

THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU SAY YES*

It can be flattering to be asked to join a Committee (for an Incorporated Association) or a Board (of a Company or government body). You might even feel obligated to give back to your local community.

However, before you say yes, you should consider a few things.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

When you join a Committee or a Board you automatically assume (under law) several obligations and duties. So, you need to do your homework and make sure the organisation is run well.

Here are some things for you to consider and ask. You should also ask to see copies of the listed documents (though you may be asked to sign a Confidentiality Deed before you may see them):

- Where and how are the Minutes kept, and have you got the past 12 months of Minutes
- Is there a Conflict of Interest policy and a register of interests
- Is there a Code of Conduct or committee/board charter
- Is financial reporting up to date and where are the monthly financial statements
- Is the organisation solvent (and likely to remain so)
- Where is the annual budget and how is it formed and approved
- Has the organisation considered its risks (for example heavily reliant on government funding) and opportunities (new revenue options)
- Are there any board/committee policies
- Are there organisational policies
- Is there a Delegation Policy to govern amongst other things, the operation of bank accounts and authority to act for the organisation
- What is the stated purpose of the organisation and are the strategic goals aligned to this purpose?
- What date was the Constitution adopted and is it due for review
- How do the Board/Committee members interact and is there any indication of disharmony or tension?
- If I am being nominated to represent a section of the community or the organisation's membership, how will I manage that interest with my duty to act in the best interests of the organisation.

The answers to these questions may help you avoid joining a poorly governed organisation or they may prompt the organisation to improve by addressing the gaps identified in answering your questions.