

First Nations Board Governance Training Program



Webinar May 20, 2025 Board effectiveness, culture, skills and strategy

PRESENTER: **Jon Staley** - Institute of Community Directors Australia



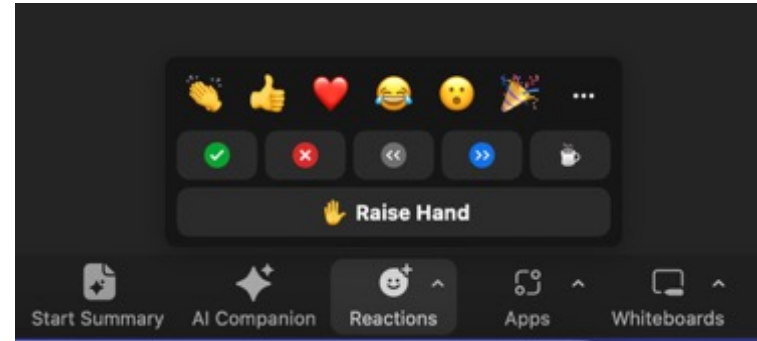
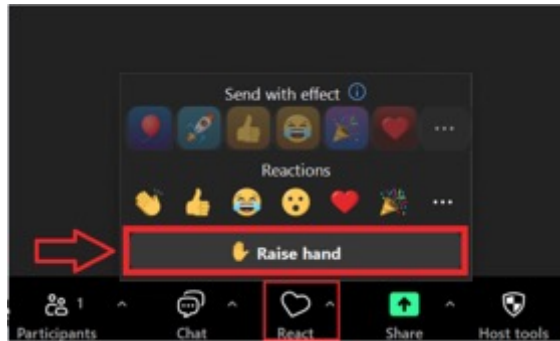
Join in via chat

*'Hi Jon here from
Our Community and
I am joining today
from Wurrundjeri
woi-wurrung
country ...'*

Acknowledgement of Country

Housekeeping

- When you'd like to share with the group, please use the raise hand function.



- Chat function is for everyone to use. Feel free to share your experience and advice, respond to prompts and answer any questions that arise if possible.
- You will receive the slides and the recording
- Please don't use AI to summarise or record this session.
- Please mute yourself unless you are speaking to the group.

WHAT WE WILL COVER

Culture, skills and strategy

Renew, review, revitalise

Succession planning

Tools and resources

Community Connect – v1

Lisa had always been a passionate advocate for community development and had volunteered for years with Community Connect, a medium-sized not-for-profit focused on social inclusion and local initiatives. When she was invited to join the board as part of a broader strategy to diversify leadership, she felt honoured and ready to make a difference and was excited by what she had read about the organisations direction in it's strategic plan.

However, from her very first board meeting, Lisa noticed that real decisions seemed to happen informally—often over lunch between long-standing members—before any official agenda item was even discussed. When she proposed a structured volunteer management plan to alleviate the burnout being experienced by a handful of core staff and volunteers, her suggestion was brushed off as “not realistic for our culture.”

Board meetings were lengthy and lacked clear agendas or outcomes, with a lot of time spent on anecdotes and inside jokes. When Lisa and another newly appointed board member, Allira, raised the idea of launching a community leadership program specifically for women, they were met with polite dismissals: “We tried that a few years ago. It wasn't successful.”

Lisa found herself increasingly frustrated. Her ideas were either diluted in endless discussions or shelved without serious consideration. After a year of trying to contribute meaningfully, she stepped down—disappointed and uncertain if she ever wanted to be part of an NFP board again. The experience left her questioning whether these spaces genuinely welcomed diverse voices or simply performed inclusion as a token gesture.

Put in the chat ...What are the issues here?

Community Connect – v2

Lisa had always been a passionate advocate for community development and had volunteered for years with Community Connect, a medium-sized not-for-profit focused on social inclusion and local initiatives. When she was invited to join the board as part of a broader strategy to diversify leadership, she was honoured and excited to contribute.

From her first board meeting, Lisa noticed something refreshing: decisions were made transparently, with clear documentation and opportunities for input between meetings. The chair made a point of welcoming her and other new members, outlining how onboarding support would work and ensuring everyone understood the context behind current projects, priorities and how they linked to the strategic vision.

When Lisa suggested developing a more balanced volunteer management plan to reduce burnout, her proposal was met with interest. A working group was formed to explore the idea further, and she was encouraged to lead it with support from more experienced board members.

Board meetings were well-facilitated—structured, time-conscious, and purpose-driven—yet still allowed space for building relationships. The culture was inclusive and future-focused, and there was a genuine openness to new perspectives. When Lisa and another new member, Allira, proposed piloting a community leadership program for women, the idea was not only welcomed but resourced with a small seed grant to get it off the ground.

Over the year, Lisa felt increasingly confident and valued. She built strong relationships, contributed meaningfully, and saw her ideas gain traction. The experience deepened her commitment to the sector, and she often reflected that joining the board had shown her what inclusive, strategic governance could look like when done well.



*‘Culture eats strategy
for breakfast’*

Peter Drucker

Join in via chat

*Do you agree/disagree
with this quote?*

*What do you think
Drucker means?*

*What is your experience
of strategic plans?*



*'Culture outperforms strategy every time:
and culture with strategy is unbeatable.'*
Quindt Studer

CULTURE

SKILLS

STRATEGY



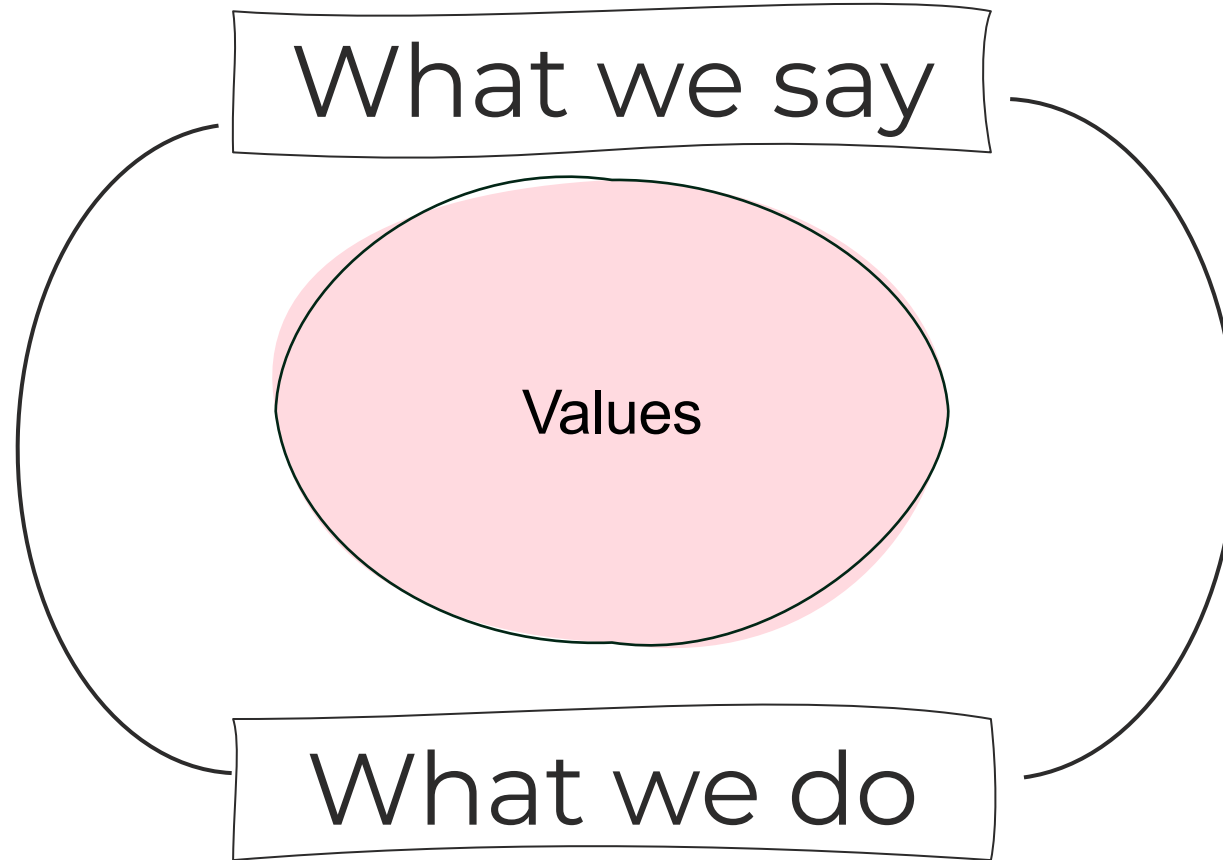
What is organisational culture?

Simply stated, organisational culture is “the way things are done around here.”

(Deal & Kennedy, 2000).

What you do is who you are.

(Ben Horowitz, 2019).



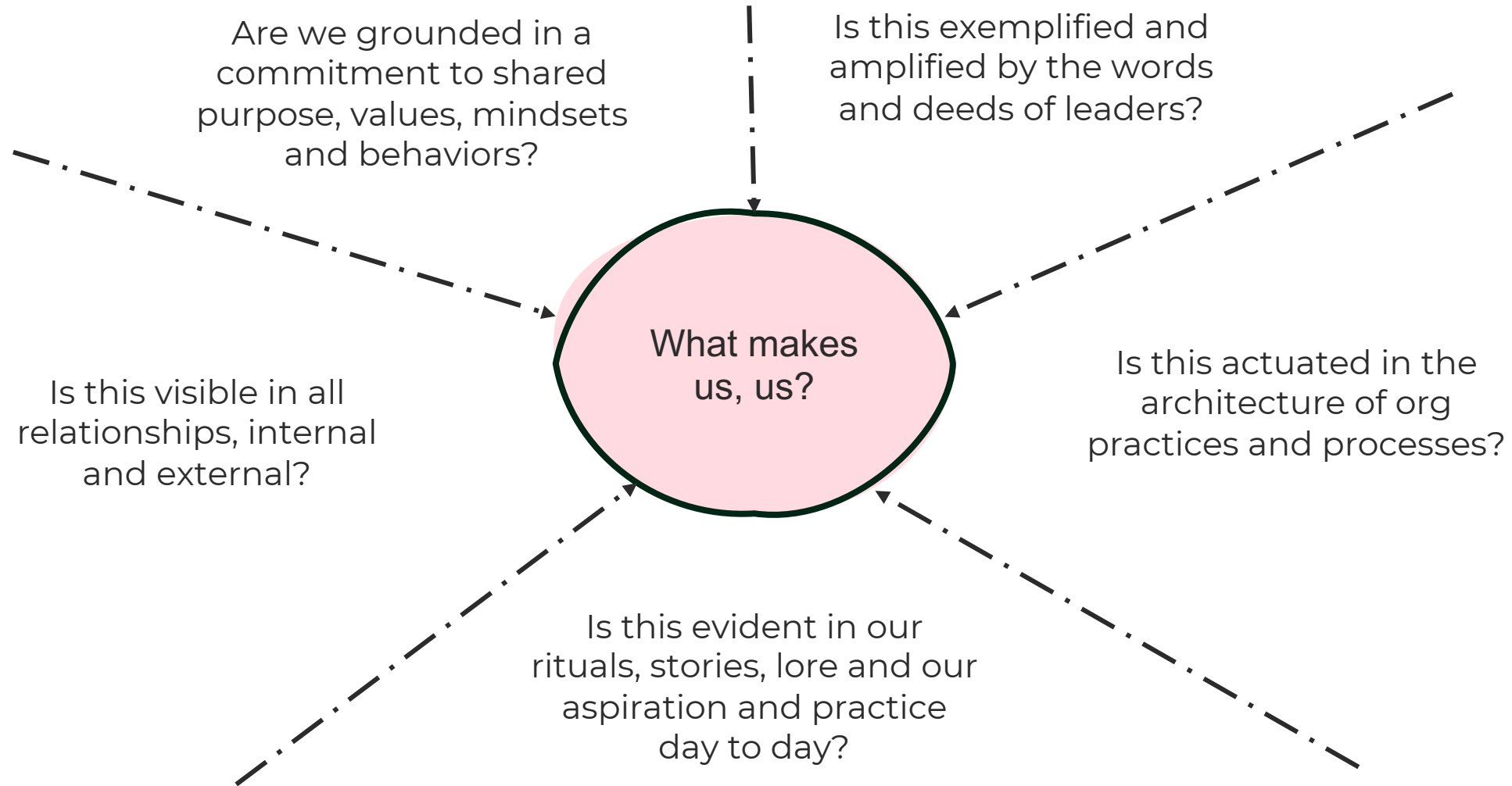
'Whenever there is a mismatch between what we say and what we do – we erode our integrity and weaken our culture. When there is alignment we cultivate trust and strengthen our culture.'

Cultural Iceberg

(Edward T Hall)



What is organisational culture?



Board review

REVIEW

RENEW

REVITALISE

The Board looks at itself



Once a year the Board should hold a review and ask:



Has the Board got the right skills mix?
Do we need more training?



Is the Board listening to its stakeholders?



Is the Board operating smoothly?



Is the Board accountable and transparent?



Is the Board asking the big questions?



Is the Board forwarding the purpose?

Board self assessment tool



<https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/tools/board-self-assessment-tool>

Board calendar

Compliance Calendar

| | ANNUAL BOARD & COMPLIANCE CALENDAR | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------|-----------|---------|---|
| | July | August | September | October | November |
| BOARD/GOVERNANCE | | | | | |
| Board meetings | | | | | |
| Board meeting dates (insert dates) | | | | | |
| Conflict of interest declarations | | | | | |
| Elect chair of board & office bearers | | | | | |
| Adopt annual calendar | | | | | |
| Strategic Planning review/workshop | | | | | |
| Adopt annual business plan/ budget | | | | | |
| Review Board performance/succession/recruitment | | | | | |
| Review CEO Performance/Succession | | | | | |
| Membership register is up to date | | | | | |
| Review Minutes/Board Chair signoff | | | | | |
| Reviews | | | | | |
| Board/CEO/AD - are we achieving our mission/purpose | | | | | |
| Policy: Health & Safety | | | | | |
| Policy: Governance/values/Code of Conduct | | | | | |
| Policy: CEO/Board Policy | | | | | |
| Half yearly planning/budget | | | | | |
| Take stock/celebrate/thank | | | | | |
| Communications protocol | | | | | |
| Compliance Register sign off | | | | | |
| Sector review - what's new to our world? | | | | | |
| Annual General Meeting | | | | | |
| Approve AGM planning schedule | | | | | |
| Review Constitution and Determine any rule changes | | | | | |
| Adopt statutory accounts | | | | | |
| Sign off annual report | | | | | |
| Approve any rule changes (for decision at AGM) | | | | | |
| Appoint returning officer (if election) | | | | | |
| Hold AGM (insert date) | | | | | |
| POST AGM | | | | | |
| All new Directors to: | | | | | |
| Sign code of conduct/confidentiality | | | | | |
| Complete declarations of interest form | | | | | |
| Commence induction | | | | | |
| Sign & lodge annual return | | | | | within 30 days of AGM |
| Annual review fee to ASIC | | | | | |
| Update Register of Directors (new directors) and Secretary if required [Regulator ACNC website] | | | | | within 28 days of any change (esp. after AGM) |
| DELEGATIONS TO DIRECTORS | | | | | |
| Sign off tax return (if required) | | | | | |
| Sign off annual financial statements | | | | | |





*Ideal zone for personal/
professional development*

Join in via chat

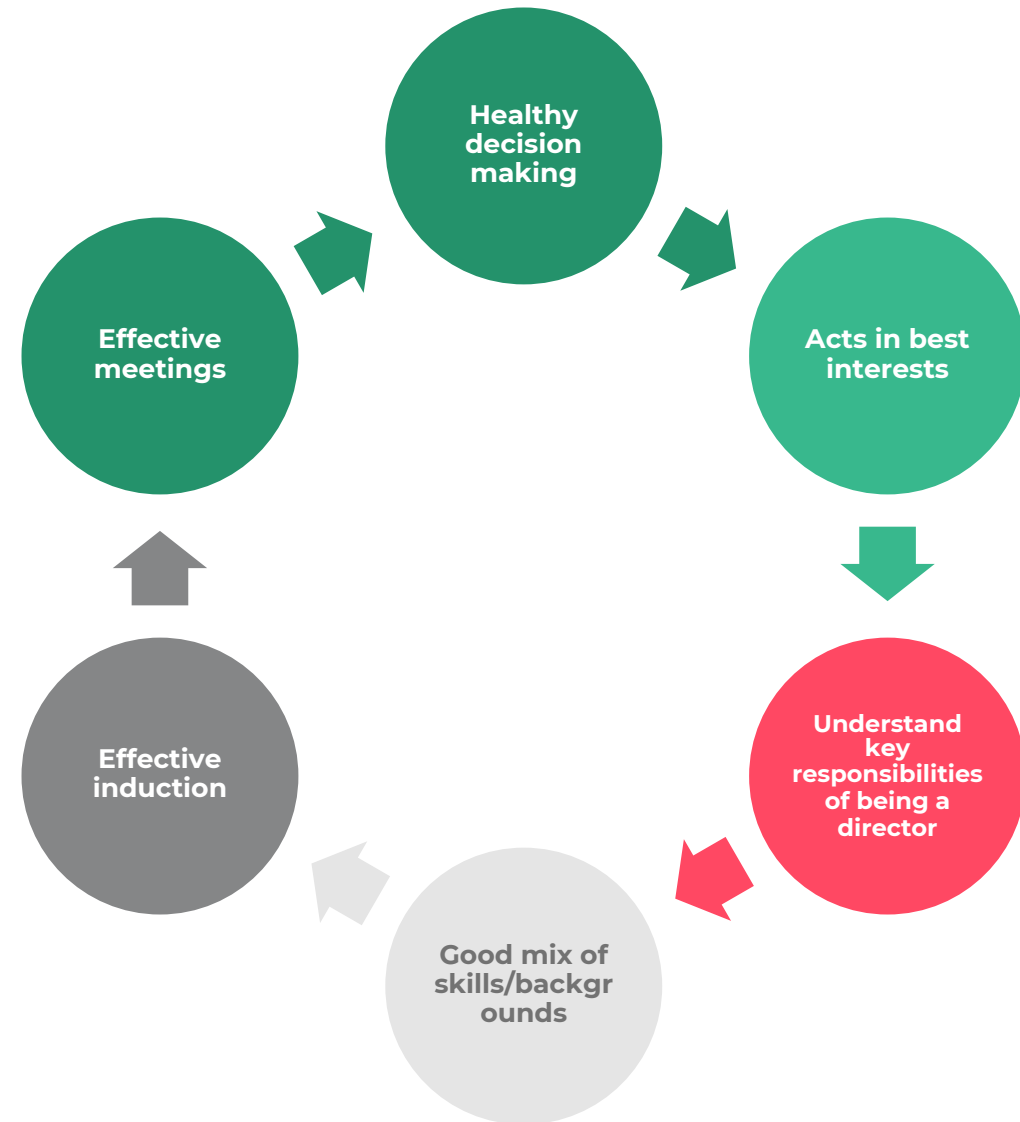
*Where do you spend
most of your time?*

*Comfort, stretch or
panic zone?*

*What about your
board/org?*

<https://www.mindtools.com/a0bop9z/the-learning-zone-model>

Creating a healthy culture = board retention



Succession planning – what's that?

Have we got the right mix of people/skills on our board?

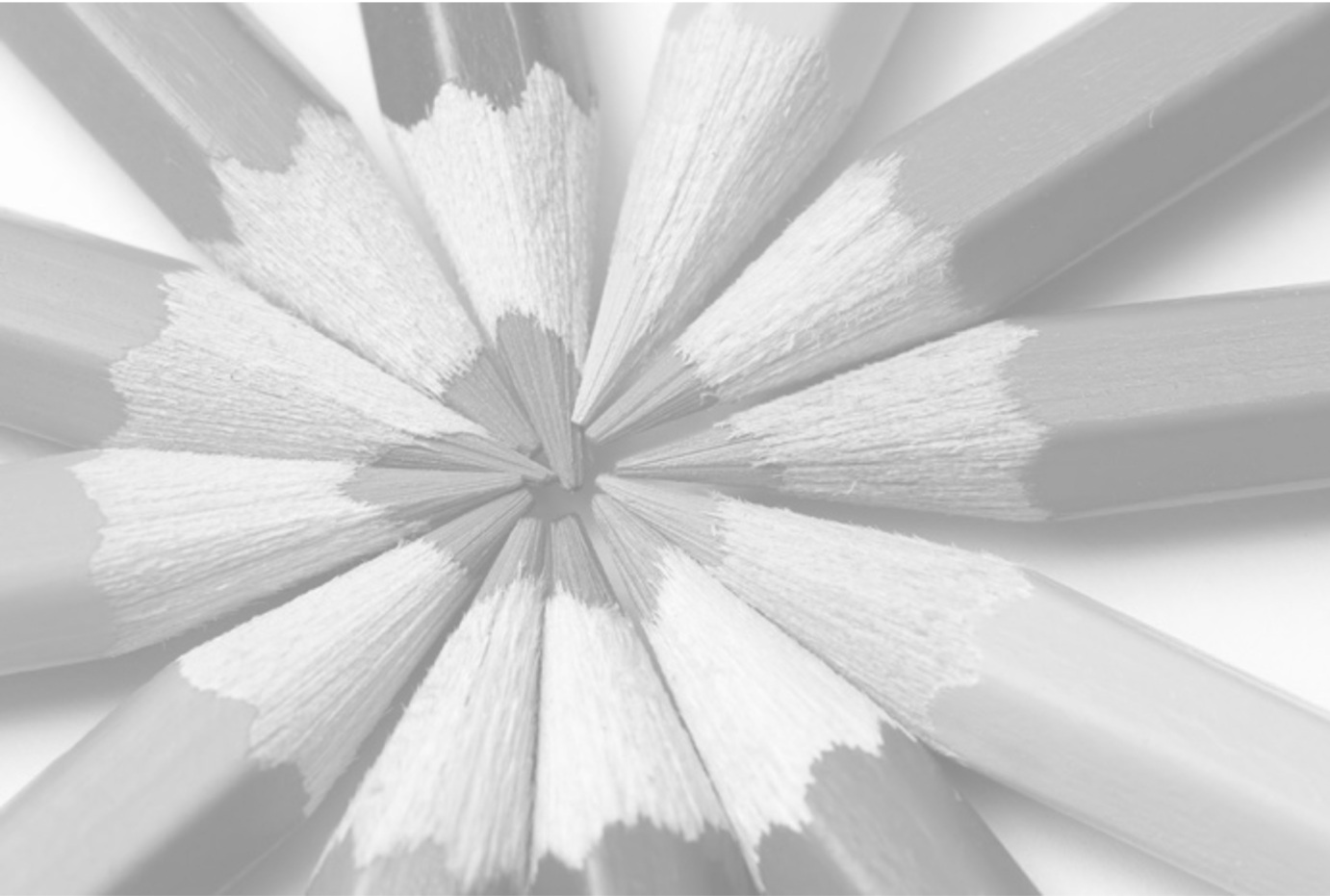
What will we do if our chair/treasurer/secretary retires?

'Good succession planning is about the healthy handover of collective wisdom thereby ensuring the continuity and evolution of organisational knowledge and purpose'

How can we pass on our knowledge?

Who are the next custodians of our organisation?

Building a complementary, skilled, diverse board



Step 1: Identifying the gaps

- Key objectives next one to three years?
- What skills would help?
- What skills are already within board?
- What skills will depart with the retiring board member/s?
- Where are the gaps?

Building a complementary, skilled, diverse board



Step 2: Assessing the existing skills & diversity of the board

- Balance?
- Mix of skills and interests?
- Gender balance?
- Representation?

Building a complementary, skilled, diverse board



Step 3: Determine what other qualities are required

- Personality style
- Perspective
- Experience
- Lived experience

Working out where to look

- Friends/colleagues/associates of existing, retiring or past board members, committee members, staff or volunteers
- Members of professional and trade associations related to your organisation
- Donors
- Local business owners
- Volunteers
- Members of volunteer organisations
- Community leaders, including young leaders
- Staff or associates of local education providers
- Members of multicultural organisations
- Members of local religious institutions
- Interesting people who appear in the media or association journals
- Community elders
- People who have benefited from the organisation's work
- Professionals with in-demand skills, including accountants, lawyers, marketers, event managers, etc.

WHAT WE HAVE COVERED

Culture, skills and strategy

Renew, review, revitalise

Succession planning

Tools and resources

Board Positions

Welcome to ICDA's Board Positions Service. It's free!

The service helps individuals make deeper, longer lasting connections with their community, and allows community groups to access new pools of skilled and willing helpers.

Find a board position

Individuals and **Workplace volunteering programs** looking to make a stronger connection with their community by joining a Board or Committee of Management.

See more

Advertise a board position

Community group Boards or **Committees of Management** who need a way to advertise available board positions to interested members of the community.

See more

<https://www.communitydirectors.com.au/board-positions>

Public sector boards

Search board vacancies

Search vacancies

Search 

Filters 

Displaying 1-9 of 9 results

Sort by

Closing date



[Board Member - Victorian Legal Services Board](#)

Victorian Legal Services Board + Commissioner | Regulatory

Closes: 25 May 2025 **Role length:** Flexible, Up to 4 years

Meetings: Bimonthly, Half day meetings **Location:** Melbourne - CBD

<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/search-board-vacancies>

Still to come

Webinar

**Cyber safety trends and
the board's role**

May 21, 1pm

Online workshop

Strategic planning
(Interactive)

May 29, 1pm

CCD

**All units must be
finished by June 12 to
be eligible for
complete certificate**

Mentoring circles

Group 1: Mon 2 Jun (5 – 7pm)

Group 2: Tue 3 Jun (5 – 7pm)

Group 3: Wed 4 Jun (5 – 7pm)

Group 4: Thu 5 Jun (5 – 7pm)

Circle 1: Jahna

Focus on applying concepts from governance, leadership, and organisational culture and from the online Certified Community Director's course.

Circle 2: Karen

Karen Milward shares her leadership journey serving on public sector boards and participants reflect on their learnings via discussion of case studies that raise ethical, decision making dilemmas.

Questions