Committee Fact Sheet

**Role of the Committee**

A Club Committee (or Board) are the group of individuals, elected according to the constitution or rules of the club and responsible for governing on behalf of its members; managing the processes and systems and making decisions to help the club achieve its purpose and objectives.

The role of a club committee includes:

* Providing strategic direction by deciding upon the club’s priorities, objectives and initiatives in line with its overall purpose and vision.
* Monitoring the strategic direction and performance of the club.
* Identifying the roles and responsibilities of committee members and volunteers.
* Monitoring the operational and financial position and performance of the club.
* Exemplifying the moral, ethical and behavioural expectations of the organisation and all its stakeholders.
* Ensuring the principal risks faced by the club are identified and that appropriate control and monitoring processes are in place to manage and mitigate their impact.
* Approving the club budget and ensuring that financial results are appropriately and accurately reported in a timely manner in accordance with constitutional and regulatory requirements.
* Ensuring that all club affairs are conducted with transparency and accountability.
* Overseeing the design, implementation and periodic review of appropriate and effective policies, processes and codes for members and the club.
* Monitoring the performance and evaluation of committee members and volunteers.
* Ensuring effective succession planning processes are in place including strategies to assure the committee is comprised of individuals who are able to meet their duties and responsibilities as committee members.
* Managing member and stakeholder engagement, reporting and information sharing including with the league/association, State Sporting Organisation, National Sporting Organisation, government and commercial partners.

**Diversity, inclusion and committee composition**

A club committee should be a diverse group of people who, collectively, provide different perspectives and experience to facilitate more considered decision-making.

There is no single formula for how a committee should look. Each club should have a committee that reflects its needs and goals, however boards are best able to fulfil their roles and responsibilities when members have a diversity of skills, perspectives and backgrounds as well as a culture that values this diversity.

Whilst ensuring that members elected to the committee are first eligible and have the requisite skills, expertise and experience for the role, clubs should seek to ensure that no gender account for more than 60% or less than 40% of the total number of members.

Contemporary understanding of effective committees also suggests that a committee should consist of five to nine members.

It is recommended that regular skill and composition evaluations be performed to ensure that the club not only has the right mix of skills needed to implement its strategy across all roles, but also has diversity in the age, gender, cultural and linguistic background and geography representative of its members and the community.

For further information on how to conduct an analysis of the diversity and skill composition of your committee and to identify opportunities to bring diversity to the leadership of your club, see the Committee Skill Matrix.

**Identification and appointment of members**

In identifying and appointing members to the committee, clubs should have in place a clear, documented process.

Succession planning is the process for managing the transition of people in and out of roles. It is an important step that proactively prepares individuals within the club for roles on the committee before they become available and can assist in reducing the occurrence and associated risk of vacant roles.

Succession planning can support clubs:

* Retain talent and further develop the knowledge, skills and experience of members in key roles;
* Future-proof its operations by filling vacancies with the right people in the right role at the right time;
* Close skill gaps across the committee and;
* Foster strong club culture by recognising and rewarding engaged and motivated members to lead the club.

Used in coordination with the Committee Skills Matrix, a Succession Planning Framework can help clubs to not only identify existing gaps, key skills and qualities required of the committee to successfully deliver on its strategic goals, but also support the development and preparedness of candidates and the club to fill key roles, allowing for a smoother transition with minimal risk or disruption.

**Member limits**

Best-practice governance suggests that organisations should have a staggered rotation system for committee members with term limits and a maximum tenure of no longer than 10 years.

Member limits are a natural and healthy way of providing change and necessary transformation of a committee by ensuring it expands its competencies and leverages fresh ideas, experience and expertise in line with modern community needs.

Member limits also provide opportunities to develop talented individuals within the club by providing a clear path to leadership roles whilst also encouraging members to make a concerted impact with the time and opportunity available to them, helping to encourage focused participation and avoiding the risk of stagnation or underperformance.

**Conflict of interest**

In performing its duties, a committee should document, disclose and enforce a process for managing conflicts of interest.

A conflict of interest may exists when a committee member could be influenced, or where it could be perceived that they are influenced, by a personal interest in carrying out their responsibilities.

Conflict of interests can be classified as either:

* **Real**: where a direct conflict exists between current duties and private interests e.g. the club President appoints a friend to the committee outside of the hiring process and without endorsement from other members.
* **Perceived:** where it appears or could be perceived that private interests are improperly influencing a member’s responsibilities e.g. a committee member recommends a relative to submit a bid for a contract with the club.
* **Potential:** Private interests are not currently but could come into direct conflict with a member’s responsibilities e.g. a coach has a child who will be eligible for selection in the coming year.

Committees should have in place a conflict of interest policy and register to appropriately identify and manage any conflicts (real, perceived or potential) prior to each meeting to ensure accountability and transparency. For further information, see the Conflict of Interest register.

**Meeting frequency**

Committees should operate in an efficient manner and meet as frequently as required in order to perform its duties effectively.

Following clear, defined processes and maintaining accurate records of meetings and committee decisions are critical to ensuring that committees are governing effectively and in the best interest of the club and its members.

An agenda and board papers, including up to date reports, should be circulated sufficiently in advance of all meetings.

All decisions made by the committee should be recorded as part of the meeting minutes, along with any evidence or information relied upon to make a decision.

Documenting processes and decisions provides accountability by defining how governance is actioned within the club; informing members of their individual responsibilities, whilst also providing oversight of the responsibilities of others and the ability to hold one another accountable.

Meeting minutes, in an appropriate and agreed format, and including a clear record of decisions and action items, should be distributed among members within one week of the meeting.

Public disclosure of the processes and policies which underpin the committee’s operations and decision-making provide transparency. This allows members and stakeholders to be assured that the committee is following good processes, creating confidence in their actions and decisions.

It is recommended that clubs publicly publish their financial reports, strategic plans, risk registers and other appropriate documentation along with an annual report which meets the requirements of its incorporating legislation.

**Performance evaluation**

The committee is ultimately responsible for the ongoing performance and stability of the club and therefore must have an appropriate system of internal controls to enable it to monitor performance, track progress against strategy and address issues of concern.

It is recommended that committees review at each meeting progress against the defined measures within the strategic plan as well as scrutinise the financial performance of the club.

As part of this process committees should critically examine all reporting by asking appropriate and probing questions, requesting more information when required and making decisions to enforce change and improve performance.

It is also important that committees review the contribution of individual members as well as the collective dynamic and systems in place for governing the club to ensure continuous improvement. At a minimum, the committee should at least once per year formally discuss its performance and identify issues or concerns to be resolved and implement appropriate action plans for the year ahead.