Welcome to
NHWQ Guide

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GLOSSARY

ABN  Australian Business Number
AGM  Annual General Meeting
CPPU Crime Prevention Programs Unit
DCPC District Crime Prevention Coordinator
NHW  Neighbourhood Watch
NHWA Neighbourhood Watch Australasia
NHWQ Neighbourhood Watch Queensland
OIC  Officer in Charge
QPS  Queensland Police Service
SCCRO Station Community Crime Reduction Officer
VQ   Volunteering Queensland

USEFUL LINKS

Neighbourhood Queensland State Blog
  • Resources page
  • Blog Locator
  • Police Station Locator
  • Talk to us

Neighbourhood Queensland State Facebook Page
Office of Fair Trading
Volunteering Queensland
Right to Information Act 2009
Information Privacy Act 2009
Neighbourhood Watch Australasia
Policelink
Welcome to Neighbourhood Watch Queensland.

This guide is designed for the information of community members already participating, or considering participating in, the Queensland Neighbourhood Watch Program (NHWQ). The Guide forms part of the ongoing commitment of the Queensland Police Service to support NHWQ in its efforts to strengthen and connect our communities for a safe and secure Queensland.

Part 1 of the Guide provides:

- important information about NHWQ; and,
- an overview of relevant state-wide policies, procedures and practices in relation to NHWQ.

Part 2 explains the steps to take if you are ready to get involved.

The Guide is available electronically by visiting the Neighbourhood Watch Queensland State Blog.

A separate NHWQ Policing Guide is available to QPS members with descriptions of roles and responsibilities as well as instructions on how to support groups.
PART A: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

1. HISTORY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (NHW)

One of the first recorded Neighbourhood Watch Programs was the Seattle Community Crime Prevention Project in the United States. Launched in 1973 it grew out of a movement to promote greater community involvement in the prevention of crime.

Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) was initially introduced to Australia in Victoria and Western Australia in the early 1980s. The Program was subsequently officially launched in Victoria after a successful pilot in the local town of Kananook.

The first trial of NHW in Queensland occurred on the Gold Coast in the Isle of Capri and Sorrento areas following concerns about rising crime rates. The success of the trial led to the official launch of Neighbourhood Watch in Queensland on 22 June 1988 and the Program has grown considerably since that date.

2. WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH?

Neighbourhood Watch is an internationally well-recognised and established brand within the community and has a very strong and committed volunteer base.

It is a community-driven program delivered by community members in partnership with the Police. The objective of NHW is to encourage community members to work together to establish local partnerships with the goal of reducing crime and improving the safety of all people who live, visit and do business in neighbourhoods.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH QUEENSLAND

Neighbourhood Watch Queensland (NHWQ) is an official crime prevention Program of the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

The QPS is committed to working in partnership with the community and greatly appreciates the outstanding contribution provided by all NHWQ participants.

Traditionally NHWQ has focused primarily on detecting and preventing crime, however, as NHWQ has evolved over the years, groups have broadened their scope to address other local problems in support of the community.

NHWQ offers participation in the Program in various ways:

- joining as an individual participant through subscription to the NHWQ State or Local Area Blog;
- joining a Local Area Online Group (Blog or E-Watch)
- being part of a group that meets face-to-face for meetings, events and activities (Traditional)
• or a combination of any of these options.

For further details on the different types of participation, please refer to Chapter 10 of this Guide.

4. INCORPORATION

NHWQ is a Program of the QPS and is linked to the QPS Australian Business Number (ABN). NHWQ is not an Incorporated Association. Although a small number of NHWQ local groups have chosen to become incorporated, the vast majority are not incorporated.

Groups can choose to become incorporated as an independent legal entity under Queensland’s Associations Incorporation Act 1981. However, any decision to seek incorporation should be carefully considered. The main reasons a group decides to incorporate is the desire to limit the personal liability of committee members and to qualify for grant funding. While these are important factors, other considerations i.e. ongoing statutory fees, accounting and auditing fees and compliance with regulations and member’s entitlement to a financial interest in the association, are relevant to deliberations. If the wrong legal structure is chosen, it may be a very expensive and time-consuming exercise to transfer the adopted legal structure to a more suitable one.

There is no expectation for local groups to be incorporated.

For further information on incorporating a NHWQ group, please contact the Office of Fair Trading on 13 QGOV (13 74 68) or visit their website at www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au.

5. STRUCTURE OF NHWQ

5.1. State Office

NHWQ is coordinated by the Crime Prevention Programs Unit (CPPU) located at Police Headquarters, Brisbane. The NHWQ State Coordinator is positioned within the CPPU and is responsible for updating policy and procedures and managing the overarching delivery of the Program to support a consistent approach throughout the State.

5.2. Police Districts

The QPS is divided into 15 distinct policing districts led by a District Officer located at District Headquarters. Each district comprises several divisions which consist of police stations led by an Officer in Charge (OIC). Within each district are police officers who hold specialist positions including Station Community Crime Reduction Officers (SCCRO) and District Crime Prevention Coordinators (DCPC).

District Crime Prevention Coordinators are a specialist district resource and are responsible for the overarching coordination and associated reporting for a number of Crime Prevention Programs (including NHWQ). They also perform many other district functions at the discretion of the District Officer.

DCPCs and SCCROs are most often the officers involved in the NHWQ Program.

To further support NHWQ at the local (group) level, each Station OIC may task any officer/s within the station to perform the role of NHWQ Police Liaison Officer. This role is in addition to the other core duties of the officer.
Whilst the above is a general description of the NHWQ structure at the district level, each District Officer has overarching discretion regarding the allocation of district resources to support Programs.

### 5.3. Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The NHWQ Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was established in 2014 to act as an advisory body to the QPS on issues pertaining to NHWQ including the strategic direction, promotion and participation of community members in the Program.

The committee consists of one NHWQ community member from each of the fifteen QPS Districts, the NHWQ State Coordinator, the Inspector Community Programs (Chair) and one other member as nominated by the Inspector, Community Programs.

Community members are selected by the respective District Officer based on the individual's knowledge, participation and engagement in NHWQ and ability to provide strategic advice regarding the direction of the Program.

The CAC meets twice annually, using a mixture of phone and face-to-face meetings. To contact the CAC member for your district, please email the NHWQ State Coordinator [CPPU.NeighbourhoodWatchSO@police.qld.gov.au](mailto:CPPU.NeighbourhoodWatchSO@police.qld.gov.au) or contact the District Crime Prevention Coordinator.

District CAC members are responsible for consulting with local groups to identify successes, issues and challenges for discussion at CAC meetings.

### 5.4. NHW Australasia (NHWA)

In 2003, NHWA was formed after it was identified there was significant value in forming a national governance structure to assist the growth and development of NHW across Australia and New Zealand.

In 2006, NHWA became an Incorporated Association. In 2018, it charged to a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charity Status.

NHWA is supported by a CEO, Executive Assistant and a Board. The NHWA website provides resources including current brochures and flyers, community funding/grant opportunities, training videos, a project library and research materials. NHWA delivers annual awards for both volunteers and police, a journal/magazine incorporating activities and events undertaken by groups across Australasia, as well as the Streetsmart Handbook designed specifically for year 11 and 12 students. For further information, please visit [nhwa.com.au](http://nhwa.com.au).
6. GOVERNANCE

NHWQ operates under a suite of policies, procedures and guidelines developed and endorsed by the QPS including a Strategic Plan, Policing Guide, Social Media Policy and insurance policies. The Welcome to NHWQ Guide is to be read in conjunction with these documents, all of which are administered centrally by the CPPU.

Any queries or concerns relating to the operation of NHWQ, should be directed to the OIC of the local police station, DCPC or local CAC representative in the first instance.

NHWQ strategic documents are located under the resources tab of the NHWQ State Blog.

7. DEFINITION OF PARTICIPATION

NHWQ defines participation as an individual or a group of community members involved in strategies designed to reduce crime and improve community safety that are:

- of benefit to the community; and
- of the participants own free will; and,
- undertaken on a voluntary basis.

NHWQ is a program of the Queensland Police Service. NHWQ participants are not permitted to receive a salary or payment or be remunerated in any way, for any service provided.

8. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

Any person who lives, visits or does business (i.e. works) in Queensland can participate in NHWQ and assist with promoting and delivering the Program.

A NHWQ participant is classified as a person who:
• lives (or works) within the boundaries of a defined NHWQ group area and is involved in the Program (either online or traditional group); or
• subscribes to the NHWQ State or NHWQ Local Area Blog.

NHWQ is apolitical, non-sectarian, and open to all community members in Queensland. Unlawful discrimination of any kind is not tolerated by the QPS or within the NHWQ Program. NHWQ has zero tolerance for vigilantism. Actions of this nature will not be tolerated. If participants act as vigilantes, they may personally be the subject of legal proceedings and not protected by NHWQ insurance.

NHWQ social media, meetings, events or activities are not forums for political endorsement/electioneering or debate.

There are likely to be NHWQ participants who are openly aligned with a political party (or even hold membership or office). These participants are NOT permitted to use NHWQ as a forum to advance any political agenda.

Elected members of various levels of Government are welcome to support NHWQ by attending meetings or events to provide advice or answer questions regarding the objectives of NHWQ, or through the provisions of resources or services to assist in the effective operations of the program in the community.

8.1. Volunteer Application Form

Depending on the role in the NHWQ Program, some individuals, particularly those who hold NHWQ Committee executive positions, must complete a Volunteer Application Form. This form authorises the QPS to conduct a variety of background checks (including criminal history) to determine the individual’s suitability to undertake the role. Further checks may be completed at any time at the discretion of the QPS.

If an existing executive committee member wishes to continue in a position beyond 12 months, a further criminal history check may be undertaken.

All committee members who wish to hold an executive position within a NHWQ group must have QPS approval prior to commencing in the position.

9. VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering Queensland (VQ) is the peak body for volunteering in Queensland and represents the interests of volunteers and community organisations. Volunteering Queensland connects people, resources and organisations to benefit and strengthen communities through volunteering, projects and initiatives.

Volunteering Queensland can assist participants to develop skills to assist NHWQ in delivering its mission.

NHWQ volunteers are strongly encouraged to visit the VQ website at http://www.volunteeringqld.org.au/home/ and learn more about:

- training and activities;
- resources; and,
• good practice.

10. Different Levels of Participation

With the advent of social media, NHWQ has transformed in recent years. Whilst NHWQ supports face-to-face interactions as being valuable in building enduring and productive relationships, it also recognises the value of embracing neighbour connectivity through social media platforms.

NHWQ offers different levels of participation enabling interested people to tailor their commitment based on lifestyle.

10.1. State NHWQ Blog Subscription

For this level of participation, individuals are encouraged to subscribe to the NHWQ State Blog. The NHWQ State Blog contains information relating to general crime prevention activities and events, emerging crime trends and crime reports and allows participants to subscribe for immediate, daily or weekly notifications via e-mail.

10.2. Local Area NHWQ Online Groups

These groups operate through a local group online presence using either a social media account (NHWQ Local Blog) or an email distribution list (E-Watch). These groups must have an appointed Area Coordinator and/or Social Media/E-Watch Administrator responsible for posting or distributing material, resources, statistics and ensuring NHWQ policies and procedures are observed.

For this level of participation, individuals are encouraged to:

• subscribe to the Local Area Blog. The Blogs contain information relating to crime prevention activities and events, emerging crime trends and crime reports for the local area. Participants are able to subscribe for immediate, daily or weekly notifications via e-mail; or
• join an E-Watch group. These group operate using email to contact residents and may include information from the NHWQ State Blog or the NHWQ Local Area Blog.

Online Groups do not generally meet face-to-face in an official capacity.

10.3. Traditional Groups

These groups consist of members of the community who form a committee to plan and promote the NHWQ Program and undertake crime prevention activities in the designated group area.

Traditional Groups meet face-to-face for meetings anywhere from monthly to quarterly and often have an online presence (see above). These groups are more formal and keep minutes of meetings and often fundraise to cover the cost of events and activities.

Committees have an appointed Area Coordinator (mandatory), Secretary (optional), Treasurer (conditional) and Social Media Administrator (conditional).

Traditional Groups are committed to:

• engaging with people in the neighbourhood (face-to-face and/or online);
• bringing people together in their neighbourhood;
• building peoples’ sense of belonging to their community;
• empowering people to take appropriate steps to keep themselves and their property safe.

11. PARTICIPANT RECOGNITION

NHWQ has three levels of participant recognition (gold, silver and bronze) awarded to NHWQ volunteers who have demonstrated active commitment to the Program. These volunteers include committee members, residents, business owners and local supporters.

For further information relating to these awards, visit the NHWQ State Blog under ‘Strategic Policies’.

12. GROUP TITLE & GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES

All (Traditional & Online) NHWQ groups MUST have a group title. Groups are named after the respective QPS District (e.g. Ipswich 01, Ipswich 02 etc). If there are existing NHWQ groups within the same area, then a new group will be allocated the next number for the District (eg. If the existing NHWQ areas are Ipswich 01 & Ipswich 02 then the new area would be called Ipswich 03. If Ipswich 04 was allocated to an area but the group has since closed, the next new group would be called Ipswich 05).

Informal names to identify with a suburb or local area may be used for NHWQ Local Area Blogs and in general discussion (e.g. Silkstone) but the official name remains e.g. Ipswich 01.

All (Traditional & Online) NHWQ groups MUST have geographical boundaries representing the area of operation. These boundaries are mapped in the QPS system and are aligned to police divisional boundaries. Formal boundaries promote consistency and provide the QPS with specific parameters when distributing crime and community safety information to groups.

The group title and boundaries are considered by the group however the final determination is made in collaboration with local OIC and/or the DCPC/SCCRO.

It is the responsibility of the QPS representative to submit the group title and geographical boundaries for recording on the QPS mapping system. Once finalised, the group will also appear on the NHWQ State Blog locator tool. This can take up to 3 months depending on the next scheduled round of updates.

The boundary of a NHWQ group is not limited to a specific number of homes or streets. The geographical size of a NHWQ group area is dependent on the needs of each community. For example, a NHWQ area could be made up of streets surrounding a park, school, shopping centre, a single block of units, nursing home or even a small town.

A NHWQ group geographical boundary:

- must follow existing land parcel boundaries;
- cannot cut across individual land parcels e.g. a park or between houses;
- must align to one side of the street or the other (not the centre of the street);
- must align to one side of creeks / rivers (not the centre of the creek/river); and
- cannot cross another NHWQ group boundary.
13. **INSURANCE**

NHWQ maintains Public Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance on behalf of groups and their participants. NHWQ negotiates both policies through Aon Risk Services Australia which liaises with the respective insurers as necessary. Certificates of Currency for both policies are available from AON Insurance.

NHWQ groups and their participants should be fully aware of the type of cover offered, any unacceptable risks and the mandatory exclusions for these policies. Further information regarding insurance is available in the ‘Resources’ section (Insurance) of the NHWQ State Blog.

Any queries relating to either policy should be directed to Mr David Harry Aon Risk Services Australia Ltd, Parramatta; Ph: 1800 806 584 or email david.harry@aon.com

13.1. **Public Liability Insurance**

Public Liability Insurance is provided with a liability limit of $20,000,000 for any one occurrence. In simple terms, this Public Liability Policy covers injury to a third party or damages to third-party property if NHWQ, NHWQ group committee members and/or volunteers are deemed to be legally liable or negligent.

NHWQ groups may negotiate their own separate Public Liability and/or Property Insurance through an approved Brokerage Company, for example to cover locally owned NHWQ assets if they deem it necessary.

13.2. **Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance**

Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Insurance is provided with Death & Capital Benefits cover of $25,000; Weekly Benefits $500 cover. In simple terms, this policy covers voluntary workers of declared groups (see policy) for personal accidents or injuries arising out of their actions on behalf of the NHWQ program. This cover applies only for accidental injury.

13.3. **Events Questionnaire Requirements**

As there are many different types of NHWQ events delivered across the state, groups **MUST** submit an Events Questionnaire to Aon Risk Services for policy coverage assessment at least 2 weeks **PRIOR TO ANY NHWQ event.** For insurance to be valid, approval **MUST** be gained from AON prior to the event. The Events Questionnaire is simple to complete and is located in the Resources section (Insurance) of the NHWQ State Blog.

An additional premium may apply (payable by the local group) for some events with features that fall outside the standard coverage criteria. Any additional insurance fees will be discussed directly between Aon Risk Services and the respective group.

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**Meetings**

*If a group is holding a meeting with no other third-party providers or stall holders it is automatically covered by the insurance policies.*

**Recurrent Events**

*If you deliver a regular (e.g. monthly) event with little or no variation, it is worthwhile discussing with Aon whether a blanket approval can be provided.*
13.4. Protector/Association Liability Insurance

Commencing 30 June 2020 NHWQ has sourced Not for Profit Protector/Association Liability Insurance for group members. The policy includes (but it not limited to) Professional Liability, Management Liability and Association Liability to a limit of $1,000,000 for any one claim and $2,000,000 aggregate.

14. SPONSORSHIP/GRANTS

14.1. Endorsement

NHWQ groups are not permitted to recommend or endorse the products or services of any person or business. This is in accordance with QPS endorsement policies.

14.2. Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a particular type of mutual benefit arrangement which may be entered into by the QPS with external third parties to receive or give a service, product or activity, in return for negotiated and specific benefits to the sponsor. Sponsorship can be in the form of:

- cash;
- in-kind support;
- promotional opportunities.

Written approval to seek or provide sponsorship (irrespective of the value) rests with the Commissioner, QPS and is required prior to entering into any sponsorship agreement.

With respect to NHWQ, groups are not permitted to seek or receive sponsorship without prior approval as described above. Negotiations are managed by the NHWQ State Office.

14.3. Supporters

Supporters of NHWQ can be any person, business or organisation that provides assistance to NHWQ financially or on any other basis. This may include (but is not limited to) meeting support (i.e. venue), products and/or financial donations or local advertising. Supporters do not seek nor are they provided any endorsement as a result of assistance provided.

Reminder: The QPS does not permit the endorsement of any supporter, product or service.

Traditional groups that deliver activities and events are most likely to attract support. Any discussions regarding support must be recorded in committee minutes.

Any financial support must be deposited into a NHWQ group bank account prior to expenditure.

NHWQ groups can utilise financial support to purchase light refreshments (non-alcoholic) at NHWQ meetings and events however, any financial support should primarily be used to develop and conduct local crime prevention and community safety initiatives.

Under no circumstances are NHWQ committee members, participants or volunteers to use financial support to purchase alcohol for meetings, events or activities.

Any NHWQ groups or volunteers found to be using financial support to purchase alcohol may be subject to investigation and sanction.
14.4. Grants

NHWQ groups may apply for local, state and federal grants to assist them in meeting their objectives, including local community activities. Many grant applications will require the provision of an Australian Business Number (ABN). As the majority of NHWQ groups are not incorporated, groups may choose to partner with another crime prevention organisation or an incorporated NHWQ group for the purpose of using their ABN.

Note: There is no requirement for any other group or organisation to be an auspice.

**NHWA** is also committed to assisting NHWQ groups and have offered to be the auspice for any groups applying for grants. This includes use of the NHWA ABN. Groups wishing to use this opportunity should contact NHWA directly by email to admin@nhwa.com.au.

It is suggested that prior to any grant application NHWQ groups consult with the DCPC to discuss options.

15. Promotion/Marketing

15.1. Media

All media handouts, notices, articles and interviews that relate to NHWQ should be approved by the DCPC, OIC of the local station or SCCRO. Refer to the NHWQ Social Media Guidelines and NHWQ Social Media Policy regarding the use of social media, including NHWQ Blogs. It is recommended that groups discuss this requirement with the DCPC to determine a suitable marketing model.

15.2. Newsletters/Email (E-Watch)

Newsletters are a useful tool for promoting NHWQ and local community activities, community safety messages, crime prevention and crime issues.

Groups can create and distribute newsletters using the templates under ‘Other Documents’ in the NHWQ State Blog including:

- Making a Newsletter;
- Newsletter Template (include disclaimer).

Ideas for articles can be sourced from local police (OIC or Police Liaison Officer), the NHWQ State Blog and state/local myPolice sites. All newsletters are to clearly identify the official NHWQ group title, the author and the source of articles included. The informal group name may also be included to more closely identify with the community.

Newsletters can be published and distributed in a number of ways; delivery to homes located within the group boundaries, in the local NHWQ blog and by email at a frequency determined by the group Social Media/E-Watch Administrator in consultation with the Area Coordinator. It is recommended that any newsletter distribution list include the:

- OIC of the local station;
- DCPC (essential);
- Police Liaison Officer (if applicable);
- SCCRO (if applicable);
15.3. NHWQ Logo

The NHW ‘faces’ logo is a registered ® Australia trademark of Victoria Police. The QPS is authorised to use and permit the use of, the trademark.

Groups are encouraged to use the NHWQ logo to promote events, activities and the NHWQ Program. When a group wishes to use the NHWQ logo, approval from the Inspector, Community Programs or delegate is required. Unauthorised use of the logo may result in breach of copyright. All requests should be provided to the DCPC who will refer the request to the Inspector, Community Programs.

15.4. Working Together Logo

The Working Together logo has been designed to represent the collaborative effort of the QPS and NHWQ groups. Groups are encouraged to make application to the DCPC to use this logo who will seek approval from the Inspector, Community Programs.

15.5. QPS Logo

Groups are not permitted to use the QPS logo at any time. To recognise the QPS on any marketing or promotional materials, groups are encouraged to use the Working Together logo.

15.6. Partner/Supporter Logos

Partner/Supporter logos are suitable for inclusion in local NHWQ newsletters however groups should not use language that suggests NHWQ is endorsing a product, person or service.

✗ ‘NHW Litchfield supports Litchfield Newsagency’.

A suitable alternative that acknowledges a contribution could be:

✓ ‘This newsletter has been printed by Litchfield Newsagency’
✓ ‘Raffle prizes have been donated by Litchfield Newsagency’

Supporter logos must not be located near the NHWQ or Working Together logos in a way that might be seen as NHWQ endorsing a supporter.

16. RESOURCES

As part of the Government’s commitment to the NHWQ Program, NHWQ groups are entitled to certain resources free of charge as part of a Householder Kit. Requests for these resources must be made by the Area Coordinator to the DCPC using the NHWQ requisition form located in the Resources section of the NHWQ State Blog.

It is the responsibility of the Area Coordinator to distribute these resources to local participants.

These resources are not unlimited, therefore all requests should be reasonable. Depending on stock, there may be a delay in delivery.
16.1. Householder Kits
A Householder Kit includes a sticker suitable for use on house/car windows and letterboxes, ‘know your neighbour’ magnet, ‘something missing card’, ‘suspect description form’ and ‘telephone contact card’.

16.2. Street Sign Installation
NHWQ signs used for entry to a NHWQ area and/or street are available in limited quantities.
Area Coordinators should request street signs from their DCPC or NHWQ Police Liaison Officer. This request will be forwarded to the State Office for supply.
Local councils support NHWQ through the installation of street signs (generally at little or no charge). Once the sign is available, the DCPC will coordinate sign installation with the relevant council, although this does vary from area to area. The timing of installation is at the discretion of the local council.
Signs are not to be erected by NHWQ groups.
All NHWQ street signs remain the property of NHWQ.

16.3. Merchandise
NHWQ merchandise is available for purchase by groups. A list of approved items, including prices, can be found in the NHWQ State Blog at: www.nhwq.org/resources. NHWQ groups may undertake fundraising activities to purchase items to support NHWQ crime prevention and community safety events. Individual participants are also able to purchase merchandise at own expense.
Payment for NHWQ merchandise by groups is arranged directly with the supplier.

17. Conference & Events/Activities

17.1. State Conference
A NHWQ State Conference is conducted annually in a nominated area of Queensland. The purpose of the State Conference is to provide an opportunity for participants to share ideas, learn new crime prevention strategies and to celebrate NHWQ achievements.
The State Conference recognises the outstanding contribution community members and police officers have made to the Program in the previous 12 months. Each year one NHWQ community member and one NHWQ Police Liaison Officer from each policing district is recognised as District Member of the Year. The conference culminates in the awarding of NHWQ State Community Member of the Year and NHWQ State Police Liaison Officer of the Year. Instructions for nomination of District Community Member of the Year is available approximately 3 months prior to the conference and can be found at on the NHWQ State Blog.

17.2. Events/Activities
NHWQ activities will vary depending on the needs of the local community. Examples of crime prevention and community safety initiatives and online community engagement activities include:
• Launches of new NHWQ groups;
• Know Your Neighbour campaigns;
• Home Security/Safety Audits;
• Number Plate Anti-Theft Screw days (Turning the Screws on Crime);
• Coffee with a Cop;
• Cuppa & a Chat;
• Dogs on Patrol;
• School Fete stalls;
• BBQs in the park;
• Shopping Centre displays;
• Newsletter letterbox drop (including targeted engagement to new residents in the neighbourhood);
• Guest blogger invitations (to write NHWQ articles);
• Guest presenters for NHW meetings/functions;
• Resource Day (Encourage community members to display NHWQ stickers on windows, doors and sheds)
• Events to encourage members to mark their property for identification (and register their details with police) and
• Road Safety Awareness Programs (e.g. Sausage sizzle at highway rest stops).

These events and activities are organised and delivered by NHWQ groups with the support of local police, where possible.
PART B: READY TO GET INVOLVED

18. HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE NHWQ STATE BLOG

A NHWQ subscription allows you to receive information without the need to join a group.

It’s easy to join, just visit the NHWQ State Blog at www.nhwq.org. Find the ‘Subscribe for the latest News & Updates’ section, enter your email address and choose how often you would like to receive updates (immediate, daily or weekly) then click ‘Subscribe’.

You can also view the catalogue of resources, including crime prevention tips and factsheets.

19. STARTING A LOCAL AREA NHWQ ONLINE GROUP

You and other likeminded people may be interested in starting a Local Area NHWQ Online Group to connect with your local community. Online Groups can be either Social Media based (NHWQ Local Blog) or Email based (E-Watch).

Before you start, contact your DCPC to inquire if a group already exists in your area or undertake a search using the NHWQ State Blog locator tool. If there is no group currently operating:

- Contact your DCPC/SCCRO and discuss your interest in establishing a group to;
➢ determine what type of Online Group (NHWQ Local Blog or E-Watch) will best suit your local area needs;
➢ outline your intentions, commitment and provide the contact details of the proposed Area Coordinator and/or Online Administrator.
• Seek approval to commence the establishment of the group.

Anyone intending to fill executive positions will be required to complete and submit a NHWQ Volunteer Application Form (VAF) which authorises QPS to undertake a suitability check. For further information about the Volunteer Application Form refer to Chapter 8.

The Area Coordinator and Online Administrator, in consultation with the OIC of the station, DCPC or SCCRO, will determine the geographical boundaries of the Online Group and will be responsible for uploading/distributing information relevant to the NHWQ area. For further information about boundaries refer to Chapter 12.

The OIC or DCPC will determine the group title. For further information about group titles refer to Chapter 12.

19.1 Social Media (NHWQ Local Blog) Group

Once suitability checking is complete and approval to establish the group has been received, your DCPC, SCRRO or Police Liaison Officer will organise the relevant social media training and blog access.

**Password Protection**

Your blog access is NOT to be shared with others under any circumstances. The access and password have been provided to you as an individual ‘vetted’ executive member.

Remember: NHWQ is an official QPS Crime Prevention Program therefore all information posted on social media must comply with the social media guidelines and policies. These are located under the ‘Social Media’ tab on the NHWQ State Blog, Resources page which contains other social media resources including Quick Start Guides and social media tips.

Once your social media group has launched, it is important to generate interest. You can advertise the launch of your group through the District myPolice site, advertisements in the local paper and also by traditional methods including the distribution of flyers etc.

Local residents should be encouraged to subscribe to the NHWQ Local Area Blog to receive local information.

19.2 Social Media (E-Watch) Group

Once suitability checking is complete and group approval has been received, it is then necessary to build an email distribution list for the area. This can be achieved through conducting various local pop up stalls (such as parks, shopping centres), promoting E-Watch through local council or Facebook pages or as decided by participants within the designated NHWQ area. An email list will then be collated by the E-Watch Administrator who is responsible for ensuring the list is maintained, participant privacy is preserved, and relevant information is delivered to registered participants.
Protecting Privacy
It is crucial that all participant personal email addresses are protected. To ensure this occurs, when sending correspondence by email, the Administrator MUST blind carbon copy (bcc) all participants within the distribution list.

E-Watch Administrators are responsible for forwarding newsletters/information to registered email participants in the relevant NHWQ area.

Information for E-Watch newsletters is sourced:
• from local police and/or DCPC/SCCRO/Police Liaison Officer;
• by collating information from the NHWQ State Blog, NHWQ Local Area Blogs, myPolice sites.

20. STARTING A TRADITIONAL NHWQ GROUP (COMMITTEE)

A Traditional NHWQ group will invariably provide the most rewarding level of involvement however will require the most commitment. When considering establishing a Traditional Group it is essential that you consider whether:
• You are prepared to engage with other community members;
• You can spare the time required to start a new NHWQ group;
• You or other community members have the skills required to manage a NHWQ group.

20.1. Step 1: Identifying the need for a NHWQ group
Contact your local OIC and/or DCPC to discuss your local issue/concern and possible solutions. Ascertain if there is an existing NHWQ group in your area and whether the boundary of the existing group could be extended to include the area proposed.

20.2. Step 2: Gaining Support
If a new NHWQ group is the agreed preliminary solution, support from the community is required.

It is important to gather support early as you require significant community commitment for final approval to establish a Traditional NHWQ group. This can be achieved by communicating your intention to investigate starting a NHWQ group in your neighbourhood. To canvas local support, you will need at least 6 like-minded participants to form a committee. This can be achieved by organising a social gathering at a local park or community hall through delivering flyers to homes, advertising via local community social pages, as well as using local print and electronic media outlets. Be prepared to talk to any attendees about the reason for starting a NHWQ group and asking whether they would like to be involved in the committee. Invite your local police to give some context around issues/concerns being experienced and the role of NHWQ in supporting Police in the community.

You are looking for committed community members who are interested in:
• talking to their neighbours;
• educating others about what they can do to prevent crime;
• spending time outdoors and becoming familiar with their neighbourhoods;
• encouraging the reporting of suspicious activity to police (in person or online) in a timely manner;
• applying crime prevention strategies around the home or business.

Most people will not get involved in community groups unless they can determine (early on) a positive outcome for themselves and/or their family and it’s not a huge impost on their time. So, the invitation should be personal and clearly articulate the specific crime and community safety issues you have identified and the anticipated outcomes.

Whilst you are marketing your Traditional Group, you should also consider advising your local community that they don’t need to attend NHWQ meetings for it to work. Explain there are different levels of involvement and they can participate online if that suits their personal situation best. There are no limits when it comes to participation or engagement in your local group.

20.3. Step 3: The Community Meeting

The third step involves holding a community meeting. This meeting could be held in conjunction with your first NHWQ social gathering (described in Step 2) or at a separate time. It is important that all people in a proposed NHWQ area are invited to attend. Again, this can be achieved through letter box drops, placing advertisements in local community newspapers and/or speaking to your DCPC about promoting the meeting on the District myPolice site.

It is crucial that your first meeting has a local police officer/DCPC/OIC in attendance as well as all individuals who have shown an interest in holding an executive committee position. Also consider inviting representatives of other community partners, local council and other key government representatives. It is also highly recommended to invite your local CAC representative.

During the first community meeting the local police officer will lead the discussion regarding the intended NHWQ group geographical boundaries (refer Chapter 12) as well as explaining committee positions and how the QPS intends to support the group. This may include, but is not limited to:

- attendance at events and meetings. The QPS appreciates the services and information provided by NHWQ groups, however the attendance of police officers at group meetings and events cannot be guaranteed due to the need to prioritise resources.
- provision of a NHWQ Police Liaison Officer as a key point of contact;

A community member from the organising group should lead discussions regarding:

- the types of activities intended to be held (crime prevention activities, community events, etc);
- how the group proposes to fund activities i.e. through local supporters, grants, fundraising activities etc;
- how the group proposes to fund group operating costs (e.g. printing newsletters, payment for hall hire for meetings);
- whether a Treasurer is required? (this is a mandatory position if the group will collect donations or handle money/apply for grants);
- whether the group proposes to have an online presence i.e. Local NHWQ Blog or E-Watch model (in addition to face to face meetings);
- how the group will be promoted to the community i.e. official launch.
This meeting will ultimately determine if you have the **required community interest** to start the group. If sufficient support, as determined by the OIC or DCPC is achieved, an **Area Coordinator** and **Secretary** may be elected at this meeting. If there is an intention to hold any fundraising activities or seek grants, an **Event Coordinator** and **Treasurer** must also be appointed, either at the meeting or before funds are raised or events held. If the group intends to have an online presence, a **Social Media/E-Watch Administrator**, should also be elected.

Positions are filled by simply taking nominations from those present and voting. Prior to commencing in the role, all elected individuals MUST complete a Volunteer Application Form which authorises QPS to undertake suitability checks. *For further information about the Volunteer Application Form please refer to Chapter 8.*

**Insufficient Numbers**

*If the Police representative determines the community meeting has not attracted sufficient numbers to establish a Traditional Group, participants will be encouraged to join NHWQ through a subscription to the NHWQ State Blog or the establishment of a Local Area Online Group.*

**20.4. (Step 4) Developing a Communication Plan**

Groups are encouraged to develop a plan on how they will deliver information to the community and local NHWQ partners. This does not need to be overly formal, however, is an opportunity for committee members to brainstorm options and harness the skills of individual members. It can also be worthwhile to consider how the group will measure success and monitor progress.

**21. COMMITTEE COMPOSITION**

Chapters 21 – 25 do not apply to groups that are established as Incorporated Associations under the provisions of the **Associations Incorporation Act 1981**. Incorporated NHWQ groups are required to comply with legislative provisions and the policies and practices of the Office of Fair Trading with respect to establishment of committees and associate elections, quorums etc.

Whilst unincorporated groups are not subject to the same level of compliance as Incorporated Associations, it is expected that groups will exercise due diligence in exercising all committee functions. This guide outlines the expectations of anyone holding committee executive positions and/or conducting meetings.

**21.1. NHWQ Committee Executive Positions**

NHWQ committee members are people who have been elected (or in the case of Local Area Online Groups, appointed by the DCPC) to specific executive positions within a local NHWQ group. The graph below represents the required positions.

General committee members who have specific skills that assist the group achieve its goals may also be elected/appointed. It is recommended that before community members commit to the committee, they discuss their availability to attend meetings.
21.2. Area Coordinator (mandatory)

The role of Area Coordinator is pivotal to any NHWQ group. The Area Coordinator has overarching responsibility for the day to day running of the group and is the main contact point for police and community participants. The responsibilities of the Area Coordinator include:

1. Overseeing the operation of the NHWQ group. This includes ensuring committee members adhere to NHWQ policies and guidelines;
2. Chairing meetings (applicable to Traditional Groups only);
3. Communicating with the local OIC, SCCRO, Police Liaison Officer or DCPC and attending District/NHWQ forums (where relevant);
4. Working with the Social Media Administrator (NHWQ Local Blog/E-Watch) where relevant and providing input into the local newsletter/social media posts;
5. Approving all local NHWQ blog articles. The Area Coordinator should have Administrator access to any social media accounts;
6. Working with the Event Coordinator in the development and implementation of crime prevention and community safety initiatives;
7. Promoting NHWQ to the broader community through attendance at local community activities and events;
8. Ensuring that a NHWQ Events Questionnaire is submitted to Aon Risk Services for approval of ANY NHWQ event prior to the event as stipulated in NHWQ Insurance Guide refer Chapter 13;
9. For Traditional Groups, in the absence of an elected Secretary, creating a generic committee email address to allow communication with the community e.g. LitchfieldNHWQcommittee@gmail.com.au,
10. Nominating a person to monitor the generic watch email account.
11. In the absence of an elected Secretary, taking minutes at meetings (Traditional Groups only).

21.3. Secretary (optional)

The Secretary supports the Area Coordinator at committee meetings and assists the Event Coordinator (where relevant). Responsibilities include:

1. Managing incoming and outgoing correspondence;
2. Preparing meeting agendas in consultation with the Area Coordinator;
3. Capturing meeting minutes, including decisions and action items;
4. Compiling an email register of volunteers at events/activities as required for insurance purposes;

5. Maintaining an asset register of NHWQ property.

21.4. Treasurer (conditional)
The role of the Treasurer is **mandatory if the group is handling funds**. The Treasurer is responsible for:

1. Establishing a NHWQ group bank account in the title of the group with a minimum of **three** executive committee members (including Area Coordinator and Treasurer) as signatories (not from the same home/family);

2. Ensuring a minimum of two committee members are required to sign all expenditures (withdrawals/cheques);

3. Ensuring all expenditure is approved by the committee prior to payment;

4. Ensuring a financial report is tabled at each meeting providing an audit trail of all income and expenditure;

5. Ensuring all accounts are closed and money has been dispersed in accordance with NHWQ practices, upon closure of the group (see Chapter 25);

6. Where required, maintain an Asset Register.

21.5. Social Media (NHWQ Local Blog)/E-Watch Administrator (conditional)
The responsibilities of the Social Media (NHWQ Local Blog)/E-Watch Administrator include:

1. Coordinating with local Police to set up a NHWQ local blog (where relevant);

2. Updating all group information on the blog;

3. Coordinating with local Police to arrange social media training and Administrator access for relevant group members;

4. Compiling and managing a NHWQ local E-Watch distribution list (where relevant);

5. Managing incoming and outgoing online correspondence on the local NHWQ Blog, email account and other social media channels;

6. Sourcing content specific to the NHWQ area through contact with local police and/or NHWQ State Blog and preparing articles and social media posts.

21.6. Event Coordinator (conditional)
The role of Event Coordinator is recommended if the group is intending to hold any community events/activities. The Event Coordinator works closely with the committee, other volunteers and event partners with responsibilities including:

1. Identifying and developing opportunities to address local crime and community safety concerns;

2. Working with the Social Media (NHWQ Local Blog/E-Watch) Administrator to promote events to the local community;

3. Sourcing volunteers to assist in delivering events and activities;
4. Submitting the NHWQ Events Questionnaire to Aon Risk Services for approval of ANY NHWQ event prior to the event as stipulated in NHWQ Insurance Guide refer Chapter 13;

5. Preparing post event summaries of lessons learnt (what went well and what could be improved);

6. Preparing post event articles, images for social media and (upon approval by DCPC), distributing information via social media and to local print media outlets.

22. MEETINGS & ELECTIONS

Meetings are generally only held by Traditional Groups. Whilst the below are minimum standards it is strongly recommended the committee discuss the meeting requirements with the DCPC to determine an acceptable operating model that is tailored for the group.

22.1. Annual General Meetings (AGM)

An AGM takes place during the period nominated by the OIC/DCPC (generally August/September period). If the NHWQ group is an Incorporated Association, then it must comply with the relevant rules of incorporation.

The purpose of an AGM is to either re-appoint or elect new people to executive committee positions and to provide an opportunity for the group to report on activities undertaken during the previous 12 months. At the appointed time, all positions should be declared vacant.

The opportunity must be given to NHWQ participants within the group to nominate for executive positions. Those elected to positions will be required to complete a VAF to authorise QPS officers to undertake a suitability check.

22.2. Elections

Nominations for all positions within the NHWQ committee should be called (4 weeks) prior to the AGM as well as during the AGM. This does not preclude new positions being created at other times during the year.

Contested and uncontested positions are filled by vote. To support transparency in the election process, it is recommended that any persons wishing to vote in an election, attend and cast a vote, in person. Whilst proxies are not excluded from the process, it is not the preferred method of voting.

Minutes of the AGM should record the names of any persons elected or appointed to executive positions (for insurance purposes).

22.3. General Meetings and Notices for Voting

General NHWQ group meetings are arranged by the local committee and will be held as often as necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the group.

Where a committee member intends to table a proposal relating to expenditure of funds, it is advisable to provide prior notice to all committee members. This could be in the form of an email or group newsletter advising of the intended purchases. This gives committee members enough time to consider the proposal and any further information gathered.
All income and expenditure is to be recorded in the minutes.

22.4. Voting

There are several ways in which a vote can be cast - by voice, show of hands, secret ballot or email. The chairperson (Area Coordinator or representative) usually determines the voting method which is most appropriate. However, members may call for a secret ballot at any time.

A secret ballot is used to protect the confidentiality of votes and is generally used during the election for a position. The chairperson declares the results of the motion as either carried/lost/elected etc. On most occasions, numbers are not provided.

Every NHWQ member has one vote. Motions are required to be seconded by another member before discussion and voting. Members with a private interest/agenda may not be eligible (e.g.: those only attending the AGM to pursue a personal matter and not have the interest or values of NHWQ in mind) to vote.

Police representatives do not vote at NHWQ meetings. However, when participating as a community member (e.g. NHWQ resident) they have the same rights and obligations as other NHWQ members as set out in this guide.

The Area Coordinator shall occupy the chair with the right to a casting vote should it be required.

22.5. Records, Reporting & Storage

Types of information recorded at meetings should include:

- interactions with local Police;
- issues/concerns and possible solutions;
- events undertaken and results/outcome;
- action Items and who is responsible;
- recognition of Service nominations;
- award nominations;
- transfer of assets (e.g. loan equipment to another group etc.);
- financial records.

A financial report outlining the current balance of the NHWQ account and all receipts and expenses since the previous meeting should be tabled at each meeting (at least quarterly).

All correspondence related to group income and expenditure must be recorded and retained by NHWQ groups for a minimum period of 7 years. It is suitable for records to be retained in electronic format.

In circumstances where a group has officially closed, all financial records are to be assembled in a neat and organised manner and provided to the OIC of the local station or DCPC for retention for a period of 7 years (refer Group Closure).
23. REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Any member who discredits NHWQ by their actions and/or behaviour or does not effectively carry out their duties or is considered to be disruptive to the NHWQ group, may be asked by the group to resign.

A member may be removed from office at the discretion of the OIC of the local police station.

Any removal of a member will be carried out in a discrete manner.

The OIC may also suspend/remove a member from holding an executive or official committee position if there is evidence the committee member:

• has been abusive to other NHWQ members;
• is using NHWQ for political endorsement and/or electioneering or debate
• does not follow proper procedure for election to a NHWQ committee;
• does not meet or comply with the Volunteer Application police checks (as conducted regularly by either the local police and/or DCPC/SCCRO);
• has been charges/convicted of an offence.
• misappropriates NHWQ funds (may result in commencement of legal proceedings).

The QPS can exercise absolute discretion when determining a person’s suitability for membership or holding a NHWQ committee position.

24. YEARLY REPORTS & EVALUATION OF NHWQ GROUPS

Achievements and activities for the year

After an AGM, NHWQ groups should provide information to the OIC or DCPC (hard copy or electronic) outlining:

• a report dot point) outlining activities and outcomes achieved for the year and priorities for the next 12 months (linked to NHWQ Strategy);
• contact details of all new executive committee members;
• details of all members who hold positions, including those who may represent the NHWQ group (e.g. zone coordinators / Block Coordinators if appointed);
• Volunteer Application Forms for any new committee members or group representatives;
• current financial balance; and
• outstanding issues of areas of concern.

25. GROUP CLOSURE

If a Traditional NHWQ group has not ‘met’ in 18 months, serious consideration should be given to officially closing the group. If a group has not met in the last 18 months and holds funds in a bank account, the group will be contacted by the DCPC to discuss the immediate closure of the group.
Prior to closing a NHWQ group, consultation must occur between the committee members and the OIC of the local police station or DCPC.

Every effort is to be made to hold a meeting of all members to discuss closure or alternative types of operation (e.g. move from a Traditional Group to an Online Group). If a decision is made to close the group, the OIC or DCPC will assist the group to undertake necessary processes including:

- assisting the Treasurer to ensure all income and expenditure is finalised prior to closure;
- assisting the committee to determine the appropriate distribution of residual funds (i.e. to another NHWQ group and/or non-profit organisation) and make arrangements for the account signatories to transfer funds (cheques/transfer). *At no time is cash to be withdrawn for this purpose*;
- ensuring the Treasurer provides the committee a final Treasurer’s Report outlining all income and expenditure since the last report;
- ensuring signatories close the account and a copy of the bank closure statement is provided to the DCPC.
- ensuring any assets and promotional material is to be returned to the DCPC for redistribution;
- executive member/s contact current and former local supporters of the group to thank them for their contribution;
- executive member/s advise the local community via the local NHWQ blog, E-Watch distribution and/or flyers that the group has closed;
- conducting final meeting (if possible) to officially record the group closure including the reasoning. Minutes to be taken.

All official group records are to be assembled in a neat and organised manner and provided to the OIC or DCPC for storage and retention for a period of 7 years.

Existing group members should be encouraged to establish or join a Local Area Online Group or to subscribe to the NHWQ State Blog.

NHWQ groups that are Incorporated Associations must comply with any other requirements outlined on the [Office of Fair Trading Queensland](https://www.qld.gov.au) website.

Street signs once erected, will remain in place as a visual reminder of NHWQ.

### 26. PRIVACY

The [Right to Information Act 2009](https://www.qld.gov.au) and the [Information Privacy Act 2009](https://www.qld.gov.au) provide safeguards in the proper use and handling of personal information. Any request for disclosure of personal information made by a member of the public or external body needs to be considered in accordance with these legislative requirements.

The QPS collects, stores, uses and discloses personal information of NHWQ volunteers for the sole purpose of promoting and effectively supporting the NHWQ program.

Your DCPC can assist with any enquiries on the proper use of information.