



Roles and Responsibilities of Boards in Philanthropy

Board leadership in philanthropic culture and engagement is critical in influencing effective fundraising outcomes and funding social purpose. These are seven points for leadership for Boards in philanthropy and fundraising.

1. Shaping Culture

The board has responsibility for ensuring that an appropriate organisational culture is in place, and this will include a culture of philanthropy in an organisation serving a social purpose.

2. Crafting Strategy

The board has responsibility for understanding and approving strategy and should work with management to set and measure strategic objectives and plans.

3. Enabling Execution

The board should work with management to support and enable operational execution of strategy, understanding the relevant functions and measurements used in operational execution.

4. Facilitating Resources

Management should work with the board to identify and engage the necessary resources (financial, people, systems) required to undertake operational activity and meet strategic objectives.

5. Generating Advocacy

Board members should be advocates for the organisation they lead and present a positive and open narrative to stakeholders.

6. Creating Connection

Board members will play a role in connecting the organisation to its broader constituency by engaging and influencing positive and meaningful engagement.

7. Modelling Giving

Board members will play an important role in modelling philanthropic engagement by giving themselves. Giving amounts and frequency may remain private, but the fact that leadership engages in philanthropic support will influence a broader constituency.



Director Responsibility

In the broader context of director responsibility, directors are expected to make a concerted effort to understand the business of the entity and the information placed before them, as well as exercise curiosity in regard to this information. To this end, it would be expected that directors and other responsible officers should understand the nature of a business anchored in philanthropy and purpose as well as the business drivers. This will mean understanding philanthropy and fundraising practice and the connection with serving social purpose from a cultural, strategic and operational perspective.

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Nigel Harris is Managing Director of Nigel Harris & Associates Pty Ltd, an advisory practice specialising in philanthropy and fundraising leadership.

In a 40-year career, Nigel has held several executive leadership roles in non-profit organisations, most notably Chief Executive Officer of Mater Foundation (Queensland) for 24 years. Under Nigel's leadership, Mater Foundation's annual fundraising revenue grew from \$2m to \$73m, becoming one of Australia's largest health charities and a major funder of medical research and clinical services.

Holding an MBA as well as qualifications in Public Relations and Marketing, Nigel is also a Certified Fundraising Executive (CFRE) and a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (GAICD). In 2012 he was recognised as the Arthur Venn Australian Fundraising Professional of the Year and has also been recognised through other non-profit management awards.

Currently Chair of Act for Kids and a director of Leukaemia Foundation Australia, Nigel also serves on the Board of the Institute for Sustainable Philanthropy and the Management Committee of Braille House. He is a Fellow and Past Chair of Fundraising Institute Australia, a Fellow of the Institute of Managers and Leaders and Certified CEO through the CEO Institute. He has been active in community and sporting organisations for over four decades.

In June 2022, Nigel was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in recognition of his contribution to the non-profit sector and the broader community.