

Golf Club Governance in Australia

4 steps to better outcomes



Contents

Foreword	3
1. Introduction	4
2. Executive summary	5
3. Research methodology and terminology	6
4. Recommendations	7
4.1 Be clearer about the purpose and role of the board and directors	7
4.2 Get board renewal, composition and diversity right	11
4.3 Focus on leadership, dynamics and process	15
4.4 Do strategy, performance, risk and stakeholder management well	17
5. Summary and next steps	19
Appendices	20
1 Board Effectiveness Framework	21
2 Survey ratings and benchmarking	22
3 About GBAS and about Board Surveys	23

Foreword

In the ever-evolving landscape of Australian golf, governance stands as a cornerstone of our industry's integrity, performance, and success. As we navigate the post-Covid era, the opportunity for growth and improvement within our clubs and across our sport has never been more apparent.

Golf continues to ride the crest of the wave that has catapulted our participation numbers. However, our competitive landscape and emerging economic conditions demand that there is no room for complacency.

With over 3.5 million Australians hitting golf balls every year, demand for golf in all its forms, has never been higher. But from a club perspective, we need to continue to adapt. The key to our sustainable future is ensuring that our offerings remain relevant and valued by modern day Australians.

The quality of decision-making and governance processes directly influences a club's performance and sustainable future. All this makes the findings and insights from this report incredibly valuable.

Golf Club Governance in Australia – is a report diligently researched and authored by Board Surveys and Golf Business Advisory Services. It sheds light on the current state of governance across Australian golf clubs and highlights that increased performance expectations necessarily rely on proper governance protocols and decision-making processes within club boards.

As we strive for excellence, improved performance, and a stronger more sustainable golf clubs, I commend this report to you. I'm sure that you will find this report of interest – and I invite all clubs to delve into its findings and recommendations.

Please join us in collective effort, working together to elevate the governance standards within clubs and across Australian golf. I have no doubt that this will be a significant step in ensuring the ongoing relevance, longevity, and prosperity of the sport we so deeply cherish.

James Sutherland

Chief Executive Officer

Golf Australia

1. Introduction

Golf clubs have enjoyed a 12% growth in membership in the last three years post-Covid, having endured nearly two decades of slowly declining demand prior to that. This growth has provided the industry with a wonderful opportunity to secure its long-term sustainability.

Golf clubs, like many other sporting clubs, are becoming big businesses. There are more than 1,600 clubs around Australia catering for over 430,000 members. The top 100 of these clubs are presiding over revenue in excess of \$650 million per year and assets of more than \$850 million (excluding land).

As Golf Business Advisory Services (GBAS) has moved around the country, engaging with General Managers and club boards, it has been evident that the quality of governance within golf clubs varies materially. In recent times it also appears that club elections are increasingly being contested, many having numerous candidates which is adding to the instability of some boards and thus their clubs.

As a governance expert and co-author of this report, Nicholas Barnett has witnessed a lack of strategic focus by some boards and the overreach of some golf club directors into management's domain. His observations have been substantiated by comparing this research with the more than 500 other board reviews included in his firms' database.

Most agree that good governance processes typically lead to improved club outcomes. This report shows that many clubs remain vulnerable to the below-par performance of their boards, their functioning, the quality of decisions and how they make them.

It is our experience that the success or otherwise of a business, or a club, is primarily determined by the leadership, behaviours, processes, and quality of decision-making of the board of that entity. That leadership needs to be consistently maintained at a high level to ensure that all clubs make it through the next 50 or 100 years.

We trust that the recommendations for improvement outlined in this report will help your club improve the effectiveness and the value added by your board. These recommendations align with the AICD's new Not-For-Profit Governance Principles released in April, 2024.

This research has been undertaken to shine a more focused light on the 'state of play' of governance in Australian golf clubs. With clarity of the current state, forward progress will be much easier to achieve.

We acknowledge the advice and input provided by Margot Foster AM of Boardroom Excellence Australia, specialist governance advisors to sporting clubs and organisations, during the research phase and the preparation of this report.



Jeff Blunden
Managing Director
GBAS



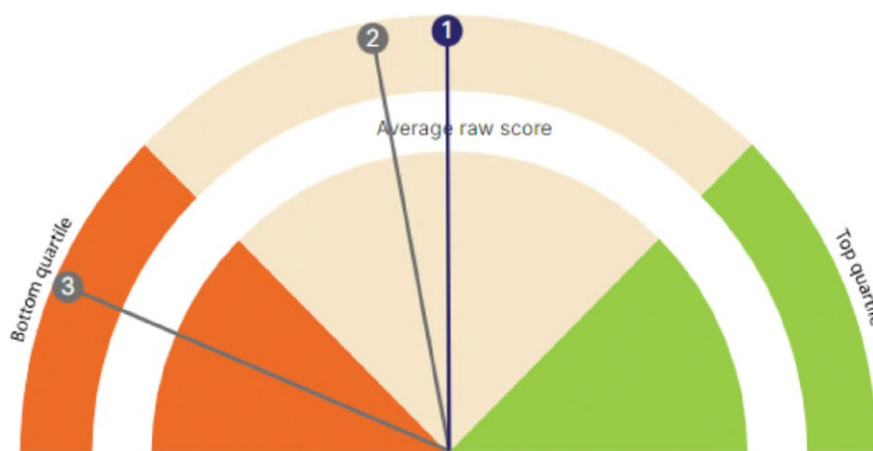
Nicholas Barnett
Executive Chairman
Board Surveys

2. Executive summary

The research for this report was undertaken by Golf Business Advisory Services (GBAS) in conjunction with Board Surveys between December 2023 and March 2024. It sought opinions from club GMs and CEOs (referred to as GMs) and from club Captains/Presidents (referred to as Chairs) on matters impacting the effectiveness of their respective club's board. Survey statements were rated and written comments were also made.

Whilst the golf industry continues to enjoy a post-Covid resurgence, this research shows that many club boards remain susceptible to instability and sub-optimal governance practices.

The ratings by GMs and Chairs to the survey statements included in Appendix 2 have been benchmarked against other small and medium not-for-profits (NFPs). Illustrating overall Board effectiveness, the chart below shows how the overall responses of Chairs and GMs compare to this benchmark. Overall, the ratings of golf club Chairs are slightly lower than the ratings for other NFPs (the grey circle 2 versus the blue circle 1). The ratings of golf club GMs are a lot lower than the ratings for other NFPs (the grey circle 3 versus the blue circle 1).



1	Small and Medium NFP
2	Directors (Presidents / Captains) - 56 responses
3	Executives (GMs and CEOs) - 67 responses

The ratings by club GMs of the effectiveness of their club's board were also found to be quite a bit more negative than the ratings made by Chairs (grey circle 3 versus grey circle 2). This probably means that the view of Chairs in relation to their board's effectiveness is overly positive. Further, the flow on impacts to the GM and club staff of an ineffective board is also likely to be underestimated by Chairs and boards themselves, particularly the stated levels of board over-reach and challenges flowing from board member turnover, as found in this research.

In order to most improve the effectiveness of golf clubs across Australia we have developed the following four recommendations.

1. Be clearer about the purpose and role of the board and directors
2. Get board renewal, composition and diversity right
3. Focus on leadership, dynamics and process
4. Do strategy, performance, risk and stakeholder management well

These recommendations are each covered in detail in Section 4. Section 4 also includes some useful tips for Chairs, boards and GMs.

3. Research methodology and terminology

56 Presidents/Captains (Chairs) and 67 GMs/CEOs (GMs) responded to an on-line survey sent to them by GBAS in early 2024. The survey statements used in the survey are the intellectual property of Board Surveys. This has enabled Board Surveys to directly compare responses from club Chairs and GMs to those in its wider research database.

Respondents rated the survey statements on a 1 to 7 point scale as shown below. To simplify the way the information has been included in Appendix 2 and this paper we have combined survey responses into three categories as shown below.

- Disagree**
Strongly disagree (1)
Disagree (2)
Slightly disagree (3)
- Neutral**
Neither agree nor disagree (4)
Slightly agree (5)
- Agree**
Agree (6)
Strongly agree (7)

In completing the survey, respondents were also asked to provide written comments on the biggest governance challenges being faced by their club.

Several comments made by Chairs and GMs in their written responses are included in this report whilst protecting the anonymity of individual respondents.

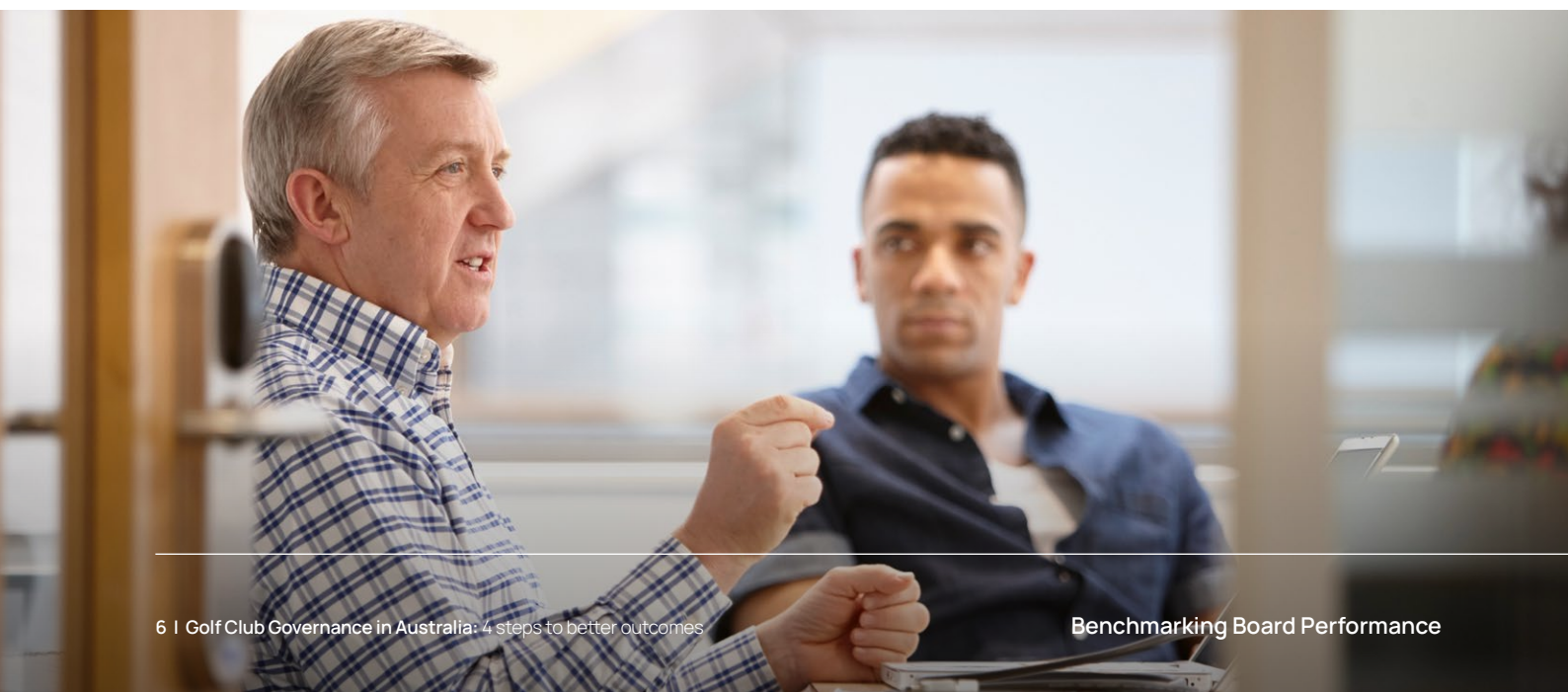
Terminology

In this report the governing body of a golf club is referred to as a Board (not Committee) and its members are referred to as Directors (not Committee Members).

Committees of the Board are referred to as Board Committees or just Committees (not sub-committees).

The chair of the board has been referred to as the Chair (not President/Captain or Committee Chair).

The GMs and CEOs have been referred to as GMs in this report.



4. Recommendations

4.1 Be clearer about the purpose and role of the board and directors

The biggest complaint and frustration of Chairs and GMs was that the board gets too involved in the day-to-day management and operations of their Club. They say that many directors simply don't understand and properly differentiate between the role of the board and its members and that of club management.

This was the lowest rated survey item with only 59% of Chairs and 45% of GMs agreeing or strongly agreeing that their directors demonstrate a clear understanding of their role. Both these survey responses are in the bottom quartile of comparable NFP boards as shown in Appendix 2.

Survey item	Responses		
Directors demonstrate a clear understanding of their role including how it differs from the role of management.	Chairs	14%	59%
	GMs	28%	45%

Legend: ● **Disagree:** Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3) ● **Neutral:** Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly agree (5) ● **Agree:** Agree (6), Strongly agree (7)

“As President, I feel it is my duty to ensure that fellow board members realise that our GM is responsible for the day to day running of the club, and that the board’s powers are limited to the boardroom.”

- Chair

“We have the luxury of a very corporate governance model. This is unquestionably a very good thing versus a traditional golf club environment.”

- Chair

“Delineation of “operations” and “governance” is an ongoing issue.”

- Chair

“Newer directors want to manage the operations of the Club and it takes some time to educate them that it is not the role of the Board.”

- GM

“Ensuring the Board/Committee focus on strategic issues and minimising operational focus is key to long term success.”

- GM

“A significant portion of the membership do not understand the separation of duties between Board and Management.”

- GM

Director over-reach into the operations of the organisation is not unique to golf clubs. It happens in organisations of all types and shapes and sizes in Australia and beyond. Based on the perspectives of the Chairs and GMs who completed our survey golf club boards are worse at this than other NFP boards.

Less experienced directors often find it easier to get involved in the management and operations of their club as that is what they are most comfortable with. Some mistakenly give directions to, or make decisions for club executives, without reference to their board. Many don't recognise that they don't have the authority to do that on behalf of the board, nor is it their role.

Board discussions about green speeds, or the price of some of the club's hospitality offerings, for example, are unlikely to help the GM, the GM's staff or add much value.

Many directors find it less comfortable and more difficult to contribute to discussions about the long-term direction and strategy of their club. This is much more the role of the board and where it is responsible for adding value. Engaging in the long-term direction and strategy of their club is often not done well by boards as discussed further in Section 4.4.

Best long term interests of the Club

Many directors also feel the need to please their fellow members which may include ensuring there are little or no increases in fees or beverage prices, for example. These actions might suit members in the short term but will rarely be in the long-term interests of their club – the entity which they have committed to legally serve.

All directors should understand that their duty is to act in the long-term interests of their club as a whole. It is not to ingratiate themselves with a certain segment of members. Long-term financial sustainability as well as long-term capital planning and reinvestment should rank as a higher priority than short-term member pressures.

“The Board should act in the best interests of the Club and its members rather than promote their own personal agendas.”

- Chair

“Getting Board members to focus less on operations/self-interest.”

- GM



Use of Board Committees (sub-committees)

Most Golf Club boards have lots of board committees (often referred to as sub-committees). Many have too many board committees. This research project found the average number to be six, with 28% of clubs having eight or more committees.

Board committees exist to support the work of the board. If a board committee has been established to support management it should probably be reconstituted as a management committee and report to the GM.

Boards need to ensure that the Terms of Reference for each board committee is contained and well aligned with the club's strategic plan. Committees should not be used as another way for directors to meddle in the areas that are the domain of management.

“Need to delineate between where a sub-committee can make a decision and where management steps in.”

- Chair

“Too many sub-Committees.”

- GM

“Too many sub-committees and responsibility delegated to people with inappropriate experience.”

- GM

Oversight and add value

The board's choice of GM is one of the most important decisions it will make. Once made, directors' role is to empower, encourage, support, develop and challenge their GM. Most GMs dislike it when individual directors and/or the board disempower them by interfering in their role and/or second-guessing their decisions and actions. The same goes for finance managers who get disempowered by their club Treasurer.

The day-to-day operations and the running of the club is the role of the GM and management, not the board. The board's role is to provide direction, oversight and to add value.

Only 63% of GMs agree or strongly agree that their board adds value to their club – refer Appendix 2. We encourage boards to have candid discussions with their GMs about the ways the board can add the additional value desired.

Survey item	Responses		
The Board adds value to the organisation (including to its performance, sustainability and reputation).	Chairs	4% 16%	80%
	GMs	10% 27%	63%

Legend: ● **Disagree:** Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3) ● **Neutral:** Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly agree (5) ● **Agree:** Agree (6), Strongly agree (7)

Some boards get so overly busy governing their club that they neglect their important role of adding value. We encourage boards to think long and hard enough about how they will add value and the legacy they plan to leave.

The main areas of the board's oversight role are discussed in more detail in Section 4.4.

Tips for Chairs and boards

- ✓ Have a robust discussion with your board about its role and how it differs from the role of management.
- ✓ Clearly set out the board's role in a Board Charter or a Terms of Reference.
- ✓ Ensure directors understand their legal duties and responsibilities.
- ✓ Induct new directors well in the board's role and how it differs from that of management.
- ✓ Empower all directors to pull up those they see over-reaching into management's role.
- ✓ Encourage directors to put themselves in the shoes of the GM when they want to give instructions to them or second-guess their decisions.
- ✓ Shift the balance of discussions from the operational (transactional and day to day) to the strategic (systemic, cultural and longer term). Discussing what value the board will add and the legacy it will leave over, say, the next five years can help.
- ✓ Structure agendas and board papers to focus on strategy and club performance.
- ✓ Ensure your board has an appropriate number of board committees (not too many) and the terms of reference for each.

Tips for GMs

- ✓ Help the board take a longer-term and more strategic perspective by reorienting the papers provided to the board.
- ✓ Be more vocal and garner support from the Chair to call out instances of directors meddling in operational issues.
- ✓ Support the Chair to implement the tips included in the Chair's list above.
- ✓ With the Chair, establish protocols for director interaction with staff.



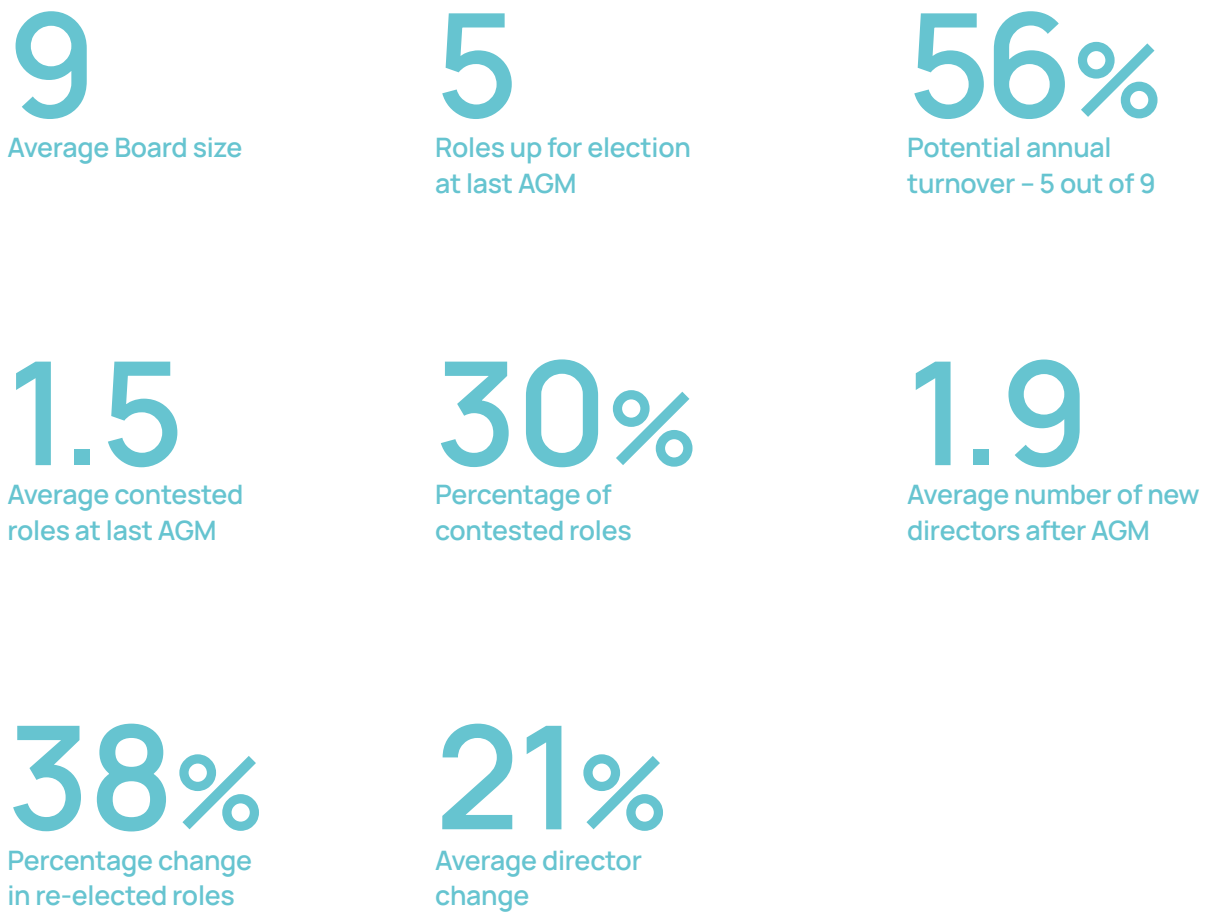
4.2 Get board renewal, composition and diversity right

The second biggest and most often repeated concern by Chairs and GMs was the need to get board renewal, composition, skill mix and diversity right.

Disruption from annual elections and outdated governance documentation

Many clubs have outdated Constitutions and other governance documentation, though some are in the process of updating these fundamental documents. Significant disruption can occur at the annual elections if the constitution provides for every director to be up for election each year. This is clearly undesirable and wouldn't occur if a contemporary constitution was used.

Our research as part of this study revealed the following information on board size and turnover based on the 2023 AGMs.



Despite the above changes, only 63% of GMs and 79% of Chairs agreed or strongly agreed that there were no measurable disruptions to the smooth operations of the board following the last AGM. GMs were quite a bit more concerned about the disruptions than the Chairs - refer Appendix 2. This indicates that Chairs could develop a better understanding of the challenges faced by GMs as a result of director changes.

Survey item	Responses		
There was no measurable disruption to the smooth operations of the board following the change of director following our last AGM.	Chairs	13% 9%	78%
	GMs	21% 16%	63%

Legend: ● **Disagree:** Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3) ● **Neutral:** Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly agree (5) ● **Agree:** Agree (6), Strongly agree (7)

Whilst we champion board stability and controlled/planned change, term limits should also be considered for inclusion in governance documentation to ensure appropriate ongoing renewal of directors.

“Implementing a 3 year Board term with election of one third of the Board each year. At the moment the complete Board could be replaced each year, which would not be good governance.”

- Chair

“We need a constitution change whereby a board member needs a break from the board after a period of time. People with good intentions get stale.”

- Chair

“Updating the wording and intent of the outdated Constitution, to more reflect the modern-day Club / Incorporation.”

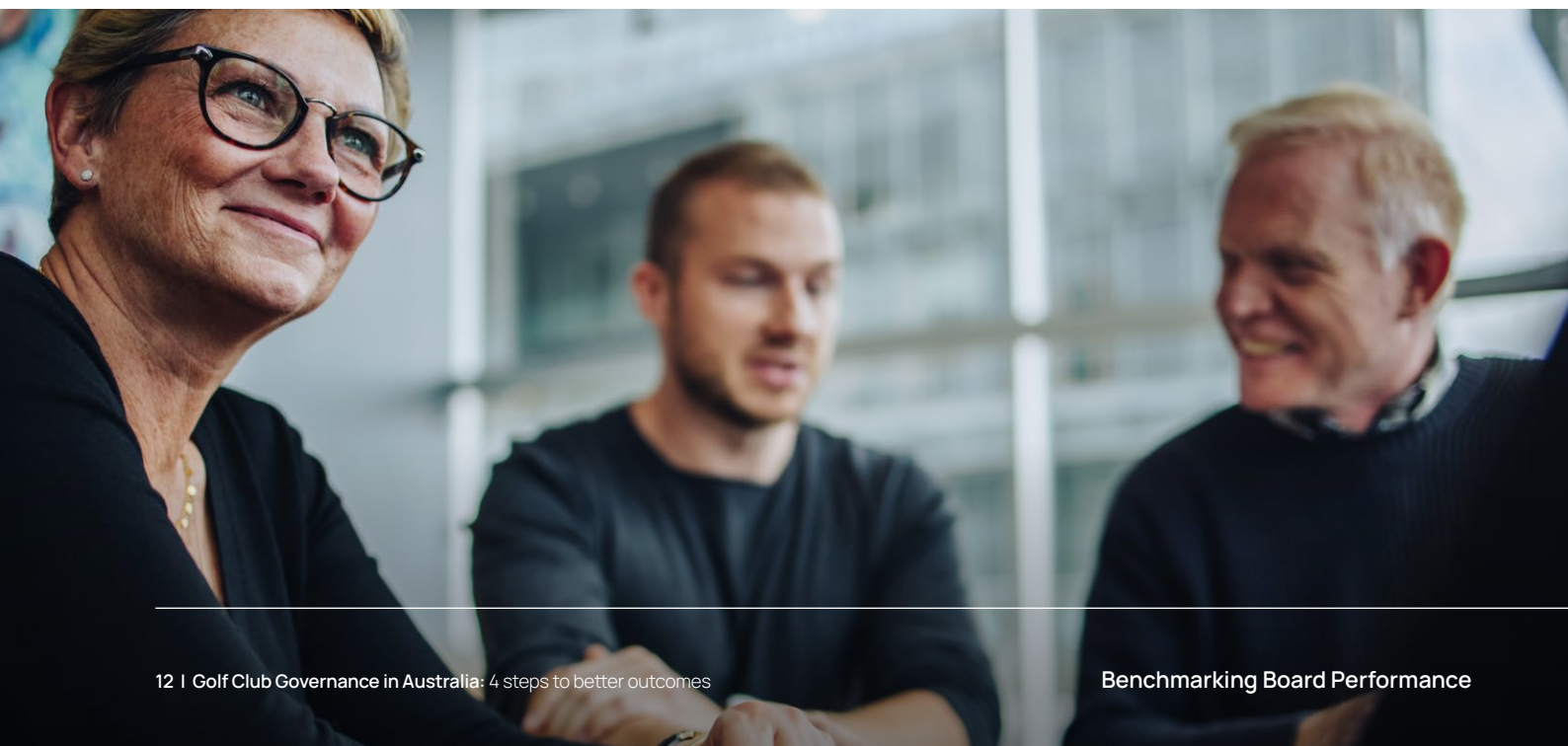
- Chair

“Updating our Governance Charter and other Documentation Policies and Procedures etc.”

- GM

“My current task is to review and update Board charters and finalise the strategic plan so that the Club continues on the path set out by a strategic and well governed board.”

- GM



Get board composition, skills mix and diversity right

Many noted that elections were often a popularity contest which made a focus on the right skills and experiences problematic. The lack of diversity, gender diversity and gender equality were also seen as challenges for many clubs.

Many clubs are considering what more they can do to identify and attract directors who will provide their board with the optimum composition and diversity. Many clubs are becoming more focused and intentional and not simply leaving director elections to chance. Some are establishing a Nominations Committee to assist with the process. Others are being much clearer with their membership about the skills and experiences being sought.

“Need to explain to members that the Club is not “just a Club” but it is in fact a business which needs to be run professionally from the Board through the general manager and management teams.”

- Chair

“Attracting Directors with the skills required to perform their duties.”

- Chair

“Poorly educated and experienced Directors elected by a “popularity contest” rather than their ability.”

- Chair

“In my view clubs run best when there are professional people on the Board who have been chosen for their skill set.”

- GM

“Ensuring that there are enough quality candidates for board and committee positions in the future.”

- GM

Induct your new directors well

Having added new directors, it is important to induct them well into the operations of the Club and the board. A good induction will include clearly articulating the role of the board and management and how those roles differ.

Setting clear expectations as to the commitment, contribution and behaviours of new (and existing) directors also sets a solid foundation for a well-functioning board.

“Onboarding of new Committee members requires a more formal process so new members understand what is really expected of them and how the Club Rules apply.”

- Chair

“A disruptive director(s) can have a significant impact on the commercial success of the club (long and short), create havoc and unrelenting stress for senior management, and have reasonable success in staging coups.”

- GM

“Making sure new board members are informed about the role of our General Manager. Distinguish between “operations” and “governance”.”

- Chair

“Golf Australia could assist with an online (generalised) induction where all club directors must complete this training.”

- GM

Tips for Presidents, Captains and boards

- ✓ Consider whether your Constitution and other governance documentation need to be updated.
- ✓ Consider forming a Nominations Committee to help identify and attract new directors if your club doesn't already have one.
- ✓ Be more explicit with your members about the role of the board and the skills and experiences being sought in new directors.
- ✓ Review your induction processes and ensure they include the matters referred to in this report.

Tips for GMs

- ✓ Review your Constitution and governance documentation and advise the board if you think it should be updated.
- ✓ Assist the board with its communication to members about the role of the board and how its role differs from management's.
- ✓ Assist the board to ensure that there is a comprehensive induction process for new directors that includes the matters set out in this report.



4.3 Focus on leadership, dynamics and process

If a club's board gets its leadership, relationships, dynamics and processes right it will almost certainly function well and achieve good outcomes. Conversely, bad outcomes will almost certainly result when there is ineffective club leadership, inappropriate behaviours and/or poor processes.

Good leadership of an effective chair and effective board committee chairs help set the tone for the board, committees and the entire golf club. Those leaders will set a high tone from the top for their club's planning, performance, risk management, ethics and behaviours.

An effective Chair will also set clear expectations for the commitment, contribution and behaviours of directors and manage those aspects well. This will include thanking directors when they go above and beyond and dealing well with any unsatisfactory commitment or performance or any undesirable behaviours.

Whilst 71% of Chairs agreed or strongly agreed that individual director issues were dealt with well only 42% of GMs had the same view as revealed in Appendix 2. This suggests that Chairs need to become much more in tune with the impact of director contributions and behaviours on the club, its GM and staff.

Survey item	Responses		
Appropriate action would be/is taken to address any individual director issues (i.e. unsatisfactory commitment or performance or undesirable or questionable behaviour).	Chairs	14%	71%
	GMs	25%	42%

Legend: ● **Disagree:** Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3) ● **Neutral:** Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly agree (5) ● **Agree:** Agree (6), Strongly agree (7)

Boards need to invest the time and effort to build good relationships, trust and rapport. This is especially the case when directors come from diverse backgrounds, as building relationships and trust in those circumstances takes longer. The Chair's working relationship with the GM is also an important contributor to an effective board. Pleasingly, the large majority of Chairs and GMs thought that their working relationship was effective as shown in Appendix 2.

Having effective processes also adds to a board's effectiveness. This includes the way information and meetings are prepared and managed. Both require the board and management to be clear about what is expected by the other.

“Explaining to members that the Club is not “just a Club” but it is in fact a business which needs to be run professionally from the Board through the general manager and management teams.”

- Chair

“Strong governance needs strong and effective leadership and skilful club management. Without those, things (like policies, etc.) don't get done or done well.”

- Chair

“Need collaborative engagement at a Board level without personalising and attacking itself or it's members. “

- Chair

“Unless you have a strong chairperson with a clear understanding and commitment to managing the appropriate level of Board governance, it can go wrong very quickly.”

- Chair

“Good club governance is essential to every aspect of club business. If this is not given the respect and attention necessary mistakes, corruption, financial inefficiencies etc are highly likely.”

- Chair

Tips for Presidents, Captains and boards

- ✓ Discuss with your board the extent that it is setting a high tone from the top for the leaderships, ethics, performance and behaviours of your club and its members.
- ✓ Set clear expectations about the commitment, contribution and behaviours expected of directors.
- ✓ Take appropriate and timely action concerning unsatisfactory commitment or contribution or undesirable director behaviour.
- ✓ Invest time in building relationships, trust and rapport between directors and between the board and management.
- ✓ Set clear expectations with management about the form, content, forward-looking nature and timeliness of board papers.

Tips for GMs

- ✓ Work hard with your team to build constructive working relationships with the board, the Chair and board committee chairs.
- ✓ Give the chair feedback in relation to any undesirable director actions or behaviours that may adversely effect the club or its staff.
- ✓ Continually seek feedback from the board in relation to the volume, form and content of board papers with a view to ongoing improvement. Help by making those board papers more strategic and less operational.



4.4. Do strategy, performance, risk and stakeholder management well

A board can understand its role, have the right composition and carry out its processes well but it must also achieve the fundamental tasks required of a board. Those tasks include doing strategy, performance, risk and stakeholder management well.

One of the most important roles of the board is to search for, appoint, develop, performance manage and support the right GM to run their club. Once they have done that they need to set clear expectations, empower and oversee the GM's leadership and management of the club.

Contributing to and overseeing the development of a compelling long-term direction and strategy for the club is also a primary function of the board that not enough golf club boards do well. Having approved the strategy the board will need to ensure that the GM has the appropriate capability, capacity and other resources to execute the strategy well.

Overseeing the performance, risk and stakeholder management of the club are also important functions of the board. Well-designed performance and risk metrics will assist in that oversight. These should be developed by the GM with appropriate input from the board and/or an appropriate board committee. The metrics should be continually improved and adapted for changes in the strategic plan and the macro environment. Many clubs could improve in this area.

Stakeholder management, including member communications was also something that many survey respondents identified as areas for improvement. This view is consistent with GBAS's other member research findings.

“Promoting the importance of ensuring our club remains successful for the next 100 years.”

- Chair

“Ensuring execution of various components of Strategic Plan are carried out in accordance with the time and cost out lined.”

- Chair

“Agreeing to the strategic direction of the Club. Positioning the Club for enduring sustainability.”

- GM

“My Club has no Risk Management Plan and has little intellectual might to rectify this key element of our operations.”

- Chair

“Without a clear strategic plan the club jumps at shadows and doesn't plan well to improve or change for a reason.”

- GM

“Not all directors have an understanding of the real challenges the club is presented with.”

- Chair

“The Board did not involve staff in strategy so it is hard for staff to 'buy in'.”

- GM

Tips for Presidents, Captains and boards

- ✓ Have a high-level discussion with your board and management about the expected outcomes and main elements of the current strategic plan.
- ✓ Oversee the preparation and/or update of your strategic plan with a focus on the matters that will add the most value over the longer term.
- ✓ Embed reporting against the progress of the strategic plan as a stand-alone item and in board papers at each meeting.
- ✓ Ensure the development of the strategic plan appropriately engages all directors, the GM and senior staff, and stakeholders if and where appropriate. This will ensure that they all buy-in to its execution. Agree on the metrics that will help monitor the club's performance and the successful execution of the strategic plan.
- ✓ Discuss the club's risk management systems and maturity and the extent that they need to be improved. Ask the GM to develop an appropriate improvement plan, if required.

Tips for GMs

- ✓ Encourage the Chair and board to engage you and your team in the preparation of the club's strategy. Go out of your way, with your team, to do all the work and provide the assistance requested.
- ✓ Once the strategic plan is signed off ensure it is well communicated to your staff and the membership.
- ✓ Work hard to bring the plan to life on a regular basis, including at board and committee meetings.
- ✓ Work out the key metrics that you and your team will use to measure your club's performance. Create a scorecard of higher-level metrics you will report against to the board on a regular basis.
- ✓ Engage the board in a regular discussion about the biggest risks to the club, including emerging risks. Ensure you have a risk management framework to manage and mitigate those risks.



5. Summary and next steps

Whilst this report acknowledges that there are many effective golf club boards it also reveals that, overall, golf club boards are less effective than other NFP boards. This report sets out four clear recommendations to deal with the most common shortcomings identified. It also sets out useful tips which will help Chairs, boards and GMs.

The real question is not whether golf club boards overall are effective but whether your golf club board is as effective as it could be and in which areas it could improve.

We recommend the following next steps:

- 1** Provide a copy of this report to all your directors and carve out some time to consider its contents and the extent that its recommendations apply to your board. Engage your GM and appropriate club staff in the discussion too.
- 2** Discuss with your board whether a more effective club board is likely to lead to a more successful and sustainable golf club.
- 3** Assess the effectiveness and performance of your board against similar clubs/ organisations. One of the best ways to do this is to carry out a reliable board survey. The related benchmarked report will quickly and easily reveal the strengths and biggest opportunities for improvement for your board.
- 4** Get your board aligned around an improvement plan that will take your board from its current state to its desired state in, say, 18 months.
- 5** Work hard to implement that improvement plan and monitor your progress. Use external advisors to assist if required.



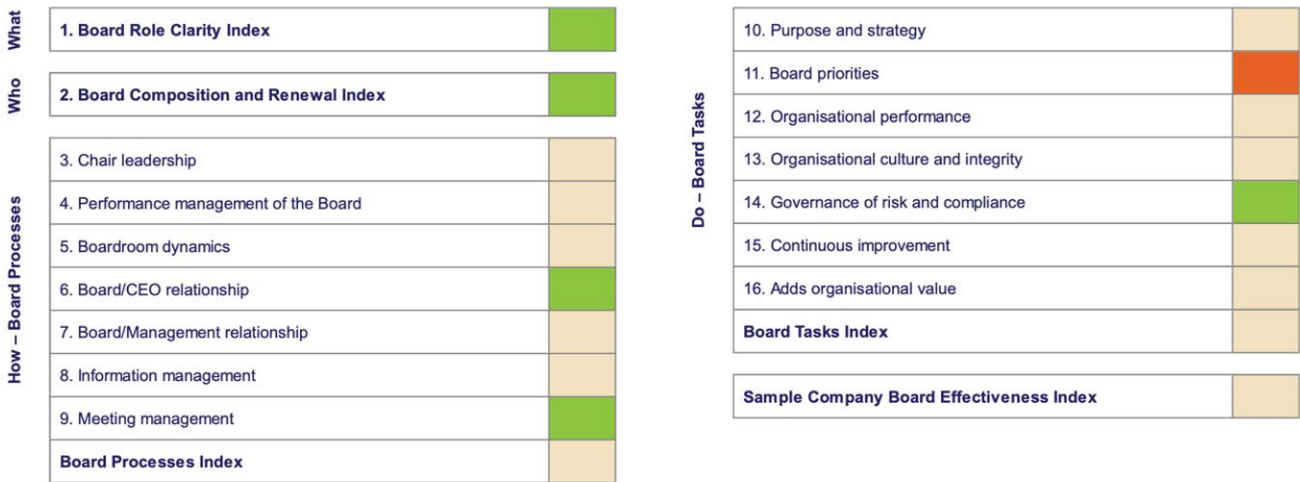
Appendices

Board Effectiveness Framework

This report has used the WhatWhoHowDo Framework of board effectiveness as set out below. The framework includes 16 discrete categories of a board's effectiveness, all of which are important for the effective functioning and performance of a board.

The four recommendations included in this report align with the What, Who, How and Do categories of effectiveness that are set out below.




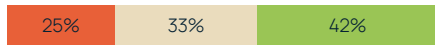














This image is taken from the summary page from the Essentials version of Board Surveys sample benchmarked Board Effectiveness Report. Each dimension of effectiveness is explained in detail on Board Surveys' website.



Legend: ● Bottom quartile ● 2nd and 3rd quartiles ● Top quartile **Note:** The benchmarking is explained in section 7

Survey ratings and benchmarking

This table summarises the survey ratings made by Chairs and GMs to the survey statements set out below. Ratings were made on a 1 to 7 Likert scale where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = slightly disagree, 4 = neither agree or disagree, 5 = slightly agree, 6 = agree and 7 = strongly agree. The benchmarking compares the average responses of Chairs and GMs to Board Surveys' significant benchmark of small to medium NFP organisations.

Survey item	Responses	Benchmark
Overall, the Board is effective.	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
Appropriate action would be/is taken to address any individual director issues (i.e. unsatisfactory commitment or performance or undesirable or questionable behaviour).	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
The Board works constructively as a team (it has collegial and productive working relationships that foster trust and respect).	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
Directors demonstrate a clear understanding of their role including how it differs from the role of management.	Chairs 	Bottom quartile
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
There was no measurable disruption to the smooth operations of the board following the change of director following our last AGM.	Chairs 	Not benchmarked
	GMs 	Not benchmarked
The Board adds value to the organisation (including to its performance, sustainability and reputation).	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
The Board and Management have an effective working relationship (i.e., collegial, respectful and with an independence of thought).	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	Bottom quartile
The Chair has a constructive working relationship with the CEO/GM (supportive and collaborative, yet independent).	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
Overall, our organisation is performing well.	Chairs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles
	GMs 	2nd & 3rd quartiles

Legend: ● Disagree: Strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), slightly disagree (3) ● Neutral: Neither agree nor disagree (4), Slightly agree (5) ● Agree: Agree (6), Strongly agree (7)

About Golf Australia

Golf Australia is the governing body for golf in Australia.

Our goal is to raise the level of interest and participation in the game from grassroots golfers through to the elite levels, spectators, volunteers and associated industry bodies. Key responsibilities include conducting national tournaments and championships including the Australian Opens, managing the Rules of Golf and the national handicap system, and developing programs and opportunities to engage as many people as possible into the game.

Working in a commercial and inclusive manner with government, business, and community, Golf Australia ensures the value of golf is understood and supported in all policy and business decisions.

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About Board Surveys

Board Surveys' vision is to help tens of thousands of boards around the globe improve their performance and effectiveness. It does this by distributing affordable, world class, fit-for-purpose, benchmarked board surveys supported by optional expert advice.

Board Surveys has a database of more than 500 different boards, which includes boards of golf and other sporting clubs. It has governance experts and project managers at its head office in Melbourne, Australia. It also has board consulting and industry specialist partners like GBAS throughout Australasia and the world.

Board Surveys is a sister brand of Board Benchmarking, both of which are owned by survey and benchmarking technology experts, Insync.

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About Golf Business Advisory Services (GBAS)

Based in Melbourne Victoria, GBAS is acknowledged as Australia's leading provider of independent golf business advisory services. The company has extensive experience across the full spectrum of golf facility operations and leverages its unrivalled insights to deliver tailored client outcomes.

Through its many strategic planning engagements, GBAS is a regular visitor to board rooms around the country and is well positioned to observe the governance processes in place in Australian golf clubs.

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