Community Sector Secretaries

Session three: Inclusion and Onboarding

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Acknowledgement of Country

Kaylene Whiskey, *Dolly Flying to Iwantja*

What is inclusion?

*Inclusion in governance means ensuring that all **board members**, **stakeholders** and **community** voices, regardless of **background, ability, identity** or **experience**, have **equitable access** to **information** and **decision-making**, feel they **belong,** and **share** in the organisation's **purpose and outcomes.***

Inclusion Model

Diversity Council Australia, Inclusion Model, Sydney, DCA, 2025.

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- It is the right thing to do!

- Enhances **quality** and **legitimacy** of the board

- Ensures **all** voices are heard

- **Stronger** more inclusive **culture**

- Practice what you preach!

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Today's Resources

Succession Planning

Board succession Part : Finding new board members

Board succession Part 2: Recruiting new board members

Board succession Part 3: Selecting the right board members

10 questions to ask about succession planning

Induction

Developing an effective induction process

Induction Checklist

Board member Induction Policy

Tips on Board Manual Contents

Board diversity

Board effectiveness

Board composition checklist

Why and how to achieve diversity on your board

Attracting diverse talent to the board

Youth on board

10 common mistakes in recruiting new board members

Watch Inclusive NFP governance Panel

Watch Ensuring Inclusivity: Understanding Australian Discrimination Law
Passcode: Festival2024!

Harvard Implicit Bias Test

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What are you currently doing that is an example of inclusive practices?

The secretary's role in fostering inclusion

Through **communication**, **organisation**, and **record-keeping**, the Secretary can:

- **Model** inclusive and respectful behaviour

- Identify and **remove** barriers to participation

- Ensure information and processes are **accessible**

- **Advocate** for continuous improvement and equity in governance

Looking inwards: inclusive foundations

Gather feedback and suggest improvements

Review internal policies and procedures to embed inclusion and accessibility

Use clear, jargon-free language in all communication

Ensure venues and technology meet access needs

Share meeting papers early and in accessible formats

Support a safe, respectful culture and raise concerns if needed

Keep accurate, respectful records that reflect all contributions

Looking outwards: embedding inclusion in board practice

Ensure public documents and communications are accessible and inclusive

Advocate for fair and inclusive recruitment of board members

Embed inclusion and equity goals in the strategic plan

Include community voices or lived experience in decision-making

Encourage consultation with diverse community groups

Apply inclusive policies and procedures in governance and community engagement

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Putting inclusion into recruitment, induction and succession planning

Conduct a board effectiveness

Review the board composition

Identify diversity gaps

Recruit for diversity

Design inclusive induction and mentoring

Ongoing support and mentoring

Breakout: Building an inclusive board culture

What role can the secretary have in creating a psychologically safe board?

How might unconscious bias show up on a board, and what can the secretary do to help reduce it?
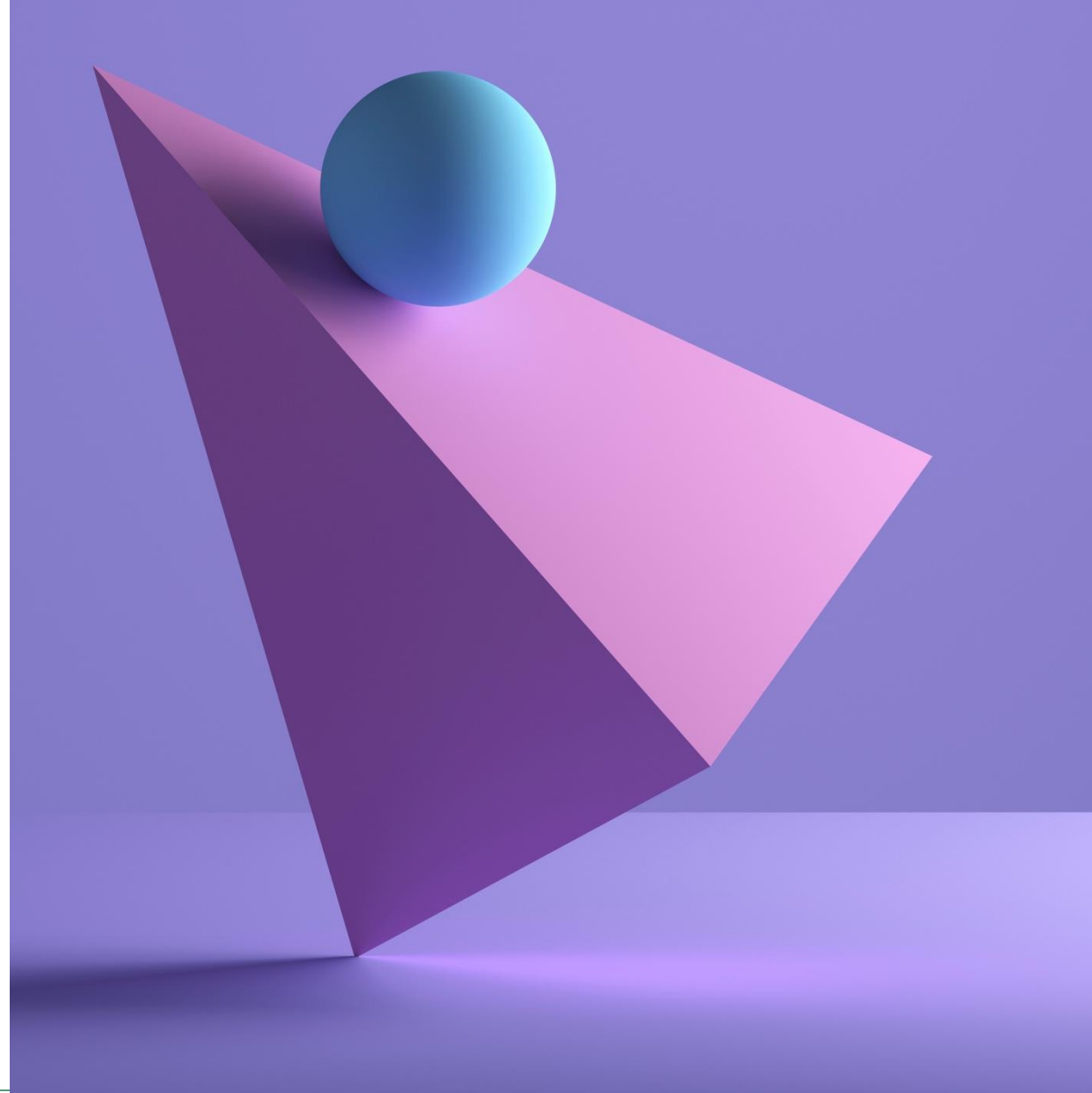
How well does your board reflect the community you serve?

Short screen break

Inclusive Onboarding

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Principles of an inclusive induction

Personalised recognise individual needs and preferences

Accessible: provide information in clear, usable formats

Welcoming: create psychological safety and belonging

Collaborative: a two-way learning process

Continuous: improve based on feedback

Inclusive board manual

- Include a welcome statement on diversity and inclusion
- Provide accessible versions of key documents
- Add bios, pronouns, and contact details
- Explain accessibility features of meetings and venues

Inclusive beginnings

From the initial approach through to introductions and setting expectations, ensure every step is inclusive and flexible, considering:

- each person's needs
- accessible communication options
- the board's culture
- the board's expectations
- the board roles and responsibilities

Building connection

Seek feedback to keep improving the induction experience

- Support new members to feel part of the team.

- Provide clear briefings on current issues and recent decisions

- Offer accessible tours or overviews of programs

- Create opportunities for genuine connection

- Make it a two-way learning exchange

Don't forget someone to facilitate and report back

Community Secretary Breakout:
Barriers and Actions

1. What are the biggest barriers your board faces around accessibility and inclusion?

2. How could you do to better champion inclusive governance?

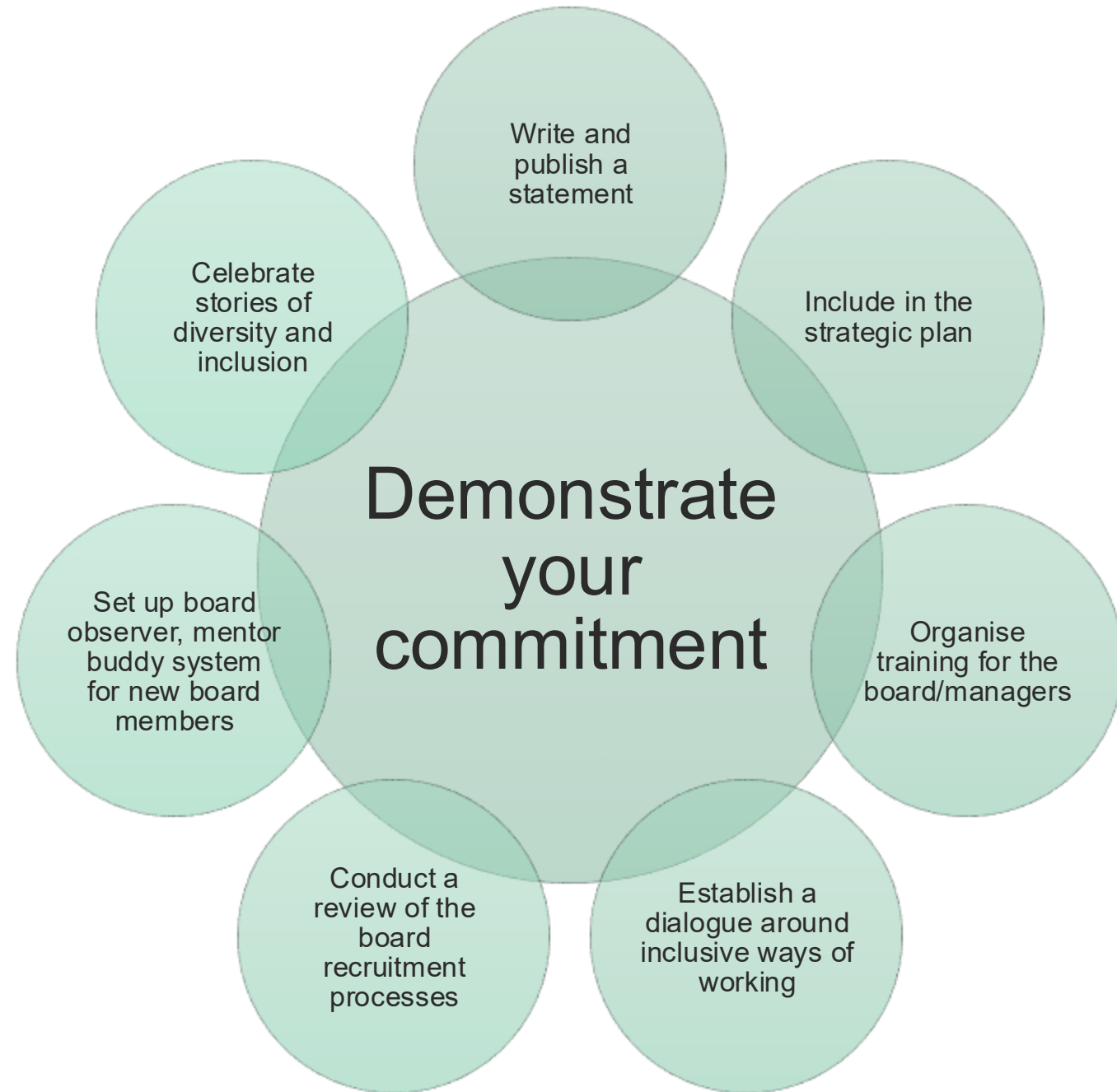3. What actions can you do to improve this?

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Company Secretary Breakout: Barriers and Actions

1. What barriers do you face when trying to advocate for inclusive practices within a more formal structure?

2. In what ways can you use your governance expertise to influence culture, not just compliance?

3. What are you willing to try?

What boards can do to be more inclusive?

Demonstrate your commitment

- Write and publish a statement
- Include in the strategic plan
- Organise training for the board/managers
- Establish a dialogue around inclusive ways of working
- Conduct a review of the board recruitment processes
- Set up board observer, mentor buddy system for new board members
- Celebrate stories of diversity and inclusion

Community of Practice

How will you stay connected?

Join the Not-for-profit Happy Hour Facebook Group

Based on Allan, B. (2008). Knowledge creation within a community of practice

Summary

- **Inclusion is not an add-on, it's central to ethical, effective, and lawful governance.**

- **Secretaries play a pivotal role in creating inclusive communication, processes, and culture.**

- **When boards practice inclusion, they practice what they preach, modelling the fairness, respect, and representation they expect in their communities.**

What next?

Congratulations

Take your governance skills to the next level with the Diploma of Governance.

Extend your leadership skills with our Leading for Transformation course.

Consider tailored training for your board to increase your collective skills.

Attend one of ICDA's upcoming training sessions.

Find more information about all aspects of governance in ICDA's help sheets

Join the Not-for-profit Happy Hour Facebook Group

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https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2025Secretaries