 3	Our Committee is responsible for 1 2 3
Committee leader					
Committee members					

- b. Discuss the three roles of each committee with the class. Many tasks will come from the committees. Here are some possible starters.

Data Collection Committee:

Gathers information on:

- why the clean-up is necessary
- what could be done
- what the final result should be
- similar activities in other places.

Communications Committee:

- organises the agenda and takes minutes for the meetings
- promotes the activity, e.g. through online/print school newsletters, local papers and posters
- speaks at school assembly to update the school community on the event
- organises guest speakers.

Finance and Facilities Committee:

- estimates cost of items or services needed for the clean-up
- seeks donations of equipment
- organises equipment as needed, e.g. gloves or tongs, rubbish bags
- sets up equipment.

Support-Raising Committee:

- decides which people could support the clean-up, e.g. local government may remove waste or supply trees
- writes to possible helpers, e.g. students, parents, local council
- works to influence the student council to support the clean-up.

Management Committee:

- coordinates the overall activity
- runs the meetings
- minutes the major decisions made.

- c. Discuss and list the main responsibilities resulting from each committee and list on the chart.

Activity 4: Selecting leaders and committee members (30 min)

- a. Clarify for students that leadership roles on a committee carry rights and responsibilities. People join community groups and make commitments based on what they can offer to the group. Usually the people in leadership roles have available time and organisational skills. Discuss examples from the groups researched earlier.
- b. From the description of the role, students nominate suitable candidates, or students nominate themselves by outlining their availability, skills and experiences to undertake the leadership roles of the committee. Explain to students that the success of the activity depends on their selection of the most appropriate people for the role.

Discuss voting principles: all students have the right to stand for positions; all students have the right to vote; the method of election should be fair to all students.

- c. Vote to decide leaders for each committee. A secret ballot may be the best way to vote if there are likely to be social repercussions of an open vote. Add leaders' names to the lists. Students nominate themselves on committees. As this is a class activity, all students are expected to participate and undertake a task.
- d. The Management Committee will consist of the leader or nominee from each committee. The chairperson for the Management Committee can be elected from the class group.
- e. Add the results of the role selection to the chart.

Activity 5: Decision-making (15 min)

In a consensus, an idea is modified until all members agree.

- a. Discuss decision-making. Ask students to decide how the committee will make decisions. For this activity, ask each committee to aim for a consensus model, but if necessary to use the results of a vote as the final decider. The committee leader or nominee will represent the committee's decisions at the Management Committee meeting.
- b. The Management Committee uses a meeting agenda, keeps minutes and makes major decisions through motions raised to the committee for discussion for and against, then a vote to reach a decision. Display **Resource 10** and discuss the format and the task.

Activity 6: Meeting procedures (15 min)

- a. Explain to students that the times when they are organising the activity in class are the meeting times of the committees. At the end of each committee meeting, the Management Committee will meet with the other class members present.

This provides an ideal discussion on the concept of representation and a way of students observing another aspect of joining in. It also provides a means of observation and further discussion of how decisions are made by the group.

- b. Clarify tasks and progress towards the clean-up activity. The Management Committee provides a way for the members to monitor the performance of their representatives. There can also be 'points from the floor' raised at the end of each Management Committee meeting to hear from committee members who feel that information needs to be added.

Note: Provide opportunities for students to record their reflections on the process in their journals.

Activity 7: Ratifying the constitution (60 min)

- a. All discussion groups return to a whole-class forum to reach a consensus on the draft constitution. Display **Resource 11** and use it as a model for developing the project constitution. It is then published, signed by each member of the class and displayed where everyone can see and readily refer to it. A copy of the constitution can be recorded in student journals as part of their record keeping.
- b. Discuss what should be stated in each section. Compose a rough draft as a class.

Focus question 3: How do groups get things done?

Activity 1: Working together (45 min)

- c. Distribute or display **Resource 12** to provide the class with some prior knowledge about the Clean Up Australia Campaign before viewing the video *Schools Clean Up Day – Behind the News*. It illustrates the idea that people working together as a group can achieve more than one person alone.

Ask students to note the age range of the people who wanted to join in to clean up Australia, and the range of ways they contributed to make the event successful. Invite students to share their experiences of clean-up activities they may have been involved in.

Note: The Clean Up Australia website updates their [promotional videos](#) every year. These can be used as an alternative to the Behind the News video.

If the planned class activity is a clean-up, highlight the range of possible tasks to be undertaken. The Clean Up Australia website also [provides advice](#) for schools.

- d. Ask students to reflect on the probable outcome of the campaign if only one age group had participated, for example all students, all older people or all sponsorship contributions. Discuss why activities are more successful when all kinds of people join in with a range of things to offer to the activity, for example time, money, equipment, expertise or labour. Highlight that people participate in community groups in ways that they can.
- e. As a class talk about the role online promotion can play in the success of the Clean Up Australia Campaign. Discuss ways that the class could include online promotion, for example through through their parents, school or local council social media or via local Member of Parliament sites.

Note: Age limits on popular social media platforms may restrict students directly posting messages.

Activity 2: Planning the Environmental Clean-Up (60 min)

- a. Refer back to the stated purpose of the activity. In this case it is:
‘The aim of the Environmental Clean-Up is to beautify the worst area of the school by planning and undertaking environmental action for the school community.’
- b. As a class, visualise and document what the Environmental Clean-Up will look like. For example, the time of day, what people will be doing, the helpers, and where and how it will all happen. Then identify the tasks needed to achieve the purpose of the activity and list these on the board. These tasks are then taken by the most appropriate committee to form the basis of their work.

- c. Students in their committee groups detail and add to the tasks using the who, what, where, why, when and how questions. Distribute the action plans (**Resource 13**) for groups to draft their plans.
- d. Feedback from each committee is provided to the Management Committee by the leader (or nominee) of each committee. The Management Committee amends or suggests amendments to the action plans. The Management Committee draws up and displays a time line of what needs to be done by when, so that all committee members clearly understand when their contribution is expected.

Allow adequate time for the organisation of the activity so that students understand the way that meetings and organisation happen. Regular meetings will ensure that the parts to be organised are being undertaken as needed. Students may need some extra support along the way. Parent volunteers may be able to support the group tasks. However, it is important that the responsibility for action is with the students.

Assessment

Because the students will be working in small groups, teachers will have opportunities to observe and record individual participation skills. Students also continue to record summaries of their committee activities in their journal. Assess using the following criteria. The student can demonstrate an understanding of:

- the purpose of the committee
- what this committee has to do
- what they have to do as an individual
- how they feel about the committee work
- how well the committee leader represents their views at the Management Committee meeting,
- why they feel this way and what they can do about it.

Activity 4: Undertake the Environmental Clean-Up (time will vary)

Consider videotaping or photographing the activity and/or inviting local media.

Activity 5: After the clean-up (60 min)

Committees regroup to determine how to finalise all components of the activity, for example:

- thanking all helpers
- returning things in good shape
- reporting outcomes to others, for example at school assembly
- newsletter article to promote activities
- celebrations.

The clean-up is concluded.

Focus question 4: How can groups make a difference?

Activity 1: Evaluating the group activity (60 min)

- a. In order to decide whether the Environmental Clean-Up was a success, seek feedback from the people who contributed to the work and the people who would see the results of the clean-up, for instance other students at the school, parents, teachers.
- b. Develop the contents of the feedback pro forma, e.g. the positives and suggestions for future improvements, with the students. Send it to the relevant people. Alternatively, ask students to interview a cross-section of the school population using the pro forma as a prompt.
- c. Collate and discuss the feedback to determine if other people thought that the class group had achieved their purpose and made a difference to the school community through their activities, and how they would run the project if they had to do it again.

Activity 2: Students evaluating their contribution (45 min)

- a. Students also need to consider their role in the activity. Teachers may use some of the following points to initiate discussion:
 - How did students feel about participating in a group activity?
 - How did students feel about being a committee member (or leader)?
 - Outline students' rights and responsibilities as members of the clean-up activity.
 - Discuss the positives and negatives of the clean-up activity.
 - How did students contribute to the outcome?
 - How did students' contributions made a difference to the outcome?
 - How did others on the committees contribute to the outcome?
 - Discuss things that were helpful and things that were not (hindrances).
 - Ask what students would do differently next time.
- b. Students can record their responses in the journal. Alternatively, **Resource 14** can be used for recording purposes. Ask students to share some of their feedback with the class. This way students can maintain confidentiality on the parts of the feedback they wish to.

Assessment

Assess student journals and other documentation according to the following criteria. The student can demonstrate an understanding of:

- rights and responsibilities of group members, e.g. the right to be heard, the responsibility to listen to others
- participation skills, e.g. the ability to take turns to speak, encourage others, resolve issues
- communication skills, e.g. the ability to document accurately, explain ideas to others.

Focus question 5: How and where in the community can people join in?

Activity 1: Local government services (60 min)

- a. Explain to students that local government is usually called a council. Explain any local variations needed on this concept; for example, in New South Wales there are also Council Shires. Individually, students read 'Local council's services' (**Resource 15**).

Note: A useful video explainer on the [responsibilities of local government](#) is available.

- b. Ask students, in the class groups they worked in for Focus question 1, to discuss and identify the links between their community group and Council services. Students can refer back to the posters and purposes of the groups on the display board.

Note: Visits to and visitors and resources from the local council are a valuable source of student learning.

- c. Add 'Local government' as a heading to the display of community groups and use streamers to 'draw' the links between local government services and community groups. Examples include support of State Emergency Service for community emergencies, e.g. floods, maintenance of courts for local tennis clubs and waste clearing for Clean Up Australia (mentioned in the video). Discuss with students how local government supports citizens in the community.

Activity 2: Barriers to joining in (60 min)

- a. Working in their groups, ask students to refer back to their feedback on help and hindrances towards achieving the purpose of the group activity, and discuss how they might have resolved the issues.

Bring the class together and share their findings, listing them in a table with two columns headed 'Problems' and 'Possible Solutions'.

- b. Students identify the hindrances that they believe would be the same for other people in the community, such as time. Discuss how other people's ability to participate in community groups also depends on many factors. Other factors include not knowing that some groups exist, access to social media or website information, language barriers, age considerations, availability of time, access to transport, and the cost of membership to some groups.
- c. Ask students through group discussion to identify and list ways they, community groups and local government could support people to join in. Some examples include advertising the groups in the local and school newspaper, translating information about groups into other languages, providing free community transport and reducing some membership costs.
- d. One representative from each student group feeds back their group's responses. These are added to the table. Discuss how realistic the suggestions are. Put an asterisk next to the most feasible ones.

Activity 3: Designing a presentation (60 min)

- a. Ask students to design a presentation that illustrates what they have learnt about joining in.

Note: Students could work in groups, pairs or individually on this task. If working in pairs or groups, have students complete their journal with a reflection on what they've learned through the unit. Include this review to assess individual students' understandings.

The presentation may take different formats: a poster, a slideshow, a video or a brochure that can be used to promote their learnings with the school community.

List the topics to be addressed in the presentation on the board and discuss how presentations might communicate the messages.

- What do we mean by joining in?
- Who are the groups in our community?
- Why do people participate in community groups?
- What are ways people participate in community groups?
- What are the rights and responsibilities of being members of community groups?
- Summarise the school activity.
- What have we gained from joining in?

Assessment

Collect the student journals and presentations, and assess these using the following criteria.

The student can demonstrate an understanding of:

- groups in the community
- the ways people participate in groups
- the rights and responsibilities of being members of groups
- people's reasons for joining groups
- the ways people can join in groups
- how other people can be encouraged to participate
- pluses (benefits) and minuses (costs) of groups in the community.

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National Youth &
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The Australian Red Cross is part of a worldwide organisation that tries to make the world a better place. In 1863 Henry Dunant started Red Cross to help people in wars. Today, 160 million people in 192 countries do all sorts of work to make his dream a reality. The Red Cross has rules to make sure that everyone is cared for equally. In Australia, the Red Cross also works to make local communities better places to live.

Charlie joined the Junior Red Cross, which is part of the Australian Red Cross for young people, because he wanted to help people. He volunteered to become a group leader:

In our group we learn about the work of the Red Cross, first aid, health and safety. We helped in a safety check at school and made the playground safer. We have raised money for the Red Cross by having a disco at school and organising a horror house at the local fete. We also visit the local kindergarten to read stories and help elderly people with jobs that they can't manage.

We meet fortnightly at my school. We have a president, a vice-president, a treasurer and a publicity office, who we elect at the start of the year. Each meeting has an agenda and we decide what we want to do by voting and then plan how to do it. Everyone plans the part they are good at. After the meeting we play games and have supper.

This is the way our group works. I know other groups work in different ways that suit them.

State Emergency Service



Reproduced with permission of the South
Australia State Emergency Service

The Salmon family is ready for any emergency. All four members are State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers. Noel Salmon, his wife Roxy and their two daughters Beverley and Vicki work at the Enfield station.

Noel, who has been a member of the SES for 26 years, is the station's controller. He tells the others what they have to do. Roxy is the welfare officer, supplying volunteers with food and drinks during an emergency. Beverley works as the communications officer and Vicki helps to organise rescues.

In the past year, the volunteers at the Enfield station have attended 111 jobs. They have meetings where they learn and practise the skills for the jobs they do.

When Noel joined the SES, his family all wanted to join too. He said, 'I am happy to be able to help the community and meet lots of different people. They appreciate our help.'

The Salmon family is always prepared for the next emergency. 'We have to be ready to deal with houses with roofs blown off, floods, bushfires ... just about anything.'

Adapted from Merriman, John 1997, 'A real family affair', *The Advertiser*, 15 November
Courtesy of John Merriman (journalist) and Advertiser Newspapers Ltd

Apex



Apex started in Australia in 1931. It is a community organisation for people aged from 18 to 45. Apex Clubs are in several countries around the world. The symbol chosen for Apex is a triangle with equal sides.

The purpose of Apex is to assist its members to ‘grow, learn, make friends and have fun’, while being responsible citizens who help to improve life for everyone. They do this by being friendly and supporting others who help in the community. Apex encourages international understanding and friendship.

Apex groups organise and deal with problems that could not be solved by one person alone. They hold meetings where members vote to decide the next project to support. These include:

- raising funds for such things as children’s cancer research, sun shelters throughout Australia, flood and bushfire relief, and supporting the Kids Help Line
- participation in Clean Up Australia and promotion of Clean Up the World
- other local community-based projects.

Landcare Australia



Landcare is a national program started in 1989, to protect Australia's land and rivers. Overused land and polluted rivers are some of the most serious environmental problems in Australia today. They affect every Australian because we need land for food and to produce things like wool. We need water for drinking and farming. We also need to protect native plants and animals.

Everybody can join Landcare because we can all do something to protect our natural resources. Members enjoy being with other group members and are pleased to be doing something positive for the environment. Members help in many ways – some people give money, others give equipment and some people give their time and do the work.

Landcare groups are all different. Meetings are organised by each group to suit the members and the task they want to do.

Decisions are made by the group getting together to talk about a problem and possible solutions. Members can change things by discussing their concerns and reaching agreement with the others. If they can't all agree on a decision, they vote and agree to support the decision of the most people.

Many community groups and clubs have Landcare projects and activities to participate in. The local council will know what these Landcare activities are.

Local history group



Retelling our stories or experiences makes us a part of our family and community groups. Maggy loves hearing these stories. Maggy belongs to a local history group that collects people's stories to add to the history of a community.

Understanding history is like doing a jigsaw puzzle: each story is a piece of the whole picture. By talking to older people and sharing their photographs and special objects from the past, Maggy's group sorts the pieces of history to see how the local community has developed and changed over time.

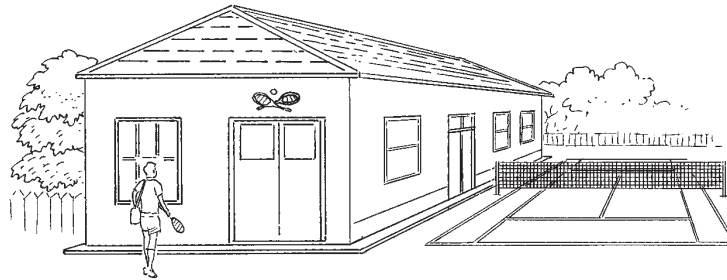
Older people in the community meet several times a year on 'memory afternoons' to share and record their stories. People have lots of fun talking, eating and making new friends.

After the sharing time, they all visit special places in the community. These walks also uncover exciting parts of local history. For instance, they visit the houses that belonged to special people of the past.

People who take part in the memory afternoons are happy to be an important part of their community and like to be a part of local history.

Based on Ragless, Maggy 1996, 'Mitcham: one community or several?' in *Community History*, vol 6, no 3
Courtesy of History Trust of South Australia

Tennis clubs



Tennis clubs promote the sport and encourage tennis players to be active members.

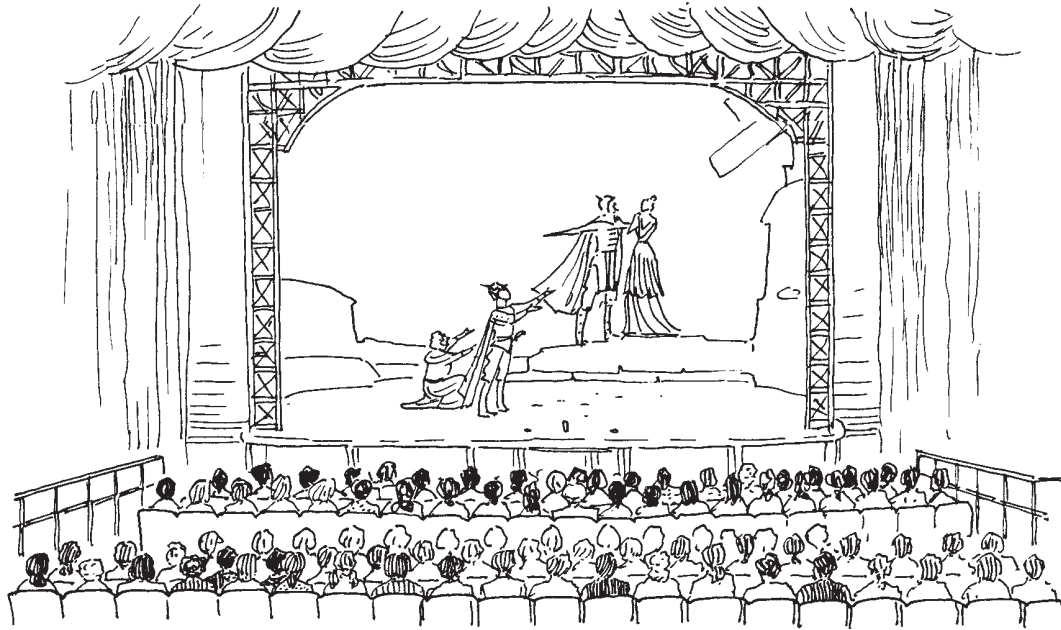
The benefits of being a club member include:

- full use of tennis courts and clubhouse – the right to enjoy all the resources the club has to offer without feeling like a visitor
- friendships – the chance to play tennis and mix with other members, meeting old friends and making new ones
- competition – to play against lots of players in competitions and to set your own targets
- regular games – the chance to play tennis more often
- social activities – clubs have a busy social program UIBU all members are welcome to join
- improved skills – by playing regularly and with better players, members' skills will improve
- involvement – the chance to become involved in club responsibilities such as being on committees and attending meetings to decide things for other members.

Most importantly, a club should find out the needs of its members and plan for them.

Adapted from *Tennis Australia Handbook*, 1993, pp 65–6
Courtesy of Tennis Australia

The Fanfare Drama Group



The purpose of our drama group is to put on plays to entertain an audience. Anyone can join the group. Not all members have to be in the plays.

We hold regular meetings. At each meeting one member keeps the minutes. These are a written record of what happens in the meetings. We hold an annual general meeting and a managing committee is elected. The managing committee is six people who make the big decisions for all of us.

The committee meets every two months. Decisions are made by voting. If someone wants something done or changed, they propose the change at a meeting. People speak for or against the change. Then the change is put to the vote. The majority decides.

People can join in the group activities by helping to choose the plays that are performed. They can help to create a play by being a director, performer, backstage person (lighting, props, costumes, make-up) or front of house (ticket sales, usher).

A drama group is like a small family. People share experiences that make them trust each other.

Australian Reconciliation Network

Reconciliation Australia was established in 2001 as the national body on reconciliation in Australia. Reconciliation is about building better relationships between First Nations Australians and non-Indigenous Australians.

Reconciliation is about understanding the past, so that we can move together into the future as friends and equals. Reconciliation recognises the past and looks to the future, seeking a better and fairer Australia for all people. People from all across Australia work with state and territory reconciliation organisations that are part of the Australian Reconciliation Network. They promote reconciliation through:

- the community at events, conferences, exhibitions and gatherings
- local councils, by such actions as flying the Aboriginal flag and the Torres Strait Islander flag
- organisations, by developing Reconciliation Action Plans that set out the actions the organisations commit to
- schools
- families, friends and people they work with.

Reconciliation organisations help people to find out about First Nations Australians' history of the area. They also help other people to become aware of the problems of reconciliation and work out how everyone can undertake positive actions towards reconciliation.

Making decisions

Ways to make group decisions	Pluses	Minuses
One person tells everyone in the group what to do.		
Everyone in the group can make suggestions. Everyone has a vote for one suggestion. The suggestion with the most votes is the one that everyone has to follow.		
Everyone in the group can make suggestions. Everyone in the group has to agree on what to do.		

Meeting agenda

Item

- 1 Open, welcome and apologies
- 2 Minutes of last meeting
- 3 Report from Management Committee
- 4 Report from Data Collection Committee
- 5 Report from Communications Committee
- 6 Report from Finance and Facilities Committee
- 7 Report from Support-Raising Committee
- 8 New business:
 - 8.1 From the last meeting
 - 8.2 From other people
- 9 Other business:
 - 9.1
 - 9.2
- 10 Any other business
- 11 Close and date of next meeting

Ace Tennis Club constitution

The name shall be Ace Tennis Club.

Purpose

- 1 to organise the Club materials (e.g. nets)
- 2 to encourage others to play tennis
- 3 to raise money by fees and fundraising activities
- 4 to decide how Club money will be spent

Paid members of the Club can participate in all activities.

The organising committee will be elected each year by a ballot of all members. The committee will be a Chairperson, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a committee of six members. One more than half of the total members of the committee will be enough to make decisions at a Club meeting.

Meetings will be held on the first Monday of the month at 7 pm. Meetings will usually go for two hours. The agenda (the list of business for the meeting) will be on display for a week before the meeting, in case members wish to add or think about items of business.

Decisions will be made by voting. This will be by raising hands for agreement, but members may ask for votes to be written on paper to keep them a secret. Each committee member has one vote.

A budget report will be made at each meeting. The committee will know how much money there is in the Club.

The constitution can be changed at the annual general meeting of all members.

Clean Up Australia



Clean Up Australia is the idea of Ian Kiernan.

In 1986 and 1987 Ian sailed in a world yacht race. The race visited parts of the world he had dreamed about. But his experience was not a happy one because he found lots of rubbish floating in the sea. He was disgusted to find old thongs, buckets, disposable nappies, toothpaste tubes and plastic bags among the seaweed.

When Ian returned to Australia, he decided to try to fix the pollution problem, starting with Sydney Harbour. He asked friends to help and they formed a committee to plan a clean-up around the harbour. He was very surprised when 40,000 volunteers turned out to help, and very shocked by the 5,000 tonnes of rubbish they collected.

Clean Up Australia now covers all of Australia. The volunteers who help are all kinds of community members. Businesses and industries as members of their communities also help to make each Clean Up Day a success.

The campaign has grown into an international event where people from many different countries participate in Clean Up the World.

Ian says, 'I'm positive about the future because I've seen that individuals can make a difference.'

Adapted from Clean Up Australia Ltd 1997, *Clean Up Day: Background – the story so far*, 2 March

The action plan

What needs to be done?	How will this task be done?	Who will do this task?	When does it need to be done by?

My class – joining in

Our class decided to

My committee had to

I had to

I thought this was

I felt

I liked

I didn't like

Next time, I

I have learnt that

Local council's services

The local council helps the community in many ways. In particular they:

Look after the environment

The council looks after the parts of the community that are public property, such as roads and parks. The council builds and repairs roads and car parks.

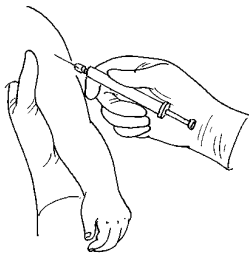
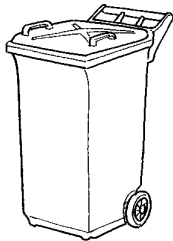
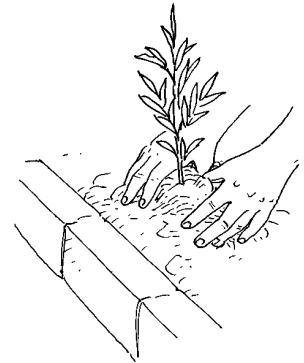
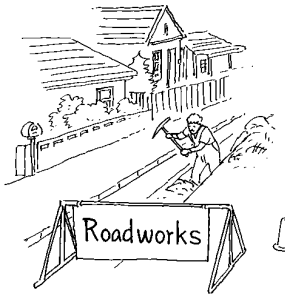
Councils decide where new roads, houses and shops should go and which natural areas to protect. Plans for all new buildings are approved by the council. Councils also look after historic places. The council arranges for garbage to be collected and for waste to be recycled.

Look after people

Some councils run libraries, art galleries and theatres. They may provide public halls in the community. Councils usually have areas for parks, swimming pools and tennis courts. They provide services for elderly and disabled people, such as Meals on Wheels and activities for citizens.

Councils ensure their area is healthy, for example by running health centres, destroying rats, checking that restaurants and shops are clean, registering dogs and providing community wellbeing services. Councils also help emergency services.

Not all councils do all of these things. Each council does the things that are most important to its citizens.



Adapted from Local Government and Shires Associations of NSW 1994, *Councils at Work: An Education Kit for Local Government Studies*, sheets 3 & 4