

FIELD & GAME AUSTRALIA MISSION AND VALUES

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Field & Game Australia's mission is to be the most effective organisation in the promotion of hunting, recreational shooting and habitat conservation.

Our values are:

- Specifically sustain, enhance and nurture responsible activities of members.
- Encourage, promote and practice the active conservation of game and habitat, and to undertake education and training of members to achieve that goal.
- Cooperate with government agencies and landholders in the promotion of game hunting in an orderly and accepted manner, and to respect the privilege of gun ownership.
- Promote public understanding and acceptance of our activities and to cooperate with other bodies which may have similar objectives.
- Unite field sportsmen in the respect of game and habitat, to promote good sportsmanship through supervised shooting ranges, target shooting and, where appropriate, to conduct local, state and national events to encourage the sport and stimulate participants to excel in their chosen pastime.

MISSION STATEMENT

"Field & Game Australia is a voluntary organisation formed by hunters. We partner with government and the community in the management and sustainable utilisation of Australia's wetlands for future generations by protecting game habitats through conservation. We promote firearm ownership, ethical hunting and clay target shooting."

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

DETERMINE THE ORGANISATION'S MISSION AND PURPOSES

The Board is fundamentally responsible for defining the organisation mission and what it strives to accomplish. A commitment to the organisation's mission should drive the Board's sense of public accountability. This usually takes the form of a written mission statement, ranging from a paragraph to a full page. In addition to ensuring that the organisation has an up-to-date statement of what it is, represents, and does, the Board should periodically review its adequacy, accuracy, and validity.

SELECT THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The responsibility of choosing the Chief Executive Officer undoubtedly has the greatest impact on the organisation development and effectiveness. While this function may also be shared with others who have a stake in the outcome, the final decision is and should be the Board's to make.

A carefully considered process is essential, but in order for a chief executive to perform effectively, the Board must recognise its duty to provide a positive working environment. Prior to a search process, the Board should do the following:

- Review the organisation's statement of mission and purposes and ensure its adequacy.
- Conduct an inventory of the organisation's major strengths and needs.
- Establish specific long-term priorities for the next period of executive leadership.
- Establish clear objectives and clarify expectations for at least the first year of the new Chief Executive's service.
- Articulate the particular characteristics, skills and style it seeks in its new Chief Executive.
- Provide an adequate compensation package and other employment terms.
- Clarify its own functions as distinct from those of the Chief Executive and staff, including recognising the Chief Executive's exclusive responsibility to select and supervise a management team without Board interference.

- Prepare a comprehensive job description that reaffirms that the organisation Chief Executive is the chief staff officer (by whatever title).
- Support the Chief Executive and assess his or her performance.

The Chief Executive needs consistent moral and substantive support from the Board. Although the primary responsibility for supporting the Chief Executive often falls to the Chairperson of the Board, it remains a Board function. Some Boards have found it useful to assign the responsibility for assessing the Chief Executive's performance to an executive committee. This helps, but the Board as a whole should ensure that the Chief Executive:

- receives frequent and constructive feedback,
- is assisted when Board Members overstep prerogatives or misunderstand their roles,
- feels that his or her performance is being assessed in relation to the Board's performance,
- is introduced to other community leaders and organisations,
- is invited to important social functions,
- is complimented for exceptional initiatives,
- is encouraged to take professional and personal leave for renewal,
- feels that the Board is aware of and sensitive to family situations and needs.

ENSURE EFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL PLANNING

Where there is professional staff, the conduct and coordination of planning is best entrusted to it. Volunteer Board Members should not be expected to be full-time authorities on program, financial, and managerial issues, or to commit to more and longer meetings. The organisation Chief Executive and staff must share at least as much enthusiasm and ownership as does the Board, and perhaps even more because they bear the primary responsibility for implementing the plan.

The planning process enables the Board and staff to translate the broad mission of the organisation into objectives and goals that can be measured and accomplished. The conventional wisdom is that Boards should insist that comprehensive organisational planning is done and done effectively.

ENSURE ADEQUATE RESOURCES

An organisation can only be effective if it has resources to meet its purposes. Providing adequate resources is first and foremost a Board responsibility. Many organisations confuse the Chief Executive's role with the Board's responsibility on this score, particularly when the staff includes a director of development or fundraiser.

It is perfectly appropriate to consider the Chief Executive as the chief fundraiser, but the Board sets fundraising targets and goals. The performance of the Board and Chief Executive is intimately linked to the Board's membership and its ability to influence potentially large donors and otherwise monitor and guide fundraising initiatives. Effective fundraising is one measure of the Boards capabilities, commitment, and influence. Every Board Member should inventory his or her connections with potentially helpful givers, and the Board should accept responsibility in this area. The fundraising responsibilities of Board Members should not be restricted to soliciting individual gifts. Board Members are also involved in soliciting corporate and foundation grants and in securing government contracts.

MANAGE RESOURCES EFFECTIVELY

An important part of serving the public trust is protecting accumulated assets and managing current income properly. The Board can only monitor budget implementation if it is provided clear, intelligible, accurate and timely financial reports.

Because organisations are usually incorporated and may be granted tax-exempt status by state and federal governments to fulfil public needs, the Board's obligations go well beyond its organisation members, constituents or clients.

DETERMINE, MONITOR, AND STRENGTHEN THE ORGANISATION'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Board's fundamental role begins with the question of whether current and proposed programs and services are consistent with the organisation's stated mission and purposes. Given limited resources and unlimited demands on them, the Board must decide among competing priorities. Financial and program decisions should not be made independently.

What the organisation does for its members, constituents or clients determines its significance as a social institution. Yet there is nearly universal complaint by Board Members that meeting agendas are dominated by finance and fundraising issues. Every board must find a sensible division of labour among its members to ensure that programs and services are demonstrably consistent with the organisation's mission and purposes, and are of high quality. Large organisations may wish to establish a standing committee to oversee programs and services.

ENHANCE THE ORGANISATION'S PUBLIC STANDING

Board Members serve not only as a link between the organisation's staff or volunteers and its members, constituents or clients, but also as the organisation's ambassadors, advocates and community representatives. Clearly articulated achievements, contributions to the public good and explanations for how gifts and grants and other revenue sources are allocated are all part of the process.

Over the course of their tenure, board members may meet with government officials, speak to community groups, represent the organisation at forums, events and conferences and be interviewed by media.

ENSURE LEGAL ETHICAL INTEGRITY AND MAINTAIN ACCOUNTABILITY

The Board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms. By being diligent in its responsibilities, the Board can protect the organisation from legal action, promote a safe and ethical working environment and safeguard the organisation's integrity in pursuit of its mission.

One of the marks of an effectively managed and governed organisation is its ability to avoid having its Board adjudicate in personnel issues, except in the rarest of circumstances. Solid personnel policies and procedures, grievance protocols, and especially, a clear understanding about the Chief Executive's responsibility for hiring and developing staff helps to ensure proper decorum in this area.

Although laws, taxation requirements and peak organisations establish certain standards governing non-profit organisations, effective non-profits go beyond what is minimally required to maintain accountability.

RECRUIT AND ORIENT NEW BOARD MEMBERS AND ASSESS BOARD PERFORMANCE

Whether or not the Board is "self-perpetuating" on its own authority, all Boards have a responsibility to articulate and make known their needs in terms of member experience, skills, influence, demographic, and many other considerations that define a balanced board composition. All Boards also have responsibility to properly orient new Board Members and to periodically and comprehensively assess the Board's effectiveness. But there is a related responsibility that more Boards are recognising and acting on: the responsibility to assess the performance of individual board members eligible for re-election or re-appointment.