

Policy Document

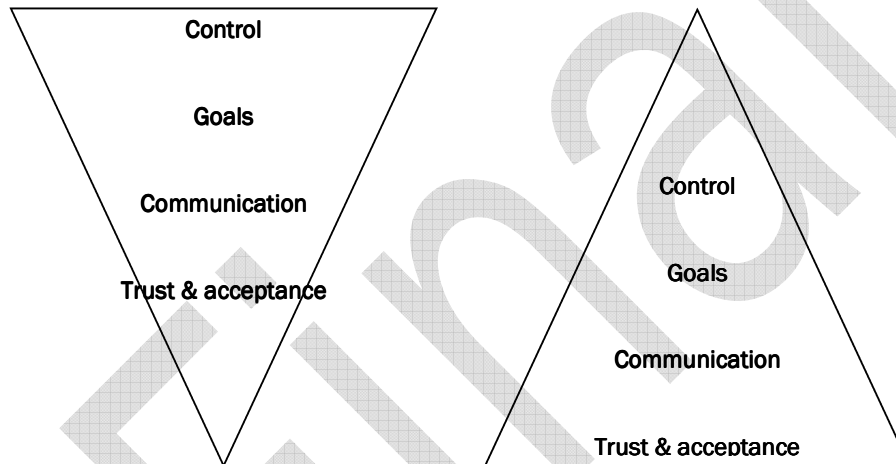
Communications

Background

Good communications are essential for the smooth and effective operations of Southern New England Landcare. Communication is the basis of much of the work of our organisation, whether it be communications among staff, directors, members or the wider public, or between any of these groups. Communications may be interpersonal, over the telephone, via internet (email, websites), through the media or at field days and events.

In the past, members have expressed the need for clear processes for communications between Directors and Staff and the need for cost and time effective communication strategies.

Southern New England Landcare sees itself in the RIGHT triangle where trust and acceptance are the foundation for the organisation, upon which good communication can be built, which helps us achieve our goals. Minimal control is used. Compare this to the LEFT triangle: if trust and acceptance is minimal and control dominant, good communication has a shaky foundation and the goals of the organisation are less likely to be met.



Policy

Southern New England Landcare recognizes that effective and meaningful communication is integral in our day to day business, and therefore promotes the following principles among its staff, directors, and members. To this end, Southern New England Landcare has adopted the following principles of good communication.

Principles

1. General:

- a. We are trustworthy.
- b. We are good listeners.
- c. We treat others equally and fairly and with respect at all times.
- d. We encourage team members with positive feedback when ever possible.
- e. We consider what we say before saying it.
- f. We avoid using staff as conduits in an unfair way.
- g. We deal with Board issues at a Board level and Group issues at the appropriate level.

- h. We understand that for the most part, Directors deal with policy level issues while Staff deal with operational level issues.
- i. We never air 'dirty laundry' about the organisation in any public forum.
- j. We consult with the relevant policy or procedure to deal with issues that become a problem e.g. Grievance Policy.

2. Telephone:

- a. We greet callers respectfully, stating our organisation's name and our own name.
- b. We avoid participating in arguments over the phone.
- c. We do not accept abusive language or behaviour at any time.

3. Internet (email or websites)

- a. We encourage the use of "Dear ____" at the beginning of all emails in order to promote respectful communications through this media.
- b. We adopt the use of key subject phrases to indicate the status of emails:
 - i. Official – matters for the board to consider with some urgency
 - ii. Resolution – a matter that requires a response from board members in order to become a resolution of the board.
 - iii. Information – matters for board and staff to be aware of.
- c. We strongly discourage access to inappropriate websites while at work or while using computers belonging to the organisation.

4. At meetings:

- a. We use consensus based decision making as the basis of decision making in meetings. See Policy document on Consensus Decision Making.
- b. We work through the Chair.
- c. We encourage delegation of tasks among members/directors.
- d. We clarify outcomes and actions out of discussions and we set dates and responsibilities.

5. Media

- a. When preparing press releases or statements for the media, we ensure that at least one other staff member has reviewed the document prior to its release. Where ever possible, the other staff member should be someone who has worked for the organisation longer than we have.
- b. We do not speak with the media about potentially controversial issues without prior discussion with and consent of the Board, and doing so provides grounds for dismissal.
- c. We discuss issues we feel strongly about with the Board, who in their capacity as a community organisation, may have additional input, key contacts and connections, and a stronger voice on the issue, which may enable a more satisfactory result.

6. Events

- a. While at events for work, we represent the view of Southern New England Landcare on any given issue, in preference to our own personal view, unless a personal view is called for.