

Working together to strengthen your organisation's governance

With you, we will design a structure and process to assist the board to enhance its governance capabilities by teasing out and addressing important issues centred around:

- How the board members can take up their role as directors strongly and cohesively to strengthen the board's leadership in a changing and uncertain operating environment.
- Getting a clear picture of action the board needs to take to address challenges in the strategic plan, change and transition work this will entail and how to tackle it.
- Working effectively with executive/senior management to contain and manage the essential paradox that all community organisations face, i.e. the need for *both* a clear distinction between the governance and operational responsibilities of board and management *and* the necessary boundary 'violations' required of each so they understand how to perform their respective roles with insight.

We do not tackle such issues with conventional governance training. Such approaches primarily focus on the transfer and acquisition of knowledge about what to do and not do and they are of limited value for this work.

Instead we work with boards in a way that acknowledges what is particular to their organisation and sector, their history and achievements and the learnings gained from that, as well as the ways in which any history can limit thinking about how to realise the future in a changing environment.

Purposeful and targeted conversations to reach common ground

A series of planned, time-managed and purposeful conversations will assist your board members to get on the same page so they can find the common ground from which to lead and decide; while also respecting and 'holding' their differences. We will help board members:

- Work out what to do when they are not on the same page - this involves having honest and direct conversations about how to effectively work together especially when grappling with complex issues and different views about what needs to happen and how it should be implemented.
- With a framework to inquire, in a systematic and collaborative way so they can understand and decide what they need to do.

Our approach

We recognise that you know best about your work so we will work in close collaboration with you. Our role is to enable you to generate the outcomes you need. We will offer guidance, help you craft the constructive and challenging questions this task requires, strategies to address what comes up and offer our insights from our

experience of others who, like you, are grappling with similar challenges

A typical program of conversations

We will design a tailored program that can address your organisation's specific issues and needs. A typical program of facilitated dialogue may include:

Conversations about the **future**:

- How board members envision the future.
- What this means in practical terms.
- Where board members agree and disagree and how to deal with that.
- What all of this will demand of the board and the executive/senior managers.
- How the board will make sure what needs to happen.

Conversations about **implementation**:

- Understanding what is needed and how it will be implemented.
- Agreement on the processes and tasks.
- Appreciation of the roles and responsibilities from the board's governance perspective and the executive/senior managers operational perspective, including how each will support the other. This will require clarifying the respective roles in a nuanced way that is neither over nor under bounded - sometimes described as *'nose in fingers out!'*

Conversations about working **cohesively**:

- How to strengthen governance practices.
- How to foster strong relationships with executive/senior managers.
- How to monitor and evaluate the work.

The consultants that lead these conversations

Anne Smyth



Lesley Thornton



Anne and Lesley are senior consultants at LDC Group. They have considerable governance and leadership development experience in the health and community sectors. Their experience and approach includes:

- Having worked with many volunteer boards in resource constrained environments.
- Recognising and honouring the organisation's history, helping them to face the future with courage and insight.
- Working effectively to time constraints.
- Expertise in navigating complex and challenging organisational scenarios.



Wisdom. Experience. Insight.

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