

Mel Yates:

Congratulations. You're thinking of joining a charity board. There is lots of good work to be done and joining a charity board is one way to roll up your sleeves and get involved. In this section, we look at what a governing body is and what the roles, duties and responsibilities of the board are.

This can help you to assess if being a board member is the right fit for you. The governing body or board, committee, trustees of a charity is the group of individuals who together are ultimately responsible for running the charity.

They manage the charity's finances and risk, oversee operations, lead staff and volunteers, and make sure the charity is working towards achieving its charitable purpose. At meetings, they discuss and make decisions about how the charity is run. The ACNC refers to these people as Responsible Persons.

Your charity may know them by another name: board members, committee members, directors, trustees, councillors, governors. Board members are either elected usually by the charity's members or appointed by nomination, for example, under legislation or under a trust deed, to be a member of the charity's governing body.

But it is only when these individuals come together as a group to form the board that they can make decisions which are binding on the charity. As individual members on their own, they cannot exercise this power unless explicitly allowed to by the governing document.

Charities come in many shapes and sizes, and so do their boards. Teamwork is at the core of each charity because board members come together to act in the best interests of their charity.

Gulnaar Gilhooly:

The board is responsible for providing leadership and direction to a charity, generally boards delegate some of their responsibilities to staff or volunteers.

However, there are some things that are usually reserved for the board, such as appointing the most senior staff members. For example, the chief executive officer if the charity has one. Developing or at least approving a strategic plan. Considering how organisational risk should be managed.

And calling meetings of the charity's members, if any. Now, there are some responsibilities that are common to most boards. Accountability, making sure the charity meets its obligations, manages its finances and operates transparently. Strategy, setting the charity's long term goals and making sure it pursues its charitable purposes.

Resourcing, securing funding and other resources to support the work

of the charity. Advocacy, representing the charity to the community and to its members and stakeholders with the chief executive officer and staff, if any. Monitoring, making sure the charity is run as required under its governing document and the law.

And finally, managing risk. Identifying and managing factors that may have a negative impact on the charity's function, such as financial risk, reputational risk or environmental risk. An annual general meeting is a meeting held once a year, where all members of a charity are invited to attend. The purpose of an AGM is to give members a report on the charity's

activities and finances for the previous year. To allow time for members to ask questions. And to elect members of the charity's governing body, such as its board or committee members.