

Quick Guide to being a Chair or President

This quick guide has been developed to provide you with a position overview of the Chair and/or President, including the kind of skills and attributes that will be useful in this role, and external resources you will find helpful.

It is ok to not have all the skills and attributes required to fulfil a role before taking it, but it is important to have a plan to develop them.

Check your constitution and your legal structure as an organisation to determine whether your governance group requires a Chair or President, and what parameters are around the role.

Chair or President

How you relate to the rest of the governing group

The President (in the context of a Management Committee) or Chair (in the context of a Board) serve as the lead, or chief, of the organisation. They use their experience, connection, skills and leadership to facilitate the governance process.

Chairs and Presidents take on a leadership role, and within the context of their community they become a community leader. This privilege and responsibility comes with the requirement of having a vision that aligns with the organisation and that group, and that will benefit the community.

Chairs and Presidents take on the balancing act of driving strategy and overseeing the operations of an organisation (depending on the size and structure). To do this effectively, they must have clarity about the role of the Board/Committee in the unique context of their organisation.

Valuable attributes

- Ability to separate personal and professional relationships, possible conflicts, and preferences
- Integrity
- Effective negotiator
- High level interpersonal skills
- Collaborative approach
- Through understanding of probity and due diligence
- Good decision making
- Ability to seek clarity
- Connection to community

Useful skills you can bring to the role

- Public speaking
- Time management
- Networking
- Facilitation
- Identify individual strengths within the group, and draw these out
- High communication skills:
 - Build relationships with diverse people
 - Influence and persuade
 - Clear articulation
 - Listen to others

Documents to become familiar with


- Constitution
- Business Plans, Strategic Plan
- Service Agreements and funding specifications
- Employment contracts, EBA, subcontracting arrangements
- Policies
- Most recent audit report
- Current budget
- If applicable, the quality frameworks the organisation currently needs to comply with

Documents and processes you may be responsible for establishing and/or maintaining

- Performance review of organisational leader (Manager, CEO etc)
- Establishing and/or maintaining quality calendar to ensure audits and other compliance requirements are up to date
- Enacting the establishing, monitoring and review of strategic and business plans
- Contributing to the annual report

What you need to know about compliance

Compliance responsibilities are often delegated, but you will be responsible for delegating and monitoring progress regularly. Service agreements will detail the quality and compliance requirements associated with funding received. You must:

- Be aware of program specifications
 - Be responsible for delivering against service agreements and contracts
- 
- A decorative horizontal bar at the bottom of the page, divided into three segments of orange, teal, and orange.

Useful resources

- [Community Door](#)
- [QCOSS' governance templates](#)
- Your sector colleagues and peers – networking with other Chairs and Presidents
- Mentors and mentoring programs focused on governance
- Professional development, such as the programs offered by the [Australian Indigenous Governance Institute](#), the [Australian Institute of Company Directors](#), [Institute of Community Directors](#) and other governance focused organisations
- [The Australian Indigenous Governance Institute Governance Toolkit](#)
- [Take me to your Board podcast](#), produced by TASCOS

Quick tips

- As the person leading the organisation, you should always take time to celebrate successes. Those working around you will appreciate the acknowledgement and will find joy in the work they've contributed to.
- Maintain positive relationship with organisational staff and with other board or management committee members. The culture of the governance group and organisation will flow from these relationships.
- Often leaders of groups will assume need to do the most speaking, but this is the opposite of leadership in practice (most of the time) – being able to actively listen is what will make you a good leader in this role.

This information has been provided for community services in Queensland as a guide to support governance. All organisations should check relevant legislation and seek independent advice for clarification.

QCOSS thanks Greater Whitsunday Communities for their contribution to this work.

A decorative horizontal bar at the bottom of the page, divided into three segments of orange, teal, and orange.