What can we do?
Steps for developing effective policies

Indigenous Governance Toolkit

Steps	Tips	What can we do?
Understand the problem to be addressed.	• Describe the issue the policy needs to address. • Keep it simple.	
Identify the overall policy objective.	• What principles will underlie your policy? Keep these in mind when developing it. • These principles should link to the vision and values of your organisation.	
Collect information and consult widely.	• Who will or may be affected by the policy or the issue? What do they have to say? • Don't just consult the experts—talk to your Elders, leaders and networks to see what they think and the solutions they may have tried.	
Identify the risks.	• Risks may be related to unintended impacts on people, or there may be cultural, economic or political risks. • Will the policy resolve or increase tensions and conflicts? • Be realistic—it's no use setting yourself up to fail by developing a policy you cannot implement and enforce.	

Identify the cultural factors involved.	• Describe the cultural issues, values, customs and relationships that the policy may need to take into account. • What cultural factors might strengthen or undermine its success?	
Identify the ranges of policy options and choices.	• Keep ranges practical. • The policy should make sense, be fair, be workable, and address immediate problems and issues.	
Consider the internal and external environment, including your vision statement, the community and government rules.	• Consider, for example, your members' and community's expectations and needs. • Consider the legal and financial requirements. • How will you communicate the new policy to members, the wider community, agencies, and stakeholders?	
Draft the policy in writing.	• Use clear and simple language. • Include a cultural values statement. • Include ideas about how the policy can be enforced in the wider community and cultural context. • Identify any skills, knowledge or professional capacities that may need to be developed to support the policy. • Have a set format for your policies (see the Policy Template included in this toolkit).	

Discuss, develop and adopt a policy statement at a board meeting.	• The governing body is responsible for both developing and approving policies. • The governing body is not just a rubber stamp for policies written by management.	
Set up systems to ensure the policy is applied and reviewed on an ongoing basis.	• It is management's responsibility to make sure procedures are in place so that the policy is communicated, understood and followed. • Have an up-to-date policies and procedures manual. • Include policies in induction training for new members of your governing body, management and staff members. • Make sure there management agrees to provide updates about how the policy implementation and procedures are going. • Set a realistic timetable for reviewing the policy. • Some policies may need to be reviewed more often because of changes—to their key role in the organisation's functions, as well as other changes.	