



Management Support Unit (MSU)



Information Sheet 1:

Simple measures to assist non-government organisations in maintaining good governance

Governance is about:

1. Accepting responsibility for all aspects of the organisation
2. Guarding the organisations vision, mission, values and assets
3. Protecting the integrity of the organisation
4. Ensuing the organisation is moving forward in a current strategic direction
5. Ensuring that the organisation has energy and long-term well-being

The following are simple suggestions to assist with the maintenance of good governance for voluntary boards of management.

1. Provide *welcome to the new board* training for all new board members and provide refresher training for long term members.
2. Have the organisations vision/mission statement clearly displayed in the meeting room
3. Always have a copy of your Constitution/Articles of Association available for reference during meeting times.
4. All members to keep an action list and note down crucial diary dates during meeting times
5. Open the meetings to staff and organisational members, allowing them observer status only. (There is a proviso that if confidential information is being discussed, all visitors be asked to leave the meeting until discussion is over)
6. Ensure all board members (including office-holders) have details on their role and responsibilities in a written format and that the roles of staff are clearly defined and agreed upon.
7. Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the staff are clearly defined and adhered to and each party respects those differences.
8. Ensure that all meetings are conducted along agreed lines, with a formal agenda and agreed meeting practices.
9. The Chairperson should ensure he/she maintains their independence and only exercises their vote when the vote is deadlocked.
10. That all reports are presented in a clear and succinct manner and circulated well before hand.

Relevant resources available from the Management Support Unit (MSU)

- **MSU Information Sheet No 3** Roles and Responsibilities of office bearers and general members of Boards of Management of Incorporated Associations (Free)
- **MSU Information Sheet No 4** A Code of Conduct for Executive Officers of Voluntary Organisations (Free)
- **MSU Information Sheet No 6** Ensuring a productive relationship between Board Members and the Executive Officer (Free)
- Bradfield Nyland Group, *Good Governance Practice for Voluntary Committees of Management. Resources and Materials* A project of the State Government of Victoria February 2002(Loan)
- Department of Family & Community Services, *Corporate Governance – Handbook for the Board* 2001(Loan)
- Fishel, D. *The Book of the Board – effective governance for non-profit organisations.* 2003 Federation Press (Loan)
- NSW Health *Corporate Governance and Accountability in Health – better practice reference guide* 2002 (Loan)
- Community Child Care Co-operative *Better Meetings* 2000 (Loan)
- Community Child Care Co-operative *Effective Committee* 1999 (Loan)
- Kennedy G. *The Management Committee: overview* 1995 Ettinger House (Loan)

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