

Board Role and Sub-Committees

Club structures need to be contemporary to promote and maintain sound governance and administration. The club board/committee role is to govern and should not be involved in management or operational decision-making.

The trend today is for club structures to have smaller boards with greater use of sub-committees for planning purposes. Generally, sub-committees should report to the board once a year on their annual plan and periodically report to the board through the executive officer e.g. President or Captain.

Role of the club board/committee

Depending on the incorporation status of club, your club will either have a board of directors (incorporated company) or committee (incorporated association) who are legally responsible for the governance of the club.

Main roles and tasks:

- Set objectives, define policy, develop strategic direction and make decisions;
- Maintain good governance and introduce ethical standards into daily activities;
- Specify the delegation of the chair, executive officer (whether paid or volunteer) and board;
- Ensure the executive officer provides satisfactory leadership, planning, club control and succession;
- Monitor the performance of management and volunteer team;
- Monitor the performance of the club against the agreed goals;
- Ensure current plans and actions provide for the clubs continuity;
- Manage communication with members and other key stakeholders including local government;
- Manage risks;
- Clearly identify board and management responsibilities;
- Ensure compliance with policies, laws and regulations;
- Emphasise and concentrate on long-term goals; and
- Undertake a regular review of the clubs finances.

The Role and function of the chair

The main role of the Chair, whether it is a President or a Captain, is leadership; ensuring effectiveness in all aspects of the governance role.

The chair manages meetings, ensures that the board/committee is balanced and discussion is open, and includes all directors/committee members. It is also the chair's responsibility to ensure that relevant issues are included in the agenda and that all directors/committee members receive timely information for meetings.

In summary, the chair should:

- Understand legal and procedural requirements for meetings;
- Determine the meeting is properly convened and constituted;
- Understand the business and objects of the meeting;
- Preserve order in the conduct of those present;
- Confine discussions within the scope of the meeting and timelines;
- Decide whether proposed motions and amendments are in order;
- Decide points of order and other incidental matters;
- Handle all matters in an impartial manner;
- Adjourn the meeting where justified.

Board/committee size

How big should our club board/committee be? There are no hard and fast rules regarding board/committee size but it should be appropriate for the size of the club. Five is a good rule of thumb for small to medium sized clubs.

Appointment and selection of board/committee members

For small clubs, term limits of two to three years is preferred to ensure the board/committee maintains a level of consistency in decision making and stability and is held accountable for policy and strategy. Ideally there will be a range of skills of board/committee members such as; golf knowledge, finance, marketing, hospitality, governance, legal, project management and information technology.

Role of board/committee members

Board/committee members must meet regularly, ideally monthly. As a rule, a club must provide its directors/committee members with sufficient freedom of action to exercise the leadership necessary to ensure successful implementation of strategy.

Ethics and code of behaviour

Your club should consider developing a code of behaviour that defines acceptable standards of personal behaviour for your board/committee. You will find an example template code of behaviour at this link: [Golf Club Code of behaviour template](#).

Powers of the board/committee

In summary the role of the board/committee is to

- set objectives and strategy;
- apply culture and ethics into activities;
- clearly state responsibilities of key people and monitor their performance;
- monitor the performance of the club against agreed goals;
- ensure current plans and actions provide for continuity;
- communicate with members and other stakeholders;
- manage risk; and
- comply with constitution, rules and the law.

Board/committee composition

The board/committee should comprise of people with an appropriate range of skills. It is strongly recommended that clubs look to recruit people with specific skills for positions on the board or committee such as the treasurer. Generally, they should:

- have the ability to think laterally;
- have good communication skills;
- be financially literate;
- be able to understand and relate to stakeholders;
- be ethical, honest and trustworthy; and
- be a team player.

Role and function of sub-committees

Golf clubs have learnt that having a multitude of committees assigned to various tasks does not necessarily ensure that the job will get done. However, a properly performing sub-committee can be an invaluable tool for the board and the club.

Specialist sub-committees are designed to relieve the board/committee of certain tasks and are developed to capitalise upon specialist skills of personnel willing to contribute their time and expertise to the club. Size of the sub-committee can vary according to the club. A sub-committee should be large enough to capture sufficient skills and experience, but not so large that the effectiveness of decision making is reduced.

Sub-committees should not abrogate responsibilities or assume the role of management, but should have a charter (within club by-laws, rules or regulations) which specifically sets their scope of work, roles and responsibilities. The charter should clearly identify and state the dividing line between the role and responsibilities of the sub-committee and those of management.

In terms of reporting, sub-committees should be required to circulate minutes of each meeting to the board/committee and management as well as being required to report to the board/committee at least quarterly.

Common golf club sub-committees

- Membership
- Course/Greens
- Match/Golf
- Finance
- Marketing and communication
- Junior Development
- House/Hospitality
- Social/Functions
- Special Projects e.g. building works, water or major tournament