

When I'm at work: Working on a committee

Learner's workbook



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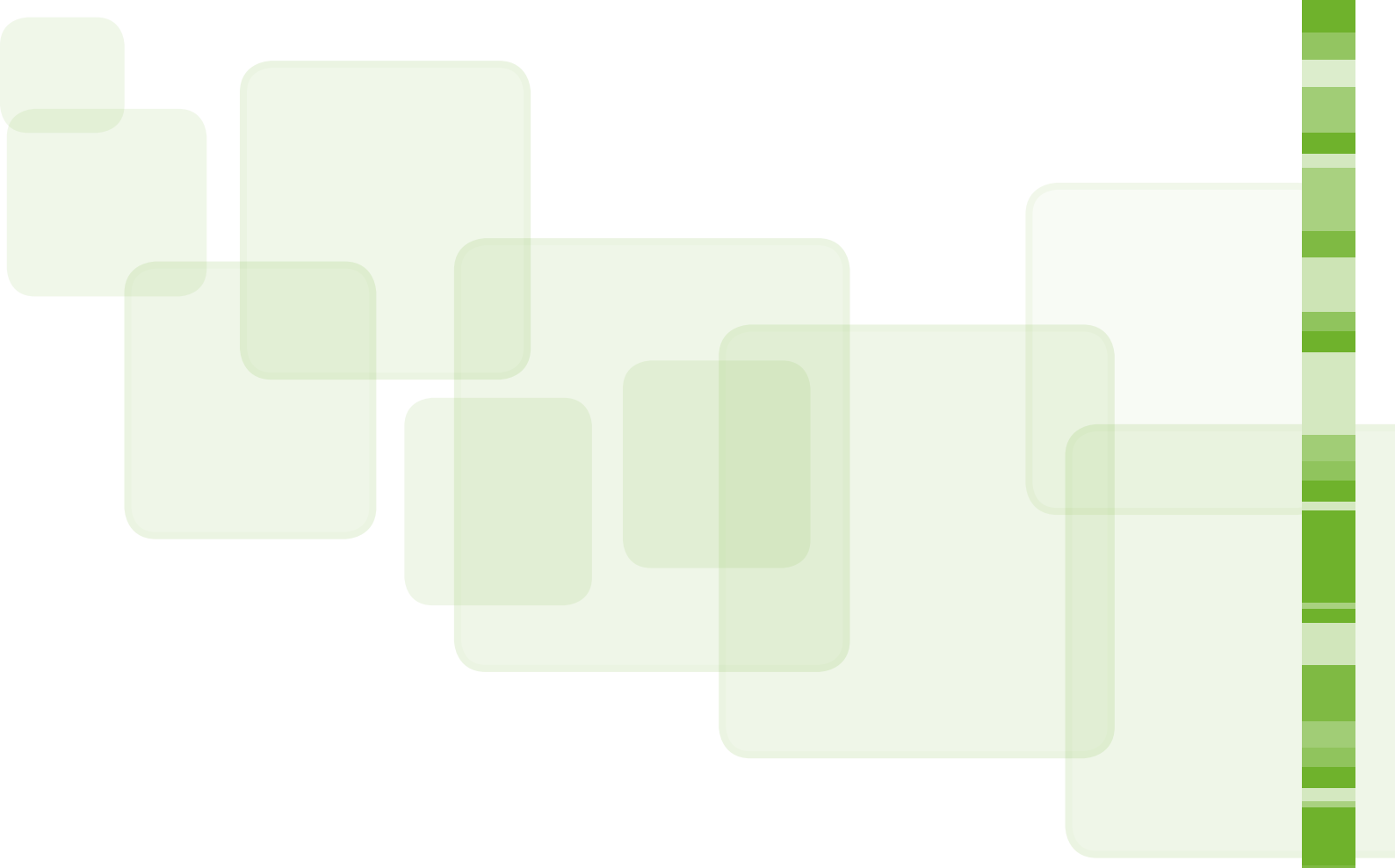
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Introduction



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- ▶ Your trainer will show you some slides on the screen to help you understand about working on committees in the workplace.
 - ▶ Your workbook has the same information in it. There are also some activities in the workbook to help you learn more about working on committees in the workplace.
 - ▶ There are seven topics for you to listen to and look at. They are all about working on committees in the workplace. Each topic gives you some information first. There are some stories for you to listen to and watch.
 - ▶ You can discuss the information and the stories with your trainer.
 - ▶ You will see the pictures and words from each story in your workbook. That way, you can read it as many times as you want to later on.
 - ▶ There will also be some activities for you to do about working on a committee. Your trainer will help you with the activities. There are lines in your workbook if you want to write about the activities you did.
 - ▶ You can write notes about any of the things that you have learned about in your workbook if you want to. There are lines in the workbook for you to write on if you need them.
 - ▶ You should keep your workbook so that you can look at it when you need information about working on committees in the workplace.

Note: The ‘Key resources’ section gives you more information about working on a committee, in case you need it.

Topic 1

What is a committee?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the boxes. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

What is a committee?

A committee is a group of people who work together for others to do things that will benefit everyone.

What is a workplace committee?

A workplace committee is a group of people who work together for others to do things that will benefit everyone in the workplace.

What do people on workplace committees do?

People on committees work together for other people in the workplace, to do things that are related to the workplace. These things will benefit everyone in the workplace.

It is important to remember that people who are on a workplace committee look after what's best for everyone in the workplace when they decide about things.



Bob's story

Now watch and listen to Bob's story.

Hi. My name is Bob. I am a member of the safety committee at my workplace. I look out for things that keep us safe at work. Workers tell me about things we should talk about at our safety committee meetings.



Questions for discussion

Why do you think Bob is on the workplace safety committee?

How does Bob's position on the safety committee help the workplace?

Why do you think it would be good to have Bob on the safety committee?

Topic 2

Why do we have workplace committees?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the boxes. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

Why do we have workplace committees?

There are four common reasons for having committees.

1. Sharing the workload

Working as a group shares the workload or leads to better ideas. When there is a large task to be done, having a group working on things is better than leaving it to one person.

Some examples of workplace committees include:

- ▶ a social committee to organise social activities
- ▶ a training committee to help the training manager with deciding which training is best for the workplace
- ▶ an events committee to work on quality in the workplace.

2. It's the law

The Australian Government has rules about what makes a good service. These rules are called the Disability Services Standards. They help to make sure that your workplace gives you quality service. Quality service includes having your say at work. Working on a committee is one way that you can have your say at work.

Some committees are formed because a law or rule says that the workplace has to have these committees. For example, OH&S legislation requires the workplace to have a safety committee. An industrial award may require a workplace committee to talk about changes to working conditions.

3. Encouraging workers to have a say

Hearing the views of workers is a way that management will know what needs to change or improve in the workplace.

Disability Services Standard 3 is all about having your say. Your workplace has to give you choice and has to listen to you about:

- ▶ the kind of work you want to do
- ▶ how your workplace can do things better.

4. Ideas for the workplace and the workers

Workers know what is happening in their work areas and have ideas about how to make things better. A committee gives workers an opportunity to talk with other workers and their supervisors about issues and ideas in the workplace.

This all contributes to making a more productive, happy, and safe workplace.

The pool table story

Now watch and listen to the pool table story.

The social club received a letter at its monthly meeting from Joe, Ross and Alf.

The letter said, 'We are really cross and don't want to pay any more money to the social club because we haven't been able to play pool at lunchtime for four weeks. It seems to be always the same blokes who get the table and hog it with their mates. This isn't fair because we helped pay for this table as much as they did and we don't get a chance to play pool.'



The social club committee discuss the letter.
What can the committee do to solve the problem?

Pretend that you and your group are the social club committee. Discuss the letter, and talk about how you would solve this problem. Tell your trainer about what you decided. Your trainer will help you with this activity.

Questions for discussion

How have you helped to solve the pool table problem?

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Who have you helped?

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How will you get back to the people who wrote the letter to let them know what you have done about their complaint?

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Why do you think it is important to have a committee like this one?

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Workbook activities

Your trainer will give you a copy of the Disability Services Standards. Find Standard 3. What is Standard 3 all about?

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How can having your say at work make the workplace better for everyone?

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What do you think would make your workplace better?

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Topic 3

How are workplace committees chosen?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the boxes. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

How are workplace committees chosen?

There are lots of ways that you can be chosen to be on a workplace committee.

It may be **part of your job** to be on a workplace committee.

You may **volunteer** to be on the workplace committee. This means that you offer to work on the committee without being asked to, or having to.

You may be **nominated** by your supervisor or a co-worker to represent the work team on a committee. This means that you are asked if you are willing to be on the committee.

If you are willing, you could be one of a few people who have been nominated to be on a committee. Each work team usually has only one representative on a workplace committee.

You may be asked to be on a workplace committee by people who are already on the committee. This is called being **co-opted**.

There may be only one position available on a committee but two or more people may want to be in that position on the committee. When this happens, you need to choose or **elect** the person you want on the committee.

The people who want to be on the committee are called **candidates**.

On a piece of paper (called a **ballot paper**) which has the names of all the candidates on it, you put a tick next to the name of the person you want to be on the committee. This is called **voting** for that person.

You don't have to tell anyone else who you voted for. This is called voting by **secret ballot**.

The person with the most votes is elected to the committee.

Brenda's story

Now watch and listen to Brenda's story.

DB Services has a quality committee and there has to be one person from each of the work areas on the committee.

Brenda used to work on the gardening crew and she was their representative on the quality committee. She has just moved over to the packing team. Carl from the packing team is already on the quality committee, so Brenda can't be on the quality committee anymore.

The gardening crew has elected Jenny to replace Brenda on the quality committee. Brenda is going to come to the next quality committee meeting to help Jenny learn what happens at the meetings.



Questions for discussion

Why can't Brenda be on the quality committee anymore?

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Why is it good to have someone from each work area on the quality committee?

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Bruce and Joyce's story

Now watch and listen to Bruce and Joyce's story.

Bruce and Joyce are supported employees in Hillside Business Services and have been nominated to join the safety committee.

As only one position is vacant, an election is going to be held. Bruce and Joyce understand that only one of them can be on the committee. They are both keen to be on the committee and have been talking with the other workers about why they should vote for them.



Bruce has talked about his previous experience on the committee and how he is a good listener. Joyce has not been on a committee before but she has good ideas and is a responsible person.

Questions for discussion

Why will it be necessary for an election to be held for this committee?

What will Bruce and Joyce need to do before the election?

What does being nominated to join a committee mean?

What does being elected to a committee mean?

Sarah's story

Now watch and listen to Sarah's story.

Parkview Business Services is planning to hold its annual Christmas party in the local park.

A committee is to be formed to help organise the party.

Sarah, a new employee, volunteers to be on the committee.



Questions for discussion

What are the things this committee will need to do?

Why do you think Sarah has volunteered to be on this committee?

Workbook activities

Your trainer will help you with these activities if you are not sure what to do.

Think about the election activity that you've just done. What did you learn from the election activity?

What do you think you did well during the election activity?

What do you need more practice in?

Do you think that being elected is a fair way of joining a committee?

Think about the guest speakers and what they talked with you about regarding workplace committees. How are you and your work area represented by committees in the workplace?

Topic 4

What roles are there on workplace committees?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the box. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

What roles are there on workplace committees?

People on workplace committees usually have special roles or jobs that they do while they are on the committee. These roles can sometimes be shared, or people in those roles can get help with some parts of their roles if they need it. For example, a worker may be the secretary on a workplace committee and have help to write any letters that are required.

Remember that it is your right to have your say at work. Working on a committee is one way that you can have your say at work.

Here are the main roles and what they involve.

Chairperson

The chairperson runs the committee meetings. The chairperson also makes sure that people on the committee take turns to talk, and that everyone has their say.

Secretary

The secretary prepares the meeting agendas and takes notes of what happens at meetings, including the things that the committee votes on and agrees to do. The secretary also writes any letters or emails that the committee wants to send.

Treasurer

The treasurer manages the money and reports to the rest of the committee about the money that the committee is responsible for. A treasurer is not always needed on a committee. It will depend on whether or not money is needed for that committee.

Team representative

The team representative is the person who is on the committee to represent the views of everyone on their work team. People on the work team may elect their team representative. Managers may ask a particular worker to be the team representative.

Committee members

Committee members represent the views of all workers in the workplace. They put forward ideas about the things that the committee is discussing.

Brian's story

Now watch and listen to Brian's story.

Brian works at DB Services on the gardening team. He's also the chairperson of the DB Services social club committee.

Mario, a supervisor at DB Services, is the treasurer of the DB Services social club committee.

Chen is the gardening team's representative on the committee.



Lisa and Julia are also team representatives on the DB Services social club committee.

At the monthly committee meeting, Brian wants to discuss the Christmas party. He asks Mario how much money there is to spend but before Mario can answer, Lisa interrupts.

Mario and Brian are annoyed. Brian tells Lisa that she has to wait her turn. He continues his conversation with Mario.

Brian then asks Chen to talk about what the gardening team wants to do for the Christmas party. Chen is surprised. Brian works on the gardening team so he knows perfectly well what the team wants.

Brian tells Chen that it's her job to say what the gardening team wants because she's the team representative.

Brian sees that Julia's hand is up, so he asks her to speak after Chen has finished. Julia has just started talking when Lisa interrupts again.

Brian firmly asks Lisa to be quiet. He then asks Julia to continue with what she was saying.

In the meantime, Lisa has put her hand up. When Julia has finished talking, Brian asks Lisa to speak.



Questions for discussion

Why do committees have rules?

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Why do people on a committee have different roles?

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How did Brian go as the chairperson?

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Why did Brian ask Chen to speak for the gardening team?

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Amir's story

Now watch and listen to Amir's story.

Amir has been on the safety committee at DB Services for three months. He represents the new printing service crew. He has been to every meeting. He comes on time and listens quietly to what is being said. If Lynne, the chairperson, asks him if he wants to ask anything he either shakes his head or says no. He pins the notes of the meeting up on the noticeboard in his work area after every meeting.



Before one meeting, Lillian, one of the other people at the printing service, asks him to raise at the meeting that there is a problem with fumes in the copier room. Lillian and other people are getting headaches that they think come from working in there.

Amir goes to the meeting, but he doesn't say anything about the fumes.

When she sees the notes of the meeting, Lillian is very angry and says Amir is not doing his job properly.

Questions for discussion

What parts of being on the committee is Amir doing well?

Are there parts of his role that Amir is not doing well?

Is it a problem that Amir is not speaking up at the meetings? Why?

Who might be able to help Amir do his job on the committee better?

Topic 5

What does it mean to represent other people?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the box. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

What skills do you need to be a committee member?

Representing other people on a workplace committee carries lots of responsibility with it.

To represent other people means that you:

- ▶ are a good listener
- ▶ talk with co-workers about issues to take to meetings
- ▶ talk with co-workers about issues raised in meetings
- ▶ tell co-workers about decisions made in meetings
- ▶ keep co-workers up to date with any actions or planning from meetings
- ▶ make sure to bring the team's voice to the meetings
- ▶ are well prepared for committee meetings (have read minutes and reports, know about team issues and comments to raise)
- ▶ ask questions during meetings
- ▶ participate in meetings and in the work of the committee.

Committee members learn how to:

- ▶ represent other people's opinions and ideas
- ▶ ask questions
- ▶ take turns at talking at the right time
- ▶ share information and ideas
- ▶ solve problems
- ▶ listen to other people's ideas
- ▶ respect other people's ideas and suggestions
- ▶ discuss ideas
- ▶ make decisions.

Louise's story

Now watch and listen to Louise's story.

Louise attends the meeting of the quality committee each Tuesday morning. At the meeting, she is asked to raise any issues from her work area. Her response is always that there are no issues.

When she returns from the meeting, her supervisor asks her to tell the workers in her area what was discussed and any decisions made at the meeting.

Louise's response is often that she has nothing to report.



Questions for discussion

What would you have done differently if you were Louise?

How would you have represented her in the work area?

What can Louise do now to better represent her work area?

How can Louise's supervisor help her?

Carl's story

Now watch and listen to Carl's story.

At the last meeting of the DB Services safety committee, Bill reported that someone was nearly hit by a forklift because they hadn't used the safe walkway in the warehouse.

The committee talked about the best way to make sure people used the safe walkways. Sally, the safety officer, said she would get some new posters and put them up. Bill knew that some people in his team didn't notice the posters. He thought that part of the problem was that the markings on the floor had worn off. He suggested getting a painter to come in and put the markings back.

Carl listened and spoke up next. He said that he agreed with Bill and Sally. His idea was that the people who worked in the warehouse could repaint the floor markings and put up the posters. Then they would know where the safe walkways were and what was on the posters.

The committee agreed that his idea was a good one and that is what they would do.



Questions for discussion

How did being on the committee help Carl get his idea?

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Can you think of a time when you got a good idea from hearing what other people had to say?

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Topic 6

What happens during committee meetings?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with
- ▶ to be ready to be involved in an activity.

You're ready so let's start ...

Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the boxes. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

What happens during committee meetings?

Committee meetings need to be run properly. For this to happen, there are things that are part of every meeting. Here are some of those things.



Agenda

An agenda is a list of everything that will be talked about during a committee meeting. If you want something discussed at a committee meeting, you should contact your team representative or the secretary of the committee. That person will add it to the agenda for discussion.

Here is the agenda for a safety committee meeting at Evergreen Industries.

EVERGREEN INDUSTRIES

Safety committee MEETING AGENDA

Meeting date

Meeting to be held on 19 February 2008.

Meeting venue

Meeting to be held in the small meeting room.

Meeting time

Meeting to start at 10.30am.

Attendance

Apologies

S Burke, P Townsend

Acceptance of previous minutes

The minutes of the safety committee meeting held on 18 January 2008 were accepted as true.

Moved:	Seconded:
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Business arising from the previous minutes

- 1 First aid kit for warehouse (L Jackson)
- 2 Fire drills (R Bebbs)
- 3 Any other business arising

New business

- 1 Workplace safety inspections (M Burg)
- 2 Any other new business

Next meeting

Scheduled for 18 March 2008.

Closing

Minutes

Minutes are notes of everything that happens during a committee meeting. The secretary of the committee usually writes these notes down. This is called **taking the minutes**. After each committee meeting, the minutes are sent to everyone on the committee.

EVERGREEN INDUSTRIES

Safety committee MEETING MINUTES

Meeting date

The meeting was held on 19 February 2008.

Meeting venue

The meeting was held in the small meeting room.

Meeting time

The meeting opened at 10.30am.

Attendance

M Burg (chairperson), R Bebb, E Duggan, L Jackson, B Cobby, V Johnson, K Hicks, J Hill, T Harms, G Billson

Apologies

S Burke, P Townsend, L Smith

Acceptance of previous minutes

The minutes of the safety committee meeting held on 18 January 2008 were accepted as true.

Moved: E Duggan

Seconded: J Hill

Business arising from the minutes

1 First aid kit for warehouse

Lyn Jackson presented for discussion two purchase prices of first aid kits for the warehouse – one costing \$160, the other \$90.

Brian Cobby said \$160 was a lot of money to pay and he preferred the cheaper kit. Kaz Hicks said that there was much more in the \$160 kit. It could also be mounted on the wall. Tim Harms and Gina Billson agreed with Kaz.

Motion: That the committee recommends the purchase of a first aid kit for the warehouse, to the value of \$160.

Moved: L Jackson

Seconded: K Hicks

There was no further discussion, and the motion was carried.

Lyn Jackson said that she would oversee the purchase of the first aid kit, and organise for it to be mounted on the warehouse wall.

2 Fire drills

Robyn Bebbs reported that all fire drills had been completed since the last meeting.

3 Any other business arising

There was no other business arising.

New business

1 Workplace safety inspections

Mary Burg noted that it was time for the annual workplace safety inspections for each team. Team representatives are to speak with their supervisors about organising these inspections in the next few months. Team representatives are to report back at the next meeting about suitable days and times.

2 Any other new business

There was no other new business.

Next meeting

The next meeting of the safety committee is scheduled for 18 March 2008.

Closing

The meeting closed at 11.15am.

Parts of a committee meeting

For committee meetings to be run properly, they should follow an order.

- ▶ The chairperson opens the meeting and welcomes everyone to the meeting.
- ▶ The secretary writes down the names of everyone there. This is called **taking the attendance**.
- ▶ The secretary writes down the names of the people who said they could not attend the meeting. This is called **taking the apologies**.
- ▶ The chairperson asks everyone to agree that the minutes of the previous meeting of the committee are correct. This is called **accepting the minutes of the previous meeting**.
- ▶ Sometimes, the chairperson reports on any important committee activities. This is called the **chairperson's report**. Other people, like the treasurer, may give reports too.
- ▶ Anything from the previous minutes that needs to be discussed is called **business arising from the previous meeting**, and is listed on the agenda. The committee now discusses these things.
- ▶ The committee now discusses any new agenda items. These items are called **new business**. They can include issues that workers have asked their team representatives to discuss.
- ▶ After all the discussion is finished, the chairperson lets everyone know when the **next meeting** of the committee will be.
- ▶ The chairperson then thanks people for attending. This is called **closing the meeting**.

Making decisions during meetings

Decisions that committees make have to be fair because they affect everyone in the workplace. That's why making decisions during committee meetings involves several steps.

- ▶ The chairperson reads the agenda item to be discussed.
- ▶ The committee members take turns to talk about the agenda item.
- ▶ When the discussion has finished, a member of the committee suggests that the committee makes a decision about the agenda item. This is called **moving a motion**.
- ▶ Another committee member agrees. This is called **seconding the motion**.
- ▶ The chairperson asks each committee member if they agree with the motion. This is called **voting for the motion**. If they do not agree with the motion, this is called **voting against the motion**.
- ▶ If more people vote for the motion than against the motion, the **motion is carried**. This means that the committee has made a decision about that agenda item.

Workbook activities

Write down some of the meeting rules that you thought of.

What should you not talk about during a committee meeting?

What did you learn during the role play of the canteen committee meeting?

Which role did you play? What specific things did you do while you were in the role?

What did you learn about what happens during committee meetings?

Topic 7

Who can you talk to about getting the skills to be a committee member?

What you will need

You will need:

- ▶ this workbook
- ▶ something to write with.

You're ready so let's start ...

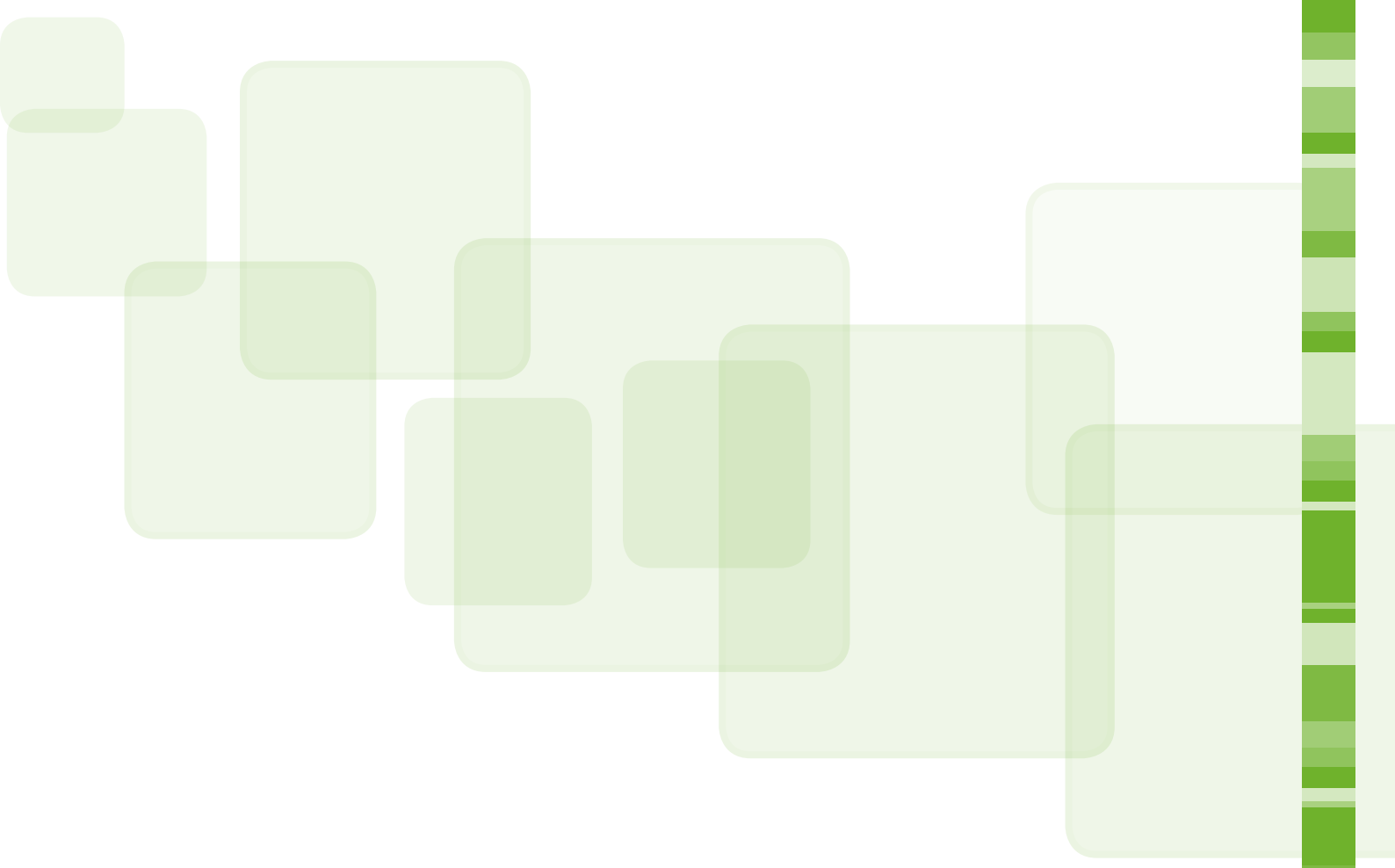
Watch the slides carefully. They will tell you what this topic is about. The slides are about the information in the box. Your trainer will talk with you about this information.

Who can you talk to about getting the skills to be a committee member?

If you want to know more about how to get the skills to be a committee member, you can talk with:

- ▶ your supervisor or manager
- ▶ your human resources department
- ▶ someone who is already on a workplace committee
- ▶ someone who is on a committee outside the workplace
- ▶ your local adult education or community centre that runs training workshops.

Key resources



This section provides you with information about, and links to, the location of additional resources that you can access. You may wish to use this material if you need to investigate further or explore relevant issues.

Disability Services Standards

Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>

This website has information about:

- ▶ Disability Services Standards (FaCSIA) 2007
- ▶ Disability Services Standards (DEWR) 2007
- ▶ evidence guidelines for Disability Employment and Rehabilitation Services.

Workplace policies and procedures

The Disability Services Standards require that Disability Business Services have policies and procedures in place that relate to the issues discussed in the training session about workplace committees.

