

OUR PEOPLE NEED SUPPORT, WHAT CAN WE DO?


SUSTAINING YOUR YOUNG FARMER GROUP

Sustaining and growing your organisation is not possible without supporting and developing your people.

This factsheet provides guidance on managing fatigue and burnout, conflict, skills development, and committee succession and change. Be sure to download the full [Young Farmer Group Guidebook](#) for more detailed information on how to be proactive in supporting your people to ensure sustainability of your group.

How can we prevent burnout?

The best volunteers unfortunately are the most prone to burnout. So, your group has a deep interest in looking after these people (including yourself!) and to make sure they do not over commit - even when they say they are fine.



As a group, you can help avoid burnout and fatigue by:

- Having a transparent position description to provide clarity and organisational visibility.
- Create strong processes, culture and environment for communication to occur.
- Incorporate rewards and recognition into your group or committee. It doesn't need to be large, but taking the time to thank people for a job well done is so important for engagement and culture.
- Encourage team members to take some time away and switch off!
- Set firm boundaries around work and how people like to be contacted about their group work during the day.


Take some time to answer a few questions on [The Burnout Project](#). The scale has been designed to provide you with an indication to how burnout is affecting you. Strategies for reducing personal stress can be found in our [full Guidebook](#).

How do we manage conflict?

If addressed constructively, conflict can be a super important step in growing and maintaining the relationships in your group.

- Consider your conflict style and that of your team. A [conflict style matrix](#) considers two factors – the relationship and the issue. After charting your responses, the grid helps identify strategies for the conflict.
- Get some more informal and formal conflict management tips [here](#) and refer to further links below.

- [Combating Volunteer Burnout \(Volunteer Hub\)](#)
- [Resolving conflict \(Community Door\)](#)
- [Conflict resolution toolkit \(NSW Volunteering\)](#)
- [Managing group conflict \(University of Nebraska Lincoln\)](#)



Learning & Development

Refer to our [full Guidebook](#) for training options and providers.

How do we pay for training?

- Consider **grant funding** (see Chapter 2 of our full [Guidebook](#)).
- Keep an eye on subsidised **Young Farmer Business Program** opportunities for training and development.
- Consider **community leadership scholarships** in your area.
- Consider a **sponsor** (your employer, a local business, or your local council).
- Group's cash reserves.





How do we manage people leaving?

We hear the term succession planning a lot in farming, but it is also a super important process for your young farmer group too!

Preparation for change is a key aspect of governance for your young farmer group. Turnover is a necessary and healthy process, and planning for it before it happens will ensure it all goes smoothly.

Succession Plan

Group struggling to maintain or increase members?

People in key roles planning on leaving soon?

Can't find enough people to take on committee positions?

One person holds most of the critical knowledge?

Lack of documentation on procedures to run the group?

Committee leaders staying too long?



Answered yes to any of the questions above? Your group needs a succession plan! Succession procedures can help clarify roles, enable you to get new people on board, prevents the group becoming too stagnant, and facilitates good information sharing, recording keeping, and entry and exit of key people.


Components of a succession plan

1. Revisit your mission and vision and your **business plan**.
2. Process for retention and **record keeping** of key processes and organisational and operational knowledge.
3. Prepare a well organised **folder of materials** to provide background information to new members.
4. Evaluate the **critical positions** in your group.
5. Keep your **matrix or skills audit** up to date as part of your annual planning.
6. Identify **when** people are planning to leave and develop **position description** for each existing and new roles.
7. Identify how you are going to **recruit** people.
8. Outline a process for **induction and development** of new members.
9. **Evaluate** whether the succession plan is working!



We find a **committee matrix** useful for keeping track of your committee's composition, skills and gaps.

You can then identify what you need to develop and what you need to replace if someone steps off the board. An example that can be modified can be found [here](#).



It's time for me to move on...

Maybe circumstances have changed and your time is over. This doesn't mean the group you are part of should cease to function or exist. You shouldn't have guilt over your exit as the group's succession plan will make this process easier.

Exiting Gracefully

Community Directors provides exit tips:

1. **Think and rethink.**
2. **Give notice.**
3. **Discuss your reasons.**
4. **Formally resign.**
5. **Leave a legacy.**
6. **Tie up the loose ends.**
7. **Remain loyal.**
8. **Replace thyself!**

New Members

Tips for recruiting new committee members or volunteers:

- Talk directly with the person who you would love to be involved.
- Make people feel immediately welcome.
- Provide a description of the role and responsibilities, including a realistic expectation on input, meeting times/ location.
- Don't overlook younger members of your community to jump on board.