

# What can we do?

## Building our governance culture

There are some practical ways to start building the internal culture of your organisation. Here are some issues and questions to consider in collective discussion within your organisation.

Step	Questions to ask	What can we do?
<p><b>1. Describe your current organisational culture.</b></p> <p>First you must recognise and acknowledge what the internal culture in your organisation is like now.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the values, assumptions, relationships, and accepted ways of behaving inside the organisation?</li> <li>• Why is it like that and how have we allowed it to be that way?</li> <li>• What impact is it having on our organisation and getting things done?</li> <li>• What is driving it to be that way?</li> <li>• What is it going to take for it to change?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>2. Describe your desired organisational culture.</b></p> <p>You need to be able to describe what kind of internal culture you want to create.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of internal culture do we want? (The following steps look at key areas in more detail.)</li> <li>• How does this link to our strategic plan and vision for our organisation?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Examine your governance values and strategy.</b></p> <p>Start by looking at your organisation's existing vision statement and strategic plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the governance we wish to create that will drive the vision of our organisation?</li> <li>• What is the internal culture we wish to create that will support that way of governing?</li> <li>• What is our organisation's strategic direction?</li> <li>• What culture do we need to have to make sure we follow that direction?</li> </ul>	

<p><b>4. Assess your accountability and transparency.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What messages do we want to convey about accountability and transparency?</li> <li>• What are we willing to commit to as our standards for accountability and transparency to our members?</li> <li>• What are we willing to commit to as our standards for accountability and transparency to our external stakeholders?</li> <li>• How are our governing leaders going to hold staff accountable for displaying these values and standards?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>5. Assess your internal relationships.</b></p> <p>Consider how you all work together.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What kind of culture around internal relationships do we want to create? Is it about working as a team, in silos, as a hierarchy with clear divisions of responsibility, or as a flat structure that emphasises collaboration and shared decision making?</li> <li>• Are there some values and norms that we want to reinforce across the organisation, such as professionalism, mutual respect, a family-like environment, reciprocity, honesty or humour?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>6. Assess your external relationships.</b></p> <p>Consider how your organisation works with external stakeholders and networks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What type of relationships do we want to have with external parties?</li> <li>• Is it about working with clear formal procedures and delegating responsibilities to particular staff or leaders, or do our different stakeholders need to be treated differently?</li> <li>• Are there some values and norms that we want to reinforce in our relationships with external stakeholders, such as professionalism, partnership and businesslike conduct?</li> </ul>	

<p><b>7. Determine the need for a creative edge or innovation.</b></p> <p>Think about how much you need your organisation respond to changes in the wider environment. Some organisations need to be extremely responsive, others may need a stable core of function.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How much innovation do we want our governing body, managers and staff members to demonstrate?</li> <li>• How important is it for our organisation to have a creative edge?</li> <li>• Are there core cultural values and behaviours that we want to maintain even when we take on new functions or projects?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>8. Consciously model the way.</b></p> <p>It helps to consciously model the behaviour and values that you have collectively agreed you want to promote.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What symbols and actions will help declare that we have a new way of operating? Are there processes that need to be changed, or incentives created to reinforce our desired culture?</li> <li>• Will our leaders become role models for the kind of culture we have decided to create? Will they send a message to our staff about how people are expected to behave, setting the cultural standard for others to follow?</li> </ul> <p>Individual leaders should continually ask themselves the following questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What mindset is guiding my actions as a leader? What mindset do I want my staff to adopt?</li> <li>• What kind of behaviour would I need to demonstrate to create an environment that promotes a positive internal culture?</li> <li>• What would it take for me to create symbols and incentives that support this culture?</li> <li>• What would it take for me to develop processes and a common vision to support this culture?</li> <li>• What would it take for me to share power and information and still maintain accountability?</li> <li>• What would it take to foster collaboration and build energetic teams within the organisation?</li> </ul>	