Guidelines to taking good minutes

The minutes of a meeting record the decisions made about each agenda item, and should include:

- actions taken or agreed to be taken
- next steps
- decision outcomes (not conversation)
- people responsible for actions
- items to be held over
- new business
- next meeting date and time.

Note

- Draft minutes should be circulated through CAN Facilitator within one week of the meeting.
- Any changes to be made before distribution should be discussed with the minute taker.
- Any other feedback/changes can be agreed at the next meeting, when the minutes are discussed.

Tips that might help your note taking:

- **Create an outline –** having an outline (or template) based on the agenda makes it easy for you to simply jot down notes, decisions, etc. under each item as you go along. If you are taking notes by hand, consider including space below each item on your outline for your hand-written notes, then print these out and use this to capture minutes (refer to sample agenda and minutes templates in your handbook).
- **Check-off attendees as they enter the room –** if you know the meeting attendees, you can check them off as they arrive; if not, have folks introduce themselves at the start of the meeting or circulate an attendance list they can check-off themselves.
- **Record decisions or notes on action items** in your outline as soon as they occur to be sure they are recorded accurately.
- **Ask for clarification if necessary –** for example, if the group moves on without making a decision or an obvious conclusion, ask for clarification of the decision and/or next steps involved.
- **Don't try to capture it all –** you can't keep up if you try to write down the conversation verbatim, so be sure to simply (and clearly) write (or type) just the decisions, assignments, action steps, etc.