



VMC
Capability
Program

MODULE 1

Strategic Governance for VMCs

Best Practice Governance for Volunteer Management
Committees Acting as Approved Providers

Duration: Approximately 60 minutes

Participant Workbook

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organisation: _____



How to Use This Workbook

This workbook is your companion to Module 1 of the VMC Capability Program training. Use it to follow along with the online training, record your notes and reflections, and keep as a reference document after your training is completed.

This workbook includes:

- Background reading and explanations to accompany each section of the presentation
- Summary tables and frameworks for quick reference
- Reflection prompts to help you apply learning to your own committee context
- Space to record your own notes throughout

Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

1. Understand the strategic governance responsibilities of management committees
2. Differentiate between governance and operational duties
3. Apply risk management principles to governance practices
4. Identify key legal frameworks relevant to approved providers
5. Effectively manage stakeholder relationships

Section 1: Understanding Strategic Governance

What is Governance?

Governance refers to the systems, processes, and structures through which an organisation is directed and controlled. For volunteer management committees, governance involves:

- Setting strategic direction — where is the organisation going and why?
- Ensuring accountability — to members, families, staff, regulators and authorities
- Managing risk — identifying and responding to threats to the organisation's sustainability
- Safeguarding the organisation's purpose — keeping the mission front and centre

It is important to understand that governance is different from management. The committee sets direction and ensures accountability; staff (and where relevant, a coordinator, director or service manager) manage the day-to-day operations to bring that direction to life.

Core Governance Roles

The committee (also known as executive) is comprised of various positions. The constitution determines the number of committee members required for the governing body to function. The typical roles include:

Role	Duties
President or Chairperson	Leads the Association, chairs meetings, and acts as its representative and accountable officer.
Vice President or Vice Chairperson	Supports the President, chairs meetings in their absence, and takes on delegated duties.
Treasurer	Oversees all financial management, ensures compliance with the Accounting Manual, and prepares the annual budget and operational plan.
Secretary	Manages correspondence, prepares meeting agendas and minutes, and maintains Association records.

Core Governance Responsibilities

As a committee member, you share collective responsibility for the following areas:

Responsibility	What this means in practice
Strategic Direction	Setting the organisation's vision, mission, and long-term goals. This is the 'why' that drives everything else.

Policy Development	Establishing policies that guide organisational operations and decision-making. Policies should reflect your values and legal obligations.
Financial Oversight	Ensuring financial sustainability, approving budgets, and monitoring financial performance. Committees must understand what they are approving.
Legal Compliance	Ensuring the organisation complies with all relevant laws and regulations. Ignorance of legal obligations is not a defence.
Risk Management	Identifying, assessing, and managing risks to the organisation — from child safety to financial risk to reputational exposure.
Performance Monitoring	Evaluating organisational performance against strategic objectives. Are we achieving what we set out to achieve?

 **Reflection**

Think about a recent committee meeting. Which of the six governance responsibilities above was most prominent in the discussions? Were any areas overlooked?

Your notes:

Conflicts of Interest

Managing conflicts of interest is one of the most important governance responsibilities for volunteer committees — particularly in services where committee members are also parents or community members who directly benefit from the service.

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest arises when a committee member's personal interests — financial or otherwise — could influence, or appear to influence, their decision-making in their committee role.

Key Obligations for Committee Members

- Disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they are identified, including interests held by close family members
- Absent yourself from discussion and voting on matters where a conflict exists
- Ensure the organisation maintains a Conflicts of Interest Register and that disclosures are recorded in meeting minutes
- Be particularly vigilant around decisions about fee structures, procurement, use of surplus funds, and staffing — areas where committee members may have a personal financial or reputational interest in the outcome

- Adopt and regularly review a Conflicts of Interest Policy that sets out clear procedures for disclosure and management

Section 2: Working Within Your Constitution

The Constitution as Your Governing Document

Your organisation's constitution is the foundational legal document that establishes its structure, purpose, and rules of operation. It is binding on all members and committee members, and takes precedence over other internal policies unless there is a specific law or regulation that is required to be followed that has paramouncy over any rule contained in the constitution.

Think of the constitution as the rulebook for how your committee must operate. Acting outside the constitution — even with good intentions — can create legal and governance risks for your organisation.

Key Constitutional Elements

Every committee member should be familiar with the following sections of their constitution:

Section	Why it matters
Objectives and purposes	Defines what the organisation exists to achieve — all committee decisions must align with these objects.
Membership provisions	Sets out who can be a member and their rights, including attendance at AGMs and voting on constitutional changes.
Committee structure	Covers roles, election processes, and terms of office. Know who can hold which roles and for how long.
Meeting requirements	Specifies required meeting frequency, quorum numbers, and voting procedures. Decisions made without quorum may be invalid.
Financial management	Includes banking arrangements, financial year, and audit requirements. Non-compliance can trigger regulatory scrutiny.
Amendment procedures	<p>Sets out how the constitution itself can be changed — usually requiring a special resolution at a general meeting.</p> <p>For P&C's, the model constitution may not be amended without the confirmation of the Director General of the Department of Education: <i>“The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) (the Act) states that all Parents & Citizens’ Associations must have a constitution and that such constitutions will have no effect unless approved by the Director-General (or delegate) of the Department of Education (the Department). (Parent’s and Citizens Associations – Model Constitution)”</i></p> <p>P&C associations</p>

Operating Within Constitutional Limits — Key Principles

- All committee decisions must align with the organisation's stated objects

- Follow prescribed procedures for meetings, voting, and decision-making
- Ensure actions are within the committee's delegated authority
- Regularly review the constitution to ensure it remains fit for purpose

 **Reflection**

When did you last read your organisation's constitution? Are there any sections you're unsure about or that may need reviewing?

Your notes:

Section 3: Governance vs Operational Responsibilities

Understanding the Distinction

One of the most critical challenges for volunteer committees is maintaining clarity between governance and operational roles. Blurring these boundaries can lead to micromanagement, staff frustration, inefficiency, and governance failures.

The key is to ask: is this a question of what we want to achieve and why — or how we will achieve it?

The Governance vs Operations Framework

GOVERNANCE — Why & What	OPERATIONS — How & When
Strategic planning and direction	Day-to-day implementation
Policy decisions and approval	Policy development and procedural implementation
Monitoring organisational performance	Managing staff and volunteers
Hiring and evaluating senior staff	Supervising and supporting staff
Ensuring financial sustainability	Managing budgets and expenses
Risk oversight and management	Implementing risk controls

Practical Guidelines

Governance asks: "What outcomes do we want to achieve?"

Operations asks: "How will we achieve those outcomes?"

⚠ Warning Signs of Overstepping

- Committee members making operational decisions without staff input
- Becoming involved in daily management or staff supervision
- Making decisions about operational matters between meetings
- Staff bypassing senior staff? to seek committee approval for routine matters

There are times when a committee may step into operations, for example if the senior manager of the organisation were to resign, the committee would be responsible to ensure there was sufficient support available to maintain ongoing compliance and monitor this while they recruit to fill the vacant position.

💡 Reflection

Has your committee ever crossed the line into operational territory? What were the circumstances, and what was the impact on staff or service delivery?

Your notes:

Section 4: Risk Management Framework

Understanding Risk in Governance

Risk management is a core governance responsibility. It involves systematically identifying, assessing, and managing potential threats to your organisation's objectives, reputation, and sustainability. Effective risk management enables informed decision-making and protects the interests of children, families, staff, and the organisation.

The Risk Management Process

Committee members should understand and oversee the following risk management cycle:

Step	Action	What this involves
1	Identify Risks	Systematically identify potential risks across all areas of operation including child safety, financial, legal, reputational, operational, and strategic risks
2	Assess Risks	Evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of each identified risk. A risk matrix can help prioritise which risks need immediate attention
3	Treat Risks	Develop and implement strategies to eliminate, reduce, transfer, or accept risks. Document the chosen treatment approach
4	Monitor & Review	Regularly review risk registers, controls, and emerging risks. Risk management is ongoing, not a one-off exercise
5	Report & Communicate	Ensure appropriate reporting mechanisms and risk awareness across the organisation

Key Risk Categories for Approved Providers

Your committee should maintain active oversight of risks in the following categories:

Risk Category	Examples
Child Safety	Physical safety, emotional wellbeing, abuse prevention, supervision adequacy, paramountcy
Regulatory Compliance	Licensing requirements, quality standards, legislative obligations
Financial	Cash flow, funding dependency, fraud, inadequate financial controls

Reputational	Service quality complaints, media issues, stakeholder relationships
Operational	Staff capacity, property maintenance, health and safety, emergency management
Governance	Committee capability, succession planning, conflicts of interest

Governance Actions for Risk Management

- Establish and regularly review a risk management policy and framework
- Maintain an organisational risk register and review it at each committee meeting
- Ensure adequate insurance coverage is maintained — at minimum: public liability, professional indemnity, and appropriate cover for committee members. Review coverage annually and whenever the organisation's activities, assets, or risk profile changes significantly
- Monitor critical incidents and complaints to identify systemic issues. Maintain a critical incident register and complaints register as required under Child Safe Standards, and use these records to identify trends and drive improvement
- Foster a culture of risk awareness and proactive risk identification. Consider establishing a dedicated safety sub-committee to support this work, particularly in larger organisations

Reflection

Does your committee regularly review a risk register? If so, when was it last updated? If not, what steps could you take to establish this practice?

Your notes:

Section 5: Legal and Regulatory Frameworks

Overview

Approved providers operate within a complex legal environment. Committee members must ensure the organisation complies with multiple legislative and regulatory frameworks. Ignorance of legal obligations is not a defence, and non-compliance can result in serious consequences including loss of approval, prosecution, and civil liability.

Key Legal Frameworks

1. Children's Rights and Child Safe Practices

Relevant legislation includes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, state-based child protection legislation, Working with Children Check requirements, and the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

Key obligations:

- Implement and maintain child safe standards including child safety policies, codes of conduct, and risk management strategies
- Ensure all staff and volunteers have valid Working with Children Checks linked to your organisation
- Establish and uphold clear reporting procedures for child safety concerns and mandatory reporting obligations
- Foster a child-safe culture that empowers children and prioritises their wellbeing. Child Safe Standard 7 requires organisations to ensure children have access to processes where their voices are heard and considered in decisions that affect them
- Regularly review and update child safety policies and practices

2. Human Rights Legislation

Human rights legislation protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes equality. Relevant acts include the Australian Human Rights Commission Act, state-based human rights legislation, and the Privacy Act. Committees must ensure organisational practices respect human rights, including the right to privacy, freedom from discrimination, and the right to education and care.

3. Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity

Relevant legislation includes the Racial Discrimination Act, Sex Discrimination Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Age Discrimination Act, and state-based equal opportunity legislation. Key requirements include:

- Prevent discrimination in employment, service delivery, and all organisational activities
- Provide equal opportunities regardless of protected attributes (race, gender, disability, age, etc.)
- Implement policies and procedures to prevent harassment and discrimination
- Provide reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities

4. Inclusion and Accessibility

Beyond legal compliance, and linked to anti-discrimination and equal opportunity, best practice governance embraces inclusion as a core value:

- Actively promote diverse and inclusive environments for children, families, and staff
- Ensure physical accessibility of facilities
- Provide culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices

- Support participation of children and families from diverse backgrounds
- Uphold the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, and communities — including engaging with First Nations communities respectfully, acknowledging Country, and embedding culturally appropriate practices. Where relevant, consider developing a Reconciliation Action Plan as a governance commitment

5. Intellectual Property

- **Copyright:** Respect copyright in educational materials, music, images, and software
- **Trademarks:** Protect organisational branding and respect others' trademarks
- **Staff-Created Materials:** Clarify ownership of materials created by staff during employment
- **Licenses:** Follow the conditions for any permissions to use products for which you have a license
- **Photography and Media:** Obtain appropriate consents for photographing and publishing images of children

6. Work Health and Safety

Under WHS legislation, committee members have 'officer duties' to:

- Exercise due diligence to ensure the organisation meets its WHS obligations
- Ensure appropriate resources and systems are in place for WHS compliance
- Monitor WHS performance and incident reporting

7. Employment and Industrial Relations

Committees must ensure compliance with:

- Fair Work Act / Industrial Relations Act and relevant modern awards
- National/State-based Employment Standards
- Superannuation obligations
- Workers' compensation insurance

8. Commonwealth Funding and Family Assistance Law

Approved providers delivering services that attract Child Care Subsidy (CCS) operate under additional Commonwealth obligations. The Family Assistance Law framework imposes significant governance responsibilities beyond state-based regulations:

Area	Governance Responsibility
Approved Provider Obligations	Ensure ongoing compliance with conditions of approval, including fit and proper person requirements for committee members, notification obligations, and maintenance of appropriate records
Use of CCS Funds	CCS funds are subject to strict requirements. Commonwealth funding must be managed in accordance with Family Assistance Law and directed to compliance and quality activities relevant to the services for which it has been received
Fee Setting & Transparency	Session reports, fee structures, and enrolment arrangements must comply with CCS eligibility rules. Fee-setting processes must be transparent, defensible, and not disadvantage families

Debt & Compliance Risk

Non-compliance can result in Commonwealth debt recovery action, suspension or cancellation of approval, and significant financial consequences. Ensure management has robust systems for CCS compliance

 **Reflection**

Which legal framework feels most complex or unfamiliar to you? What steps could your committee take to build better knowledge and compliance in that area?

Your notes:

Section 6: Managing Stakeholder Relationships

Understanding Your Stakeholders

Effective governance requires managing complex stakeholder relationships. As an approved provider, your key stakeholders include children and families, staff and volunteers, regulatory bodies, funding organisations, schools, community partners, and your broader membership or community base.

Each stakeholder group has different needs, expectations, and levels of influence. Part of the committee's governance role is to ensure the organisation maintains positive, productive relationships with all of them.

Key Stakeholder Groups

Children and Families

- Ensure clear communication channels and accessible information about services, policies, and fees
- Establish effective grievance and complaints management and feedback mechanisms
- Create opportunities for family participation and input into service delivery
- Maintain transparent governance practices and financial accountability
- Respect privacy and confidentiality

Staff and Volunteers

- Establish clear communication channels between the committee, management, staff, and volunteers to ensure transparency and effective information flow
- Ensure WHS compliance including risk assessments, incident reporting, and safe workplace practices
- Meet Fair Work/QIRC obligations including correct contracts, pay rates, leave entitlements, and relevant Award conditions
- Implement anti-discrimination policies ensuring fair and equitable recruitment, workplace practices, and grievance procedures
- Maintain NQS compliance including educator ratios, qualification requirements, and professional development investment — aiming for best practice, not minimum standards
- Establish performance management and dispute resolution procedures aligned with Fair Work, QIRC and natural justice principles
- Monitor employment practices for ongoing compliance with industrial relations, record-keeping, and payroll obligations, including superannuation, tax, and workers' compensation

Schools and Educational Partners

Many approved providers work in partnership with schools. Committees should:

- Formalise relationships through written agreements including the license to occupy school premises for the purpose of OSHC operations
- Clarify roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority
- Establish regular communication protocols between school leadership, committee members, and senior staff
- Respect school policies while maintaining organisational independence
- Collaborate on matters of mutual interest such as child safety, transition programs, and facility use and investment

Community and Local Government

- Understand and respond to community needs through service planning
- Maintain positive relationships with local government and community organisations
- Participate in local networks and advocacy efforts
- Demonstrate community benefit and social value

Regulatory Bodies

- Stay informed about regulatory requirements and changes
- Ensure timely submission of required reports, notifications, and documentation
- Cooperate fully with audits, assessments, and investigations
- Report significant incidents as required by legislation
- Address compliance issues proactively

Stakeholder Communication Principles

Effective stakeholder management requires all five of the following principles:

Transparency	Open and honest communication about decisions, challenges, and performance
Responsiveness	Timely responses to inquiries, concerns, and feedback
Consistency	Regular and reliable communication practices
Respect	Valuing diverse perspectives and treating all stakeholders with dignity
Accountability	Taking responsibility for decisions and following through on commitments

Reflection

Which stakeholder group do you feel your committee manages most effectively? Which group could benefit from more deliberate relationship-building, and what would that look like?

Your notes:

Conclusion & Key Takeaways

Effective governance is fundamental to the success and sustainability of your organisation as an approved provider. Throughout this module, we have explored the strategic responsibilities of management committees, the importance of working within your constitution, the critical distinction between governance and operations, risk management principles, key legal frameworks, and effective stakeholder relationship management.

Essential Principles for Good Governance

Remember These Core Principles:

- Act in the organisation's best interests — always prioritise the organisation's mission and the safety and wellbeing of children
- Maintain strategic focus — focus on governance rather than operations, asking 'why' and 'what' rather than 'how'
- Ensure compliance — take legal and regulatory obligations seriously
- Manage risk proactively — identify and address risks before they become crises
- Build strong relationships — cultivate positive connections with all stakeholders
- Commit to continuous improvement — regularly review and enhance governance practices

Next Steps

To build on this introductory training:

- Review your organisation's constitution and key governance documents
- Familiarise yourself with current policies, risk register, and strategic plan
- Attend induction sessions and additional training opportunities
- Ask questions and seek mentoring from experienced committee members
- Actively participate in committee meetings and decision-making

Additional Resources

For further reading and governance support:

- Australian Institute of Company Directors — <https://www.aicd.com.au/>
- Governance Institute of Australia — www.governanceinstitute.com.au
- Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission — www.acnc.gov.au
- Your state regulatory authority for education and care services - [Contact your regulatory authority | ACECQA](#)
- Relevant peak bodies and industry associations - [Home | NOSHSA](#) & Home | QCAN.org.au

Thank you for your commitment to effective governance and quality service provision.