

## Good practice meeting guidelines

### The board's meeting

Remember this is the board's meeting not management's. As such it focuses on two key areas:

1. Progress towards stated outcomes together with factors impacting the organisation's ability to deliver those goals.
2. Risk factors that could impede or disrupt your ability to achieve those results.

### Future focus

- You can't influence what has already happened. Too many boards get bogged down in the day to day and risk becoming spectators to management activity.
- Spend your time (60–70%) on things that are important but not urgent.

### Meeting plan

- The chair owns the agenda. Time is allocated to agenda items.
- Meet at a time and place convenient to the majority of directors.
- Get to the core strategic issues early, leaving noting and compliance matters until later.
- Prepare well and have questions ready.
- Board papers are set in a strategic context, concise and clearly stating what is being asked of the board.
- The board pack is not voluminous and filled with backgrounders, correspondence and for-information pieces irrelevant to the governance conversation.
- Use committees as required to explore issues ahead of the meeting.

### Inside the meeting

- A board meeting is a dialogue. An informed conversation leading to great decisions.
- Tackle the issue, not the person.
- Explore options before moving to consensus (divergence before convergence).
- Listen more than talk, respect others' opinions.
- Understand your policy environment making sure you are not debating something twice.

### The chair will...

- make clear the key items to be addressed in the meeting
- manage time
- keep discussions on topic
- resolve conflict and park what cannot be agreed on today
- prevent drift into management's business.

### The chief executive will...

- provide monitoring reports in content and form as required by the board
- report on progress toward agreed outcomes
- alert the board to changes in the operating environment
- report on anything within board policy that is negatively impacting ability to operate
- act as the board's primary consultant.

### Avoid:

- revisiting earlier decisions through the minutes or matters arising
- tabling unnecessary correspondence
- staff reports not in a governance context and purposeless backgrounders
- 'nice to know' presentations
- reports and approvals not required by the board.

*A fuller discussion of meetings is found in Step 5 of the Nine Steps to Effective Governance and summarised in the associated quick reference guide at the back of the publication.*