



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

SPORT GOVERNANCE STANDARDS

UPDATED 2023

The Sport Governance Standards were developed by the Australian Sports Commission in collaboration with state and territory agencies of sport and recreation.



Contents

PRINCIPLE 1

The spirit of the game – values-driven culture and behaviours

PRINCIPLE 2

The team – aligned sport through collaborative governance

PRINCIPLE 3

The gameplan – a clear vision that informs strategy

PRINCIPLE 4

The players – a diverse board to enable considered decision-making

PRINCIPLE 5

The rulebook – documents that outline duties, powers, roles and responsibilities

PRINCIPLE 6

The playbook – board processes which ensure accountability and transparency

PRINCIPLE 7

The defence – a system which protects the organisation

PRINCIPLE 8

The best and fairest – a system for ensuring integrity

PRINCIPLE 9

The scorecard – embedded systems of internal review to foster continuous improvement



Principle 1

The spirit of the game – values-driven culture and behaviours

An organisation's culture and behaviours should be underpinned by values which are demonstrated by the board and embedded in its decisions and actions.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>1.1 Code of Conduct The board have a directors' code of conduct which outlines the high standards of professional and ethical conduct expected by directors in the interests of the organisation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board has not implemented a directors' code of conduct 2. The board has a directors' code of conduct, executed by its directors during their induction 3. The board publishes a directors' code of conduct, which is reviewed annually by the board and annually executed by all directors 4. The board publishes a directors' code of conduct, which is reviewed annually by the board (with input from stakeholders) and annually affirmed by all directors. The code directly integrates behavioural expectations with the organisation's values
<p>1.2 Defined Values and Behaviours The organisation actively engages with its stakeholders to establish, define, and publish its core values and associated behaviours</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has not defined or published values and behaviours 2. The organisation defines and publishes values and behaviours 3. The organisation defines and publishes values and behaviours, which are aligned nationally and regularly reviewed 4. The organisation defines and publishes values and behaviours, which are aligned nationally and regularly reviewed by its members. The organisation integrates these values and behaviours into induction, recruitment, and performance evaluation processes
<p>1.3 Demonstrated Values and Behaviours The board actively demonstrates the organisation's core values and behaviours, and embeds these into decisions and actions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not actively demonstrate the organisation's core values and behaviours 2. The board actively demonstrates the organisation's core values and behaviours 3. The board actively demonstrates the organisation's core values and behaviours, referencing and reflecting on the values when making decisions 4. The board actively demonstrates the organisation's core values and behaviours, embedding these into discussions, decisions, and actions, and calling out behaviour which goes against organisational values



Principle 2

The team – aligned sport through collaborative governance

Across a sport, boards should work together to govern collaboratively and create alignment to maximise efficient use of resources and implement whole-of-sport plans.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>2.1 Stakeholder Engagement Plan The board develops, publishes, and implements a stakeholder engagement plan</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board has not developed a stakeholder engagement plan 2. The board has a stakeholder engagement plan, but it is not published or consistently implemented 3. The board publishes its stakeholder engagement plan, and it is consistently implemented 4. The board publishes and implements a stakeholder engagement plan, regularly collaborates with stakeholders, and conducts an annual review and planning process of the engagement plan
<p>2.2 Member Meetings The board identifies and implements opportunities to meet with and collaborate regularly with the boards of their member bodies</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not meet with the boards of member bodies 2. The board meets with their member bodies on an ad hoc basis 3. The board meets with the boards of both member and national bodies (where relevant) regularly 4. The board meets with the boards of both member and national bodies (where relevant) regularly and proactively



<p>2.3 Member Communication</p> <p>The organisation proactively engages and communicates with its member bodies, ensuring accountability and transparency</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not communicate with its member bodies 2. The organisation communicates with its member bodies on an ad-hoc basis, usually when information is sought by either party 3. The organisation regularly and proactively communicates with its member bodies and (where relevant) national body. This communication is two-way between both parties 4. The organisation regularly and proactively communicates with its member bodies and (where relevant) national body and provides regular mechanisms where stakeholders are given the opportunity to provide feedback and input on the direction of the organisation
<p>2.4 Member Collaboration</p> <p>The organisation proactively collaborates with its member bodies to create alignment and maximise efficient use of resources</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not govern collaboratively with its member bodies 2. The organisation proactively communicates opportunities for collaboration (such as resource utilisation) with its member bodies 3. The organisation collaborates with its member bodies and (where relevant) national body to engage in collective decision-making that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberate 4. The organisation collaborates with its member bodies and (where relevant) national body to engage in collective decision-making that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberate. There is a focus on organisations aligning to maximise efficient use of resources



Principle 3

The gameplan – a clear vision that informs strategy

The board is responsible for overseeing the development of the organisation's vision and strategy as well as determining what success looks like.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>3.1 Strategic Plan The organisation has adopted, in consultation with its members, a strategic plan with clear and measurable targets which link to a detailed operating budget</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have a strategic plan 2. The organisation has a strategic plan, but with no accompanying budget 3. The organisation has a whole of sport strategic plan with an accompanying budget 4. The organisation has a rolling whole of sport strategic plan with an accompanying budget, which is annually reviewed and monitored. The plan is endorsed and implemented consistently and effectively by its member bodies



Principle 4

The players – a diverse board to enable considered decision-making

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

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>4.1 Board Skills Matrix The board should have a diverse mix of skills, expertise, and experience in order to meet the strategic goals of the organisation</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have a board skills matrix or have regard to diversity of skills when identifying directors for elected and appointed positions 2. The board does not have a board skills matrix, but has regard to diversity of directors' skills when identifying directors for elected and appointed positions 3. The board utilises a board skills matrix, which aligns with their strategic goals when identifying directors for elected and appointed positions 4. The board utilises a board skills matrix, which aligns with their strategic goals when identifying directors for elected and appointed positions. The board/organisation actively promotes and publicises board opportunities in line with identified skill gaps
<p>4.2 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion The board demonstrates a strong and public commitment to progressing towards achieving its diversity, equity and inclusion goals within its board composition</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board has identified board diversity, equity and inclusion goals necessary to achieve its strategy 2. The board publicly discloses its board diversity, equity and inclusion goals and achievement against these 3. The board publicly discloses its board diversity, equity and inclusion goals and achievement against these. The board has a detailed action plan in place to ensure a mix of directors 4. The board publicly discloses its board diversity, equity and inclusion goals and achievement against these. The board has a mix of directors, meeting its diversity, equity and inclusion goals
<p>4.3 Gender Balance The board, while ensuring the prevailing criterion for election is eligibility, skills, expertise, and experience, should be composed in a manner such that no one gender</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board has more than 80% of one gender 2. The board has no more than 80% of one gender 3. The board has no more than 70% of one gender 4. The board has no more than 60% of one gender



<p>accounts for more than 60% of the total number of Directors</p>	
<p>4.4 Director Independence The organisation's directors should be independent, regardless of whether elected or appointed</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has directors, who are also representing other constituent bodies 2. The organisation has directors, who are not representing other constituent bodies, yet have another material conflict 3. Appointed directors are independent, its elected directors may not be independent 4. All elected and appointed directors are independent and have no conflicts
<p>4.5 Appointment of Directors The organisation has a documented and transparent process for the identification and appointment of directors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have processes for the identification or appointment of directors 2. The organisation has an ad hoc process to identify and appoint directors 3. The organisation has documented processes to identify and appoint directors, operating under an agreed terms of reference and includes a nominations committee with an external chair. The committee's recommended nominees are generally elected by its members 4. The organisation has its Nominations Committee codified in its constitution including a board appointed independent chair. The committee has the power to determine the nominees or candidate suitability or not for further consideration by the Board or Voting Members
<p>4.6 Elected vs Appointed Directors The board has a composition which incorporates both elected and appointed directors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board has all elected directors 2. The board has between 0-20% appointed directors 3. The board has 21-40% appointed directors 4. The board has more than 40% appointed directors, but a majority are still elected



Principle 5

The rulebook – documents that outline duties, powers, roles and responsibilities

An organisation should clearly define and document its structure and the duties, responsibilities and powers of members, directors, committees and management.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>5.1 Legal Entity The organisation should be a legal entity incorporated under the legislation which best fits its size, need and jurisdiction</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation is not incorporated under legislation which best suits its size, need and jurisdiction 2. The board has commenced discussions regarding transitioning to a legal entity which best suits its size, need and jurisdiction 3. The organisation is in the process of transitioning to a legal entity which best suits its size, need and jurisdiction 4. The organisation is a legal entity which best suits its size, need and jurisdiction
<p>5.2 Director Term Limits The organisation should have a staggered rotation system for directors, with term limits and a maximum tenure of no longer than 10 years</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have term limits or a maximum tenure for directors 2. The organisation limits the term for directors but a maximum tenure in excess of 10 years 3. The organisation limits the term for directors and a maximum tenure of 10 years or less 4. The organisation staggers terms to encourage board renewal while retaining corporate memory, and a maximum tenure of 10 years or less
<p>5.3 Director Eligibility A director who has completed the maximum tenure on the board is not eligible to stand as a director for that organisation for a period of at least three years</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have a minimum period before a former director is eligible to re-join the board 2. The organisation has a minimum period of 1 year before a former director is eligible to re-join the board 3. The organisation has a minimum period of 2 years before a former director is eligible to re-join the board 4. The organisation has a minimum period of 3 or more years before a former director is eligible to re-join the board



<p>5.4 Director Induction The board has a process for inducting new directors</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New directors do not undertake an induction process or training 2. New directors do not undertake a documented induction process or training but are provided with key documents (including the Constitution, Board Charter, Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, Risk Management Policy, the Strategic Plan, and any other relevant governance documents) 3. New directors undertake a documented induction process, including relevant training, provision of all key documents and meetings with at least the Chair and CEO 4. New directors undertake a documented induction process, including relevant training, provision of all key documents and meetings with at least the Chair and CEO. New Directors also meet with the key leaders of the member bodies
<p>5.5 Board Charter The board operates under a documented board charter</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have a documented board charter 2. The board has a documented board charter, which has not been actively referred to and/or revised in the past 2 years 3. The board has a documented board charter which is not regularly referred to by directors to manage director conduct and board procedure, but has been revised by the board in the past 2 years 4. The board has a documented board charter, that is referred to when managing director conduct or board procedure. The board charter has been used to guide and reinforce desired behaviours and is revised annually by the board



Principle 6

The playbook – board processes which ensure accountability and transparency

Through effective processes and continual review of its performance, the board is able to demonstrate accountability and transparency to its members and stakeholders.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>6.1 Finance, Audit and Risk Committee The organisation has a Finance, Audit and Risk committee</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent) 2. The organisation has a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent) but does not operate under an agreed terms of reference 3. The organisation has a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent) that operates under an agreed terms of reference, which is reviewed and updated annually. The Committee includes an accountant. The committee meets at least quarterly 4. The organisation has a Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (or equivalent) that operates under an agreed terms of reference, that is reviewed and updated annually. The Committee includes at least one external and independent CPA or Chartered Accountant. The Committee meets at least quarterly
<p>6.2 Chair Appointment and Evaluation The board shall appoint the chair and evaluate their performance</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has a chair who is not elected by the board 2. The organisation has a chair elected by the board, but does not document the process for this election 3. The organisation has a chair elected by the board, with a clearly defined position description and documents the process for this election 4. The organisation has a chair elected by the board, with a clearly defined and reviewed position description, and documents the process for this election. The Chair's performance is assessed at least every two years, and a development action plan is created and implemented
<p>6.3 CEO Eligibility The CEO, upon leaving their role with the organisation, is not eligible for appointment or election to the board within 3 years</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not have a minimum period before a former CEO is eligible to become a director 2. The organisation has a minimum period of 1 year before a former CEO is eligible to become a director



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. The organisation has a minimum period of 2 years before a former CEO is eligible to become a director 4. The organisation has a minimum period of 3 or more years before a former CEO is eligible to become a director
<p>6.4 Conflict of Interest The board has rigorous processes for identifying and managing director conflict of interest</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have a conflict-of-interest policy and register 2. The board has a conflict-of-interest policy and register but it is not rigorously applied or updated 3. The board maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and register, that is regularly updated and enforced, and reviews conflicts as a standing agenda item 4. The board maintains a conflict-of-interest policy and register, that is regularly updated and enforced, reviews conflicts as a standing agenda item, and directors are required to complete an annual statement of interest
<p>6.5 Governance Reporting The organisation reports on governance outcomes at both its Annual General Meeting (AGM) and in its Annual Report</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not report on governance outcomes 2. The organisation reports on governance outcomes at its AGM only 3. The organisation reports on governance outcomes at its AGM and in its annual report 4. The organisation reports on governance outcomes at its AGM and in its annual report. The organisation provides an “If not, why not” statement as to why it has not met the Sport Governance Standard/s, and outlines plans to meet the standard/s going forward



Principle 7

The defence – a system which protects the organisation

To proactively protect the organisation from harm, the board ensures the organisation has and maintains robust and systematic processes for managing risk.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>7.1 Vulnerable Persons and Children The sport has a documented process to ensure compliance with working with vulnerable persons and children legislation, (that reflects the varying legislative requirements of all States and Territories), including maintenance of relevant checks</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not document processes for workers/volunteers working with vulnerable persons and children 2. The organisation documents processes for workers/volunteers working with vulnerable persons and children, 'but the sport does not have a national policy' 3. The sport has a national policy and documents processes for working with vulnerable persons and children roles. The board ensures this is implemented consistently within the organisation, including aligning to the relevant legislation 4. The sport has a national policy and documents processes for workers/volunteers in vulnerable persons and child-related roles, aligned to relevant legislation, that is regularly reviewed and implemented consistently throughout and by the sport
<p>7.2 Development of Risk Management The board has a documented process for ensuring that the policies and procedures implemented by management are consistent with the organisation's risk management framework</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation has not developed a risk management process or associated policies 2. The organisation has developed policies associated with the management of risk 3. The organisation has developed a risk management process and the board has oversight of risk through regular reporting against the process 4. The organisation has a nationally aligned risk management process and the board has oversight of risk through regular reporting against the framework. The sport educates and trains staff and volunteers on how to report and treat risks in line with the process
<p>7.3 Implementation of Risk Management The board has established a risk management system that is appropriate for the size and context of the organisation, aligns with strategy and enables organisation-wide decision making for the management of threats and opportunities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not implement a risk management system 2. The organisation does have a risk management system, but it is not consistently implemented, monitored, or reviewed by the board



- | | |
|--|--|
| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">3. The organisation has a nationally aligned risk management system that is appropriate for the organisation, integrated across the organisation and provides clear parameters for the way risk is managed, treated, and reported4. The organisation has a nationally aligned risk management system that is appropriate for the organisation, is integrated and implemented, reviewed, and monitored consistently to ensure effectiveness. The board has established a positive culture ensuring risk is embedded and managed in all parts of the organisation |
|--|--|



Principle 8

The best and fairest – a system for ensuring integrity

An organisation should have measures and protocols to ensure integrity of the sport and safeguard its participants.

Note: From July 2022, Sport Integrity Australia is responsible for standards relating to Principle 8, including the measurement of maturity levels and support for sporting organisations.



Principle 9

The scorecard – embedded systems of internal review to foster continuous improvement

The board must have an appropriate system of internal controls to enable it to monitor performance, track progress against strategy and address issues of concern.

Sport Governance Standard	Measures
<p>9.1 Board Evaluation The board should regularly evaluate its performance and performance of individual directors. The board should agree and implement a plan to take forward any actions resulting from the evaluations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not conduct a board evaluation process 2. The board conducts a board evaluation process, but it does not assess individual director's performance 3. The board conducts a board evaluation process, and individual director evaluations and implements action plans 4. The board conducts a board evaluation process at least every two years, and an individual director evaluation that incorporates an independent external process at least every two years, and implements action plans
<p>9.2 Board Meeting Schedule The board will operate itself in an efficient manner and directors meet as appropriate to discharge their duties effectively</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not schedule a minimum of five board meetings a year 2. The board schedules five or more board meetings a year 3. The board schedules more than five board meetings a year, and has scheduled the key governance activities into the relevant board meetings 4. The board schedules more than five board meetings a year and publishes an annual meeting calendar which includes the scheduling of key governance activities. It has an appropriate balance between review/performance monitoring activities and forward looking strategic items
<p>9.3 Board Meeting Agenda The board has documentation and processes to operate its meetings in an efficient and effective manner</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not circulate agenda and board papers to the board 2. The organisation circulates agenda and board papers to the board 3. The organisation's Chair calls for agenda items from directors and papers are circulated 4. The organisation's Chair calls for agenda items from directors. Papers are circulated for every agenda item in advance (minimum 1 week). These papers are stored and readily available for directors to access and refer to, including past papers



<p>9.4 Board Meeting Minutes The board maintains accurate records of meetings and board decisions</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The organisation does not keep director-approved minutes of board meetings 2. The organisation records and documents director-approved minutes of board meetings including a record of all board decisions 3. The organisation records and documents director-approved minutes of board meetings including a record of all board decisions. Minutes are circulated to directors for approval within one week of meeting 4. The organisation records and documents director-approved minutes of board meetings including a record of all board decisions. Minutes are circulated to directors for approval within 1 week of meeting. Board decisions are communicated to members
<p>9.5 Financial Delegations The board has documented financial delegations. This includes, but is not limited to: expenditure, funding, grants, other financial transactions as resolved by the board</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have documented financial delegations 2. The board documents financial delegations 3. The boards documents financial delegations, which are reviewed by the finance, audit, and risk committee (or equivalent) on an annual basis 4. The board documents financial delegations, which are reviewed by the finance, audit, and risk committee (or equivalent) on an annual basis. Appropriate education is provided to delegates with respect to their responsibilities
<p>9.6 Non-Financial Delegations The board has documented non-financial delegations. This includes, but is not limited to: human resources, correspondence/public relations, membership, strategic actions, business plans, board resolutions, grievances, and complaints</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have documented non-financial delegations 2. The board documents non-financial delegations 3. The board documents non-financial delegations, and the relevant board committee member reviews them on an annual basis 4. The board documents non-financial delegations, and the relevant board committee member reviews them on an annual basis. Appropriate education is provided to delegates with respect to their responsibilities
<p>9.7 CEO Evaluation The board has a documented CEO (or equivalent) performance evaluation process</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The board does not have a performance evaluation process for the CEO (or equivalent) 2. The board has developed an ad hoc performance evaluation process for the CEO (or equivalent) 3. The board has developed and documents the annual performance evaluation process for the CEO (or equivalent), which includes review of KPI achievement, professional development, and adherence to the organisation's values 4. The board documents a rolling performance evaluation process for the CEO (or equivalent), which includes regular review of KPI achievement, professional development, and adherence to the organisation's values



9.8 Succession Planning

The board has a documented succession planning process for key personnel and the retention of corporate knowledge

- 1. The board does not have succession plans in place for key personnel
- 2. The board has succession plans in place for key personnel
- 3. The board regularly reviews the succession plans for key personnel
- 4. The board regularly reviews the succession plans for key personnel and allocates time at board meetings to discuss and refine these plans





Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

ausport.gov.au



Leverrier Street Bruce ACT 2617
PO BOX 176 Belconnen ACT 2616
+61 2 6214 1111