

Links to QA 3 "Partnerships with Families and Community Links"

Network is always pleased to hear about the many OOSH gatherings happening out in the various regions. Thanks to all of you who keep in touch about the regional networking in your area. OOSH professionals benefit enormously from attending regional networks.

What are the benefits?

There are all too few opportunities for OOSH professionals to come together with like-minded individuals. However, there is much to be gained for OOSH professionals linking up at regional gatherings. Network is aware that services linked into regional networks have many more survival strategies for day-to-day management of the OOSH service.

Regional networks have many benefits including:

- Build on existing relationships with other peers.
- Share information and resources
- Influence and lobby as a group on a common issues
- Develop local contacts and be familiar with expertise and resources in the area
- Assist with OHSCQA
- Celebrate successes and face challenges
- Problem solving
- Provide a sympathetic ear when problems arise.

More than just meetings...

Regional networks not only facilitate meetings they can also provide opportunities for services to:

- Facilitate shared training
- Invite guest speakers
- Purchase joint resources
- Cost share for excursions during vacation care
- Recommend good staff

Issues to consider when establishing a regional network

- What do we as OOSH professionals want to get out of coming together?
- Who are the meetings aimed at? (What geographical area do you intend covering? Will community based & private services be included?)
- Where should we meet? (Will meetings be rotated at different locations or in the same spot?)
- Who is going to take responsibility for organising meetings? (Is this going to be a shared responsibility? Or organising committees made up of a few individuals? Who is going to be the contact person?)

- Who will keep records of meetings?
- How often are you going to meet? (Once a term or monthly, or twice a year in remote areas.)
- Is there going to be a charge? (Some networks charge a small contribution towards morning tea, and mail outs)
- Can the local council assist in any way e.g. small grant, venue, mailouts, support in kind?
- How will publicise meetings and keep the network growing and healthy?



How can Network help?

Network fully supports the development of regional networking and can offer support by:

- Being a sounding board for your ideas...
- Providing envelope labels for services in your area
- Promoting your regional network by advertising it in various network publications and eventually putting it on the website!
- Attending – the OOSH Development Co-ordinator can intermittently attend meetings to up date services on current issues.
- Providing up to date information on issues affecting OOSH services

For more information...

Contact: Network's OOSH Development Team on (02) 9212 3244 or email: oosh@netoosh.org.au

Keep Network informed...

Let Network know about the regional meeting in your area. Network needs the following information.

- Which Local Government Areas are covered
- Who can attend?
- How often do you meet?
- Venue where are meetings held?
- Broad format and focus of meeting
- Contact person