

U3A QLD | SB1804



Connecting seniors
to lifelong learning.

Governance Handbook- Section 2 Committees

Contents

Legal Stuff	3
Introduction.....	4
Committees.....	5
Role Of the Committee	8
Office Bearer Job Descriptions	10
Sub-Committee Job Descriptions	12
Performance Review	16
About Us	20



Legal Stuff

You are welcome to print a copy of this document for your personal use and that of your organisation and its volunteers. Other than that, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise without the prior written permission of the copyright owners except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Requests to the authors for permission can be sent to leisadonlan@goodgovernanceconsultants.com.au

While the authors have used their best efforts in preparing this handbook and the resources contained within it, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of this document.

The advice and strategies contained herein are of a general nature and may not be suitable for your specific circumstances. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. The authors shall not be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential or other damages.

Due to the dynamic nature of the internet, certain links and website information contained in this publication may have changed. The authors make no representations to the current accuracy of the web information shared.

In Queensland, as an incorporated association, most organisations will be subject to the Associations Incorporations Act and its Regulations. The relevant Government regulator is known as the Office of Fair Trading. There is substantial information available on their website about the legal aspects of both the Act and its Regulations and during the service of this guide, it is possible that some information may change to reflect changes in the legislation. We have added some important links here for you to easily remain up to date.

HELPFUL LINKS

[Incorporated Associations Smart Business Guide](#)

(A must for your association, on the laws and how they apply to you in simple to understand terms)

[Associations Incorporations Act 1981](#) (For rules about running an association)

[Office of Fair Trading Queensland](#) (For information about your responsibilities)

[Australian Charities & Not-for-profits Commission](#) (For those who are registered charities)

[Australian Taxation Office](#) (To keep up to date with changes in tax law)

[Department of Justice OFT Fundraising](#) (For information on raffles & donations)

[Australian Consumer Law](#) (What claims you make in advertising and to “sell” membership & activities)

[Workplace Health & Safety Queensland](#) (For your obligations to members, staff & volunteers)

[Fair Work Ombudsman](#) (When volunteers are bullied)



Introduction

Good Governance - two little words full of meaning that should be at the heart of all the work undertaken by your board/committee and your subcommittees.

The Good Governance Health Check guides users through the essential concepts, principles and activities needed to ensure a healthy and productive organisation.

Most incorporated Associations are small, volunteer-driven organisations, with limited resources and in need of practical guidance to meet the many challenges of the modern not-for-profit environment.

The Health Check contained within this Handbook will give you a snapshot of your Association's governance health status and will identify areas where improvement is needed. Levels of understanding and familiarity will vary amongst your board members according to the purpose, structure, scale and sophistication of your organisation, but the Health Check can be applied to any incorporated entity.

And - to help you work smarter not harder - we've included a Toolbox full of simple tips, techniques, templates and examples to help your organisation on its governance journey.

How does it work?

It's simple. The Handbook is divided into 11 sections, starting with the big picture and moving through the detail of specific areas of operation. Each section contains Questions and Toolbox tips, techniques and examples.

Carefully read each question and the explanation. If you can confidently answer "yes", then tick the box. If the answer is "no" or you don't know, then leave it blank for now. You'll get most value from the Good Governance Health Check if you're completely honest. Most questions are objective - they ask for evidence of something factual or tangible.

When the question asks if you have a particular plan or policy or procedure, only say yes if you can actually put your hands on an example or on the finished item. Some questions are subjective - they ask for an opinion or perception. Glossing over problem areas puts your organisation at further risk and means you miss out on important opportunities to diagnose issues and work out solutions. And - hey - it means you're wasting your time and your money - and that's never smart. Honesty is the best policy!

After you've answered all the questions for that section, review your answers. If you find blank check boxes then you have the start of your Good Governance To Do list. It's simple! Good Governance is complex, but the step-by-step Health Check breaks it down into bite size chunks and makes it do-able.

At the end of each section you'll find the Toolbox. It contains tips, techniques and examples relevant to that particular topic. You can work through the Checklist and Toolbox one section at a time or you can come back to the Toolbox after you've answered all the questions in all sections.

Work through all of the sections. You can do this at your own pace - take all the days, weeks or months that you need. The speed isn't important - but achieving continued forward progress is. It's all about having a strategy and the right tools to achieve genuine continuous improvement.

Good luck and good governing!

SECTION 2

Committees

The Committee (or Board) is the governing body of the Association and takes on the responsibility of managing its affairs. This is no small task so all Committee members should be prepared to make a significant commitment and fully understand their role. The Committee is accountable to members for the good governance of the organisation.



Committee Checklist

<p>Are all the office bearer roles contained in the Constitution filled?</p>	<p><i>Office Bearers are the Committee members holding positions required by the Constitution. These are generally President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, but may vary from organisation to organisation.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Were all office bearers appointed in accordance with the Constitution?</p>	<p><i>Your Constitution will specify the way Office Bearers are appointed or elected and this process must be adhered to for the appointments to be valid. These requirements will vary from association to association so check your Constitution!</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have a Public Officer?</p>	<p><i>All incorporated associations are required to have a Public Officer under the Act. The Public Officer is responsible for communicating with the regulatory authority in your state, amongst other things. (Secretary in Qld)</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Does the Committee's collective experience and competence meet organisational needs?</p>	<p><i>The Committee needs to "add value" to the association so Committee members collectively should represent a broad range of skills and experience.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you encourage and actively promote diversity in your Committee?</p>	<p><i>A broad range of skills and experience are desirable for your Committee, but there is also evidence that diversity, particularly gender diversity, leads to better Committee outcomes.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do the Committee members have a good understanding of their role?</p>	<p><i>All Committee members should have a good understanding of their role, including their obligations to the organisation, to each other and in shaping the culture of the organisation.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Does the Committee have a good understanding of their legal responsibilities?</p>	<p><i>All Committee members should have a good understanding of their legal responsibilities under the Associations Incorporation Act and also at common law.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



<p>Do you have written 'job descriptions' for Committee positions?</p>	<p><i>People perform better if they know exactly what is expected of them! The same is true for volunteer Committee members so it's good practice to identify the requirements of Office Bearer and other Committee positions. These would include President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary, but may also include members holding Portfolio or other Sub- Committee leadership roles.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have a written 'job description' for the Committee as a whole?</p>	<p><i>Just as individuals perform better if they know what's expected of them, so does your Committee! You can develop a simple 'job description' for your Committee. This should include a Purpose Statement; key responsibilities both to the organisation and to the group; and what you believe your members and stakeholders expect of you. Having a 'job description' allows you to measure Committee performance and sets the 'tone from the top' for your organisation.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have a statement of Committee Protocols or a Code of Conduct for the Committee?</p>	<p><i>The Committee has a duty to act in good faith and for a proper purpose. Members must take care and display due diligence in managing the affairs of the Association. A statement of Committee Protocols or Code of Conduct identifies what is acceptable behaviour for Committee members.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have Committee performance measures in place?</p>	<p><i>How do you know if you're doing a good job? Simple performance measures allow you to assess how well you're performing as a Committee. TIP! Use your Committee 'job description' as the basis of a simple, self-assessment review.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have an induction procedure for new Committee members?</p>	<p><i>Joining a Committee can be a daunting experience for new members! That's why an induction process to provide them the information they need and an introduction to the 'culture' of your association can be of great benefit and have them 'up to speed' as quickly as possible.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Do you have a succession plan for your Committee?</p>	<p><i>A well-rounded Committee with a broad range of skills and experience is highly desirable - but doesn't happen just by wishful thinking! As members approach the end of their term or indicate that they will be retiring, the Committee should consider how they will be replaced and by whom. What skills do you need? What type of person will you want to attract? Succession planning means giving consideration to these questions and coming up with an appropriate strategy.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>



SECTION 2

Tips & Techniques

Role of the Committee
Job Descriptions
Committee Job Description
Code of Conduct
Performance Review
Induction





TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Role Of the Committee

Committees exist to govern the Association on behalf of members, within the law and making the best use of available resources. So what does this mean?

Committees are as individual as the Associations they govern and will vary in number, composition and focus. However, there are some basic principles that all Committees need to understand to properly fulfil their role.

THE COMMITTEE IS A TEAM

Your Association's Committee is a group of individuals, (usually) elected by the members and entrusted by them to achieve the aims of the organisation. While the Committee is a collection of individuals, those individuals do not govern. Only the Committee, as a single entity, speaking with one voice, has the authority to legitimately make decisions.

Not all Committee members are going to think the same way on all issues. In fact, it's a good thing for the Committee to represent a range of views, skills and experience.

The Boardroom should be a safe space for Committee members to express their views and to engage in vigorous debate on a range of issues. BUT, once a decision is made, every Committee member must publicly support the decision, show a united front and speak with one voice. The tone of your organisation is set from the top and factional divisions within the Committee are likely to be reflected throughout the membership.

What goes on in the Boardroom, stays in the Boardroom!

ORGANISATIONAL ROLE

The Committee has a responsibility to the Association to manage its affairs in a responsible, efficient and ethical manner. Duties of the Committee in relation to the organisation include:

- meeting legal requirements
- meeting governance requirements
- working towards organisational goals
- effectively using resources
- having a clear organisational structure
- having appropriate decision-making strategies
- having effective communication processes
- having up-to-date and relevant policies
- having short and long term plans
- having problem solving strategies
- having clear internal and external reporting strategies
- having transparency and accountability
- having appropriate links with other organisations.

Organisational responsibilities are all about meeting objectives effectively and responsibly. These are generally things that can be identified and measured, but the Committee has other responsibilities that may be less easy to quantify.

CULTURAL ROLE

Creating a healthy Association culture is also an important role for the Committee. Organisational culture is about the behaviour of people and is influenced by vision, values, norms, systems, language, assumptions, beliefs and habits.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Role of the Committee

The Committee must lead by example in creating or maintaining a healthy culture which includes:

- abiding by the code of ethics/conduct
- demonstrating strong and relevant values
- being committed to the Association's vision
- avoiding conflicts of Interest
- maintaining confidentiality
- ensuring fairness and equity
- conforming with organisational policy.

The Committee cannot just pay lip service to these things—individually and collectively the Committee must embody these principles and inspire others to meet their standards.

GROUP ROLE

The way Committee members behave and interact with each other is another important aspect of their role. This includes:

- timely attendance at Committee meetings
- paying attention & putting down the mobile
- participation in Sub-Committee and Working Groups as required
- being prepared for meetings
- reading agenda papers and reports; and preparing them as required
- participating in debate
- being courteous to all members
- listening to the views of others
- maintaining Committee confidentiality.

The Committee can't effectively manage the affairs of the Association if they can't work together. Creating and maintaining good and productive relationships within the Boardroom will allow all members to focus on the task at hand rather than petty squabbles, dissension or time-wasting.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Being an Association leader and serving on the Committee is not something that should be taken lightly. All Committee members have an important role and significant responsibilities to the organisation, to its culture and to each other. Anyone who can't commit to the role and all it entails should think carefully before nominating (or re-nominating) for the Committee!



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Office Bearer Job Descriptions

All Committee members have a job to do and this is especially the case for Office Bearers. Creating 'job descriptions' for members holding leadership positions in your organisation is highly recommended.

Everyone performs better when they know what is expected of them, and this is true for your volunteer leadership also. Job descriptions will vary from association to association to meet individual needs, but here are some of the general elements to be included:

PRESIDENT/CHAIRPERSON

The President has a dual role - as Chairperson of committee meetings and as the Leader/Public Face of the organisation.

The Chairman's role at a meeting is to ensure that:

- the agenda is prepared, usually with the help of the Secretary
- the meeting starts and finishes on time
- attendees, apologies and minutes are recorded accurately and in sufficient detail
- meeting rules are followed
- everyone gets a chance to speak on each topic
- business is conducted in an orderly manner
- discussion is focused on the agenda item of the moment
- discussion is courteous at all times
- the views of all members are respected
- decisions are made according to the rules of the organisation
- tasks are delegated appropriately and fairly
- all guests are welcomed and understand their rights at the meeting
- minutes are signed as a true and correct record.

The President's role as a Leader includes to:

- act as the leader of the Association and embody its principles and values
- be the primary spokesperson for the Association
- be the public face of the Association
- be an Ambassador for the Association
- ensure that the Association is pursuing its strategic goals
- ensure that the Association is achieving good governance practice.

VICE-PRESIDENT

The Vice-President is the person who stands in for the President when they are unavailable as Chairperson or leader and is often regarded as the 'next in line' in terms of succession planning.

Other than this, the role of the Vice-President is too often limited or unclear. It's a good idea to give the Vice-President some other substantive role (such a Portfolio Chair) so that they have the opportunity to contribute and also gain experience in chairing and leadership.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Office Bearer Job Descriptions

TREASURER

The role of Treasurer is extremely important for your organisation. The Treasurer is the person that ensures that members' money is being spent wisely and for a proper purpose. Activities include ensuring that:

- the finances of the organisation are managed appropriately
- financial reports are prepared for the Committee
- budgets are prepared and approved
- recommendations are made to the Committee about income and expenditure, investments and debts
- records are kept of all incoming and outgoing payments
- audit requirements under the Associations Incorporation Act are met

Note that the Treasurer is not necessarily the person actually preparing the accounts and reports. Your organisation may have staff or contract bookkeeping professionals to do this. However, the Treasurer is the person responsible for bringing this information to the committee table to ensure that financial obligations are met.

SECRETARY

Secretary is a somewhat old-fashioned term but is still used in most associations to describe this important role. Activities include ensuring that:

- records of the organisation are kept
- incoming and outgoing correspondence is managed
- meetings are called in accordance with the Constitution
- agendas are prepared (in conjunction with the Chairman) and circulated
- formal minutes of all meetings of the Board are kept.

The Secretary is often also the Public Officer of the organisation as required by the Associations Incorporation Act. As governance practice has evolved, it is the Secretary who has often become the person most responsible for the governance activities of the organisation. Often, they will be the Chair of the Risk and Governance Committee and so take on a great deal of responsibility within your association.

PORTFOLIOS

As is the case in Government, Committee members can take on responsibility for particular areas of interest. These are usually determined by the priorities identified in the Strategic and Operational Plans.

Portfolio Chairs oversee and report on activities relevant to their portfolio area and are particularly recommended for Committees without significant staff resource.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Sub-Committee Job Descriptions

WORKING GROUPS AND SUBCOMMITTEES

From time to time every Board needs to have a small 'Brains Trust' to work on a special project or task (e.g. conducting the biennial performance review of your Executive Director, reviewing a problematic policy, or overseeing the construction of a new oval). The Committee should give the small group a name and also make clear what they want it to do, when it should be done and any special powers it may have. Just like every person needs a Job Description, every group of people need to know what is expected of them.

Groups that are formed for a short time only are usually called a Working Group or Steering Committee – their name indicates that a temporary group has been established to get a particular job done. For example, the Performance Review Group, Membership Policy Review Group or the Oval Redevelopment Steering Committee. Members can be time poor, so Working Groups with a clear charter and time frame can be a great way of getting people involved.

While some people might be reluctant to put their hand up for an ongoing and open-ended commitment, they may be quite happy to contribute to a particular task for a defined period.

An ongoing sub-group of your main decision-making body should be given a name which shows it is continuous – if your governing body is called a Committee the subgroup is usually called a Subcommittee. If your governing body is called the Board, the subgroup can be a Committee or Subcommittee – either term is acceptable and easily understood. The ongoing subcommittees are sometimes referred to as 'Standing Committees'.

For example, the small group which meets on a regular basis to assess and approve (or reject) membership applications would be called the Membership Subcommittee or the Membership Standing Committee.

Your Committee gives the group its purpose and powers. This can be done by approving Terms of Reference for Working Groups and Subcommittees. Terms of Reference give detail about who will be on the working group/subcommittee, what it will do, when it will meet, how it will make decisions, what other powers it will have, how and when it will report to the Board etc. Having these things defined up front will save you headaches down the track!



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Committee Job Descriptions

Just as job descriptions for Office Bearers are important, so is a 'job' description for the Committee as a whole.

Everyone performs better when they know what is expected of them, and the same applies to your Committee. Developing a Job or Role description for the Committee as you start each year is a great way to reflect on your purpose, the things you want to achieve as a group and the expectations placed upon you. This is quite different to understanding your legal and general responsibilities as Committee members. Instead, it should be an annual process that focusses the group on their tasks for the year and also ties in with any Committee performance review process.

ELEMENTS OF A JOB DESCRIPTION

The Committee job description does not need to be long or complicated, it's just a simple statement that can include the following:

Purpose - a short statement that sets out what you believe is the purpose of your Committee for the year.

Key Responsibilities - responsibilities to both the organisation and to the Committee group itself.

Expectations - those that you have as a Committee of yourselves and those that you believe your members and stakeholders have of you.

TIMING

Developing a Committee Job description is something that should be done at the first meeting after your Annual General Meeting/Committee elections - your induction meeting. This allows you to look forward to the year ahead, discuss and develop a shared understanding of what you want to achieve. It also gives new Committee members a great opportunity to gain a better understanding of what's in store and the dynamic of the group. Here's an example Committee Job Description:

Purpose:

The purpose of the Committee is to lead the organisation with integrity, diligence, responsible governance and decision making; to work towards our vision and goals with forward-thinking, creativity and innovation; and to represent the best interests of our members at all times.

Key Responsibilities:

To the organisation:

- **Develop and implement the strategic direction of the Association in accordance with our Objects, Vision and Strategic Plan**
- **Ensure a healthy and productive Organisational culture**
- **Lead by example in terms of values, ethics and integrity**
- **Ensure fiduciary and legal obligations are met**
- **Plan, monitor and evaluate performance and the effectiveness of programs and projects**
- **Cultivate appropriate networks and listen to the views of stakeholders**

To the group:

- **Act in good faith, respect confidentiality and declare conflicts of interest**
- **Participate constructively in all Committee debates, promote robust conversations and respect the views of others**
- **Be courageous - make the hard decisions and question accepted realities**
- **Be informed and prepared for all meetings**
- **Be a proud ambassador**

Expectations:

Relevant, contemporary and representative leadership; to act at all times in accordance with the aims, principles and values of the organisation; to communicate plans and priorities to members; to advocate on their behalf on a range of issues; to be accountable and transparent; to deliver appropriate services and activities; to listen to members and give them the opportunity to be heard.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Code of Conduct

Committees set the “tone from the top”. What they do and how they behave reflects on the Association, so it is important that Committee members understand what is expected of them. A Code of Conduct provides that guidance.

Many Associations will already have a Code of Conduct (or Code of Ethics). Like the Constitution, it’s one of those things that was probably drafted when the Association was formed - and just as likely to have been sitting in a drawer gathering dust ever since.

Like everything else, the Code of Conduct needs to be a ‘living document’ that is simple, relevant and used or referenced regularly. It also needs to be reviewed to maintain currency and scheduling the review of your Code every three years along with your Constitutional review is a good idea.

MAKE IT REAL!

The biggest danger with a Code of Conduct is that it can be a list of nice words and phrases that don’t really mean anything. Like your organisational values, your Code should be developed in the context of your Associations objects and goals so it’s relevant and meaningful to the people who are expected to abide by it.

Ask yourself questions like:

- what is the fundamental purpose of our Association?
- what is important to us and our members?
- what makes us proud to be involved?
- what would disappoint us?

Reference your Vision and Values and think about what principles would support them. For example, if one of your values is ‘integrity’, what Committee behaviours does that require?

Your Code of Conduct should comprise two elements - Guiding Principles and Behaviours.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These are the statements or ideals that set the context for your Code of Conduct. They are the things that are important to you as an organisation and that should be upheld in the actions, decisions and behaviours of Committee members. For example, if you are a junior football club, your guiding principles may be:

- We believe that having fun and active participation are the primary aims of junior sport and will pave the way for social development and good health in future years.
- We believe that every child should have the opportunity to participate, regardless of skill or ability, and should be encouraged to fulfil their potential.
- We embrace diversity and encourage acceptance among players, officials and parents.
- We hold paramount the physical, mental and emotional safety and well-being of our players.

Guiding principles may also be used to communicate the ideals of your organisation and you may also want to include them in your strategic plan, on your website and in promotional materials.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Code of Conduct

BEHAVIOURS

Behaviours are how Committee members should act in support of the Association's vision, values and guiding principles. They may include:

- committee members will uphold and act in accordance with the Guiding Principles of the Association at all times
- committee members will act with honesty, integrity and in the best interest of the Association.
- decisions will be made fairly and impartially
- committee members will respect the confidentiality of meetings
- committee members will exercise due care, diligence and skill in fulfilling their role
- committee members will focus on issues rather than people or positions
- committee members will use the resources of the Association for a proper purpose
- committee members will be independent in judgement
- committee members will fully participate in debate and deliberations
- committee members will avoid conflicts of interest and where this is not possible, will declare them as soon as possible.

These are just a few examples - you need to make the list of behaviours expected of your committee members relevant to your situation. Don't just include items for the sake of it. It's better to have a short list of behaviours that you truly expect than a long list of meaningless platitudes.



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Performance Review

All Committees want to do a good job, but how do you know how well you're performing?

The idea of a performance review can be confronting for many Committee members. But a simple and constructive process can yield results that will be beneficial for the Association and provide significant insight for the Committee as a whole.

WHAT TO MEASURE?

The first thing you need to decide when embarking on a performance review process is what you want to measure. A good place to start is with your Committee Job Description. This is where you've considered and agreed a purpose statement for the whole Committee; defined your key responsibilities to both the organisation and your leadership group; and explored the expectations placed on you. As your Committee year draws to an end, it presents a good opportunity to reflect on how well you've met these measures. Your Strategic and Operational Plans are also a good place to go to work out what to measure. Your Operational Plan in particular has indicators and targets that can be used to measure how well the committee has performed on an operational level.

HOW FAR DO YOU GO?

Board performance reviews can be anything from simple self-reflection to a facilitated 360 degree review process. How far you want to take your Committee performance review process will depend on your preference and budget.

For many smaller Associations a simple three part process can be quite adequate and may include:

- an anonymous and confidential Committee survey
- a quiet chat with the President
- a private self-reflection.

SURVEY

It is a fairly simple matter to turn your Committee Job description as decided at the beginning of the year into a survey form. You just take the elements of that job description and ask how well you've met those measures on a scale from 'poor' to 'excellent'. A five-point scale will generally be sufficient although you can choose to have more options if you wish.

The survey can be anonymous and is likely to generate a more honest response if it is. Committee members can be cautious about how they respond if everyone is going to know what they've said, so maintaining the confidentiality of the process is important. You may consider hiring an independent person to collect and collate Committee member responses, or you can entrust the President to undertake this role. It would therefore be one of the duties of the President to keep this information confidential.

Results of the survey are then collated and an average score for each measure calculated. For example, if there are 10 Committee members all giving a score from 1 to 5 you would simply add all the scores together and divide by 10 to calculate your average. These scores can then be tabled and discussed at your next Committee meeting and appropriate action developed for lower scoring areas.

A sample survey based on the example Committee Job description in that Toolbox item follows.



Committee Performance Survey Sample

	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5
Purpose:					
How well has the Committee demonstrated leadership?					
How well has the Committee achieved responsible governance?					
How sound is the Committee's decision making process?					
How well has the Committee represented member interests?					
Organisation:					
How well has the Committee developed and implemented the strategic direction of the Association?					
How well has the Committee ensured a healthy and productive culture?					
How well has the Committee led by example?					
How well has the Committee met its legal and fiduciary obligations?					
How well has the Committee planned its programs and projects?					
How well has the Committee monitored performance?					
How well has the Committee cultivated appropriate networks?					
How well has the Committee listened to the views of members?					
Committee:					
How well has the Committee dealt with issues of confidentiality and conflict of interest?					
How well has the Committee encouraged constructive debate?					
How well has the Committee respected diverse views?					
How well has the Committee displayed courage in their questions and decisions?					
How well has the Committee been informed and prepared for meetings?					
How well has the Committee filled the role of Ambassadors for the Association?					
Expectations:					
How well has the Committee acted in accordance with the aims, principles and values of the Association?					
How well have plans and priorities been communicated to members?					
How well has the Committee advocated on behalf of members?					
How would you rate accountability and transparency?					
How well have services and activities met the needs of members?					
Additional Comments:					



TIPS & TECHNIQUES

Performance Review

MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT

Once the survey is completed and average scores tabled, it's a good idea for the President to make time to have a private meeting with all Committee members. This should be an informal get-together, perhaps over a cup of coffee, to discuss each individual Committee members' reaction to the survey results, any suggestions for how performance can be improved and any concerns that member may have.

It's also a good opportunity to discuss each member's plans for the future. Do they intend to re-nominate for a Committee position? Are they interested in standing for a Leadership Role? Do they feel that they have made their contribution and are ready to move on? This information can assist with the succession planning process and provide additional insights for the President.

Again, the President must keep these conversations confidential!

SELF REFLECTION

A Committee performance review also provides all members with the opportunity for some private self-reflection. How have you found your Committee experience? Has it met your expectations? Do you feel that you have made a contribution? Do you think that you could offer or do more? Do you feel that you have been encouraged to participate? How can you improve your personal contribution to the committee?

Committee membership is a journey and it often takes individual members a while to 'settle in' and feel confident around the table. The first year is often about learning how the Committee works, what it does and what is expected of them. As members become more comfortable, they will tend to participate more in debate and contribute more by taking on subcommittee or other roles.

At any one time there'll be new members just starting out on this journey and 'old hands' who have almost come to the end of theirs. It's part of what makes a good Committee dynamic and members shouldn't be too hard on themselves if they think they've not done as much as they could in their first term.

It is also important for more experienced Committee members to reflect on whether they have more to contribute or whether they should stand down and let others have their opportunity. Experience on a Committee is great, but there always comes a time to let go and it's really good if you can recognise this before someone has to tell you.

SUMMARY

There are many different ways to engage in Committee performance review and this is just one suggestion on how to go about it.

The main thing is to decide to embark on the process, decide what it is that you want to measure and find a method that will suit your organisation.



TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Induction

Newly elected Committee members have a lot to learn in a short period of time. A good induction process gives new members the help they need to become a contributing Committee member as quickly as possible.

MORE THAN A MANUAL

A common mistake made by Committees is to give new members an 'Induction Manual' to read in the false belief that this provides an effective introduction to the organisation. It does not.

Certainly a manual containing relevant information is important, but it does nothing to build relationships or introduce new members to your culture and values and what you expect of Committee members.

BEFORE THE ELECTION

The induction process can start even before new Committee members are elected or appointed. Your nomination package should contain information about Committee membership, what it means and the commitment required. A simple checklist is a good idea and will encourage potential candidates to do some research before deciding to nominate. The checklist could include questions such as:

- Have you reviewed the organisation's Constitution and are you happy to work within it?
- Have you reviewed the organisation's Strategic Plan?
- Do you know what is required of Committee members?
- Are you willing to contribute the time and skills necessary to meet those requirements?
- Are you aware of your legal, fiduciary and ethical responsibilities?
- Have you read the organisation's most recent Annual Reports and other publications?
- Are you satisfied with the achievements of the organisation and the direction it's heading?
- Would you be proud to have your name associated with the organisation?

This gives candidates something to think about and will also point them to some of the essential information needed by incoming Committee members.

DOCUMENTATION

After the election, the first thing you should do is write a letter of welcome to new Committee members. This should come from the President and be sent or given with the Induction Manual.

The Induction Manual should include:

- a copy of the Constitution, plus any by-laws or rules if you have them.
- a copy of the Association's Strategic Plan
- a copy of the Code of Conduct
- a copy of the current Committee Role Description
- a copy of current governance policies
- minutes of the last several meetings
- the last Annual Report including financial statements
- committee contact list
- committee meeting schedule.

There may be other items relevant to your organisation that need to be included, so you should develop your own list for future reference.



Congratulations

You've worked the whole way through the Good Governance Health Check. Take a bow!

It doesn't matter how long it took you to get here - the important point is that you've taken the time and put in the effort to carefully consider how well your Association is performing.

By now you'll have a plan for continuous improvement (Organisation Development Plan - call it whatever you like, we're plain and simple so we like 'To Do List' - but whatever works for your Committee is fine by us).

You'll also have developed a much greater understanding of what good governance really means - in practice, not just in theory and we're confident you'll have a much greater appreciation of its value to any organisation.



If you ever need assistance you can contact us:

Leisa Donlan

leisadonlan@goodgovernanceconsultants.com.au

0438 190 854

Adrian Hart

hartadrian@goodgovernanceconsultants.com.au

0419 709 473

About Us

The original concept and development The Good Governance Handbook and the online Good Governance Health Check are the result of an original collaboration between Kate Hartwig and Kate Reynolds. Leisa Donlan & Adrian Hart from www.goodgovernanceconsultants.com.au have tailored this guide & updated the content specifically for your organisation and the regulatory framework you work in and added a few templates and other information.

We've all been working in the not-for-profit sector for most of our working lives (hooley dooley, that's about 120 years between us!) and we know what works and what doesn't. Our approach - as you can see with this Handbook - is plain and simple - we provide no-nonsense, proven, practical assistance with governance and organisational development.

We've pooled our good, bad and ugly experiences and some of the many publications, tools, tips and techniques we've developed over the years into one, easy to access Handbook. We hope you've found it useful.