

Why are Agendas important*

Board and Committee meetings are where key decisions are made. The Agenda is the backbone of those meetings. Without an Agenda, meetings risk going off-track and running overtime.

A meeting Agenda helps to:

- Clarify matters to be discussed and decided
- Focus attention on priorities
- Give structure, direction, and momentum to your organisation's governance.

Whether you're a large organisation or a small community group, having a clear Agenda is essential to running effective, efficient meetings.

What is an Agenda?

Agendas should have standing items such as:

- The name of the organisation, meeting date, time and place (e.g. online or in person)
- Opening of meeting and acknowledgement of country
- Attendance record (present/absent/apologies/any observers)
- Conflicts of interest
- Confirmation of previous minutes
- Matter arising (usually from prior meetings)
- Correspondence (in and out)
- Matters for discussion (i.e. matters the committee/board needs to consider and make a decision on)
- Matters for noting (i.e. matters the committee/board needs to know about)
- Other business (this is where new items can be raised at the meeting which are not already on the Agenda)

Who prepares the Agenda?

As a matter of practice, the Chair or CEO of the organisation will prepare the Agenda in consultation. A good habit is to invite input from others – either formally or just through a quick email asking, "Is there anything you'd like added?"

When is the Agenda sent to the board/committee?

Once it is finalised, the Agenda – along with any background papers – should be sent out, ideally one week before the meeting. This gives everyone time to read and prepare, which leads to better conversations and more informed decision-making.

How do Agendas support good governance?

Agendas are a tool to support good governance by supporting your organisation to be transparent, accountable, and efficient.

Making Agendas available to your broader membership can encourage participation and trust. It also gives members the chance to raise concerns or offer input on key issues.

Finally, the Agenda provides a useful way to track important issues as it is linked to the minutes of prior meetings. Action items from past meetings can be tracked under the Agenda.

Practice tip: See our Agenda template to get you started.