



Participating in Environment Network Manawatu's Management Committee

The Management Committee Group Culture

A committee of volunteers reflecting our member groups' diversity

Welcome to Environment Network Manawatu's (ENM's) Management Committee (MC). This committee is comprised of volunteers, who are typically elected at ENM's Annual General Meeting, or else appointed to a mid-year vacancy by the existing MC when a willing volunteer looks to be a good fit.

ENM aims to have a MC that reflects the diversity of our member groups' interests—including biodiversity conservation, water quality, urban environment, waste reduction, resource use, climate change mitigation, sustainable transport, sustainability education, eco-appropriate food production, and other environmental topics of importance to our region. We rely for guidance on the environmental ethics, knowledge, and connections our members bring to the MC.

The diverse environmental interests of MC members help keep ENM's vision and direction responsive to our diverse member groups.

A hands-on group culture relying on members' diverse skills

When desired, MC members can take a more hands-on role. Any specialist skills they wish to share (IT, writing, financial, legal, etc.) are highly valued.

Members of our MC have opportunities to participate according to their interests, skills, and availability. Many MC members take a hands-on role, whether by representing ENM at public events or in the media, supporting the development of policies, helping to manage and support staff, contributing to projects, or helping to develop key external relationships (e.g. with councils, funders, ENM member groups, and other organisations in the environmental or community sector). For this reason, it can be helpful to have an MC whose members want to share particular skills in areas such as facilitation, law, finance, writing, photography, IT, human resources and more. The MC is also a place where those interested are welcome to develop new skills and experience.

The key to a good MC: Members who take part in governance decisions

Although many MC members take a hands-on role, this is not always essential. The number one role of the MC is to provide oversight and governance, to ensure that a diverse collective is paying attention and steering ENM's decision-making in a way that is responsive and accountable to our member groups.

The one essential duty of a Management Committee member is to just show up to meetings and participate in discussions and decisions.

➔ **The primary responsibility of the MC is to make good decisions in the following areas:**

- **Overall vision and direction** (strategic and long-term planning, deciding which projects to take on, etc.);
- **Financial risk decisions** (budgeting and expenditure, fundraising decisions);
- **Contractual agreements** (with staff and with external parties); and
- **Operational oversight** (paying enough attention to know all is going as planned).

In other words, the one essential duty of an MC member is to show up to meetings and participate in discussions and decisions. Sometimes MC members who fulfil this essential role without additional volunteering doubt the value of their contributions. Paid staff and volunteers, however, consistently affirm the importance of collective decision-making for ensuring ENM resources are used to best effect.

A cooperative, consensus-oriented culture

In recognition that decisions made by a diverse group are typically more robust, ENM works to maintain a flat decision-making culture, where everyone is given an opportunity to speak and everyone's perspective is considered. ENM asks MC members to take responsibility for speaking when and how they choose—that is, it is unusual for a Chairperson to go around the room and solicit views one by one. Most decisions are made by consensus, and it's important for people to share their views even if they are different than those of the majority. Sometimes good decision-making requires delaying decisions for further consideration or to gather more information.

Given the participatory culture of our MC, tasks are frequently delegated to the person who raises their hand, so that tasks that may typically be associated with the Chairperson, for example, may be carried out by the person who has most capacity at any given time.

Guidelines for Specific Duties

In this participatory and work-sharing context, the tasks set out below are just guidelines that may be adapted in practice. ENM encourages all members of the MC to feel free to raise questions or make comments about any aspect of their participation (e.g. about group dynamics, how to get more involved, how to place good boundaries around involvement) and/or about the direction of ENM and its use of resources.

Standard MC member duties

- **Come to meetings regularly**, preferably having read documents in advance whenever possible. Missing a couple meetings over the course of a year is okay, but a certain number of MC members are required at each meeting to maintain a quorum and consistent leadership. Our constitution allows for MC members to be removed if they have missed three consecutive meetings.
- **Participate in meeting discussions and decision-making.** If you think there is a need to critique the direction the group is headed, speak up.

- **Participate in an MC and staff email distribution list.** Note that many of these emails are shared on a “right to participate” rather than a “required to participate” basis. It is typical for many MC members to skim ENM emails and to be choosy about when to read more closely and when to reply. ENM accepts that both the capacity and interests of individual ENM members change from time to time.
- **Raise your hand for additional responsibilities, if and when that is of interest to you.**
- **Speak up** if you have a new idea or way to contribute that no one else has mentioned.
- **Do what you agree to do, or communicate with others if that is no longer possible.** If you are working on something in a team, please be reasonably accessible to the team (phone/email).
- **Declare all conflicts of interest to the full MC and ensure these are recorded in the Conflicts of Interest Register.** Be familiar with ENM’s Conflict of Interest Policy.

Useful documents for all MC members

- MC members are encouraged to be familiar with the ENM Constitution, especially the organisational purposes.
- New MC members are encouraged to have a good look around our web site, <http://enm.org.nz>, and/or watch the ENM documentary, *Connect to the Heartland*, which is available on YouTube.
- MC members are encouraged to be aware of our policies, including our Health and Safety Policy. A folder of policies is available in the MC office, or via email in electronic form.

Chairperson’s/Co-Chairpersons’ duties

In a hands-on committee, it has proven difficult in past years for any one person to fulfil all the responsibilities of Chairperson. For this reason, the ENM membership has made provision for the role to be shared between Co-Chairpersons. Additionally, responsibilities are at times further delegated, and the Chairperson or Co-Chairperson does not always take an ex officio role on sub-committees, though he/she/they are welcome to do so. Shared Chairperson/Co-Chairperson responsibilities are as follows:

- Chairing meetings, and facilitating direction-setting by the full MC;
- Managing staff, including any volunteers that are not managed by paid staff;
- Generally overseeing operations;
- Ensuring that key organisational documents are prepared, including meeting agendas, annual plans, other long-term plans, and Chairperson’s reports;
- Serving as organisational spokesperson (although ENM has a standing policy, supported by the ENM membership, that paid staff may also represent ENM);
- Serving as a signatory on some organisational documents and payments;
- Letting others know when additional support is needed.

Treasurer's duties

Many of the Treasurer's operational responsibilities can be delegated to staff, but good oversight remains critical. Standard Treasurer responsibilities include:

- Oversight of annual accounts preparation for the auditor, plus meeting with the auditor if required;
- Oversight of general bookkeeping, budgeting, and accounts preparation by staff;
- Oversight/participation in the development of budgets;
- Explaining financial reports to the MC and, at general meetings, to the ENM membership;
- Serving as a signatory on payments and other financial matters, providing oversight to ensure these are in keeping with decisions made by the full MC.

The Treasurer should be well versed in ENM's Financial Policy and Procedures, which provides a more comprehensive list of duties and how they are being carried out.

Secretary's duties

Except for the role of signatory, all secretarial tasks are currently delegated to staff, though support is needed when staff are absent. Any Secretary is welcome to take a more hands-on role, which frees staff time for other activities. The Secretary retains formal responsibility for ensuring the following are carried out:

- Record-keeping, including keeping minutes and membership records;
- Ensuring ENM meets its legal requirements for notification to external organisations (such as the IRD, Societies Office, and Charities Service);
- Ensuring proper notice of meetings has been made;
- Serving as a signatory on some documents and payments.

It is useful for the Secretary to be familiar with ENM's archives policy.

Youth committee member

All MC members may be of any age, provided they have the capacity to contribute and are elected or appointed to their role. The ENM constitution makes special provision, however, to reserve a space for a young person aged sixteen to twenty at the time of election or appointment. There is no expectation that youth committee members serve as youth representatives, and there is no mechanism in place for them to do so. The MC recognises, however, that youth participation valuably diversifies the MC and helps it serve youth-oriented member groups and younger members of the public. There may be times that a youth member may choose to take on a more representative function by seeking input from other young people.

Youth participation valuably diversifies the MC. It also provides a learning opportunity with long-term benefits for the environmental sector.

The Management Committee has a mentoring responsibility toward any youth participants under the age of eighteen, and it is hoped that ENM participation will help youth committee members develop their leadership and governance capacity for the long-term benefit of the environmental sector. To this end, the

MC seeks to appoint one or two particular mentors for any young person serving on the MC. Mentors and youth may spend additional time together to ensure youth members are included, feel welcome, and have the work of the committee explained to them. Additional mentoring roles might include making sure youth have transport to meetings and helping youth identify particular ways they can be more involved, if desired.

No person under the age of eighteen assumes any legal responsibility for ENM. The participation of a youth committee member is otherwise accorded equal weight alongside that of all other MC members.

Observers

The MC may welcome observers to its meetings. We have a standing agreement to invite an observer from Palmerston North City Environmental Trust. In general, observers' role is to listen, not to participate more actively, although additional input may be invited at particular times. Those who volunteer as observers strengthen the connectivity and information-sharing that are central to ENM's role in the environmental sector.

General comment on delegation

ENM's constitution allows MC members and Officers to delegate duties to individuals and/or sub-committees. Ultimately, responsibility remains with the full MC.

Adoption of this document

This description of MC roles was last reviewed and adopted by the full ENM MC in September 2016. A signed version is available in the ENM Office.