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| Induction and education  (5) Induction programs and kits – minimum contents  Guidance note for boards of major DELWP agencies |

This guidance note is for use by board members of the over 100 major public entities and other statutory boards, committees, councils, panels, etc. in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) portfolio, including large (category 1 and 2) committees of management of Crown land reserves.

# Overview

To assist the effective operation of the board:

* Each member appointed or reappointed to the board should receive a suitable induction, including:
* induction program
* induction kit
* briefing from the chair, preferably one-on-one.
* Incoming board members should satisfy themselves that the induction they receive is suitable and should not hesitate to request further information.
* Incoming chairs are encouraged to request DELWP to provide them with a chairperson’s induction briefing.
* During the term of their appointment, board members should be assisted by the agency to remain up-to-date with new laws, government policy, governance obligations and best practice, etc.

# Developing an induction program and kit

The induction program and kit for board members should include the minimum contents set out on the next pages.

These are based on binding requirements in *Premier’s Circular 2015/02,* signed by the Victorian Premier on   
19 October 2015.

## ‘Fit for purpose’

Whether a particular topic is covered in the induction program itself – and, if so, to what extent - is **flexible**, provided that relevant guidance materials are included in the induction kit.

This will help to ensure that the induction program is   
‘fit for purpose’ – i.e. tailored to meet the needs of that particular incoming board at that particular time.

DELWP liaises with the incoming chair of the agency in relation to the appropriate level of involvement by the department in the design and delivery of the induction program and kit.

DELWP’s involvement is on a collaborative basis. DELWP’s level of involvement will depend on a number of factors, for example:

* Is it a new agency?
* Is it an agency with a well-established induction program?
* What are the ‘fit for purpose’ needs of the incoming board?

The minimum information to be provided at induction is:

## Support from DELWP

Information on the support available from DELWP, including a copy of:

kit **Governance resources available from DELWP**   
(DELWP guidance note).

# Roles and responsibilities

Information on the respective roles of, and relationship between, the minister, the department, the board, and the agency’s CEO/senior executives, including a copy of:

kit [Welcome to the board](http://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/welcome-to-the-board/), published by the Victorian Public Sector Commission. (The *DELWP guide to good governance* is currently being updated. In the meantime, please use this generic publication.)

kit **Summary chart of roles and responsibilities**   
(DELWP guidance note)

kit **Basic requirements of good governance**   
(DELWP guidance note).

Of particular relevance is:

* the board’s accountability to minister
* DELWP’s oversight and support role on behalf of the minister (s 13Aof the *Public Administration Act 2004*)
* the strategic role of the board v the CEO’s role in managing the day-to-day operations of the agency.

## Public sector v private sector

As part of ‘fit for purpose’ induction, it may be useful to provide the incoming board with the opportunity to compare the role and obligations of a public sector board member with those of a private sector board member.

## Relationship-building and networking

It will be also beneficial for the induction program to actively foster:

* a good working relationship between the members of the incoming board
* a positive relationship between the board and DELWP
* if more than one board attends the induction program together, networking between boards.

# Operating environment

Information on the ‘industry’ in which the agency operates, including a copy of:

kit any government policies/strategies of particular relevance to the agency.

# Current status

Information on the agency’s current financial, strategic, and operational position and on the key challenges and opportunities for the agency, including a copy of the agency’s current:

kit strategic plan

kit annual business plan

kit annual report.

# Governance framework

Information on the agency’s governance framework   
(the laws and other obligations that bind the agency), including a copy of:

kit the establishing Act or terms of reference

kit any ministerial guidelines, directions, and statements of obligation and/or expectation.

It may be useful to also include:

* a summary of the board's powers of delegation, if any (what functions can be delegated, to whom, how).
* information on key 'whole of government' laws   
  – e.g. freedom of information (leaflets, links, etc.).

**Hint - preparing an induction kit**

The DELWP guidance notes for inclusion in induction kits are available from the [Induction and](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/about-us/boards-and-governance/on-board-governance-guides-and-resources/governance-essentials) education support module on DELWP’s governance website, On Board ([www.delwp.vic.gov.au/onboard](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/onboard)).

(The model policy on *Induction and continuing education* is also available from On Board.)

# Standards of conduct

Information on the standards of conduct required by the *Public Administration Act 2004,* focusing on the ‘duties of directors’, which are set out in s 79 of the Act and mirrored in the [Directors’ Code of Conduct](http://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/) issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission, including a copy of:

kit **Conflict of interest - an overview**  
(DELWP guidance note)

kit **Gifts benefits and hospitality - responding to gift offers - an overview**  
(DELWP guidance note with summary chart)

kit **Meetings and decisions - an overview**  
(DELWP guidance note)

kit **Code of conduct – an overview**  
(DELWP guidance note)

kit [Directors’ Code of Conduct](http://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/code-of-conduct-for-directors/)

It may be useful to also provide:

* relevant sections of thePublic Administration Act   
  e.g. s 7 (public sector values), s 8 (public sector employment principles), s 13A (oversight and support) and, if applicable, s 79 to s 85.
* supplementary information on the requirements for confidentiality (current and former board members) and the proper use of information (no gain to self or others; no detriment to the agency).
* information on the role of the Victorian Ombudsman and the Victorian Auditor-General’s Office (VAGO).

# Board policies

Information on the need for suitable board policies to be in place that are consistent with DELWP’s model policies.

kit Copies of all of the board’s policies, including:

* Code of conduct
* Conflict of interest
* Dispute resolution
* Gifts, benefits and hospitality
* Induction and education
* Meetings and decisions
* Performance assessment.

# Further information

## On Board

This guidance note is available from the [Induction and education](http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/about-us/boards-and-governance/on-board-governance-guides-and-resources/induction-and-continuing-education) support module on DELWP’s governance website, On Board ([www.delwp.vic.gov.au/onboard](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/onboard)).

Guidance on other key governance topics is also available from On Board.

## DELWP relationship managers and teams

DELWP offers support to its agencies through DELWP divisions and regional offices. Please contact your agency’s usual DELWP relationship manager or team or phone the Customer Service Centre on 136 186.

## DELWP governance e-alerts

It is recommended that board members [subscribe](http://eepurl.com/bfeumr) to DELWP governance e-alerts, which provide governance news and information (e.g. new laws, best practice, major updates to On Board, etc.).

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For more information contact the DELWP Customer Service Centre 136 186

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www.delwp.vic.gov.au/onboard