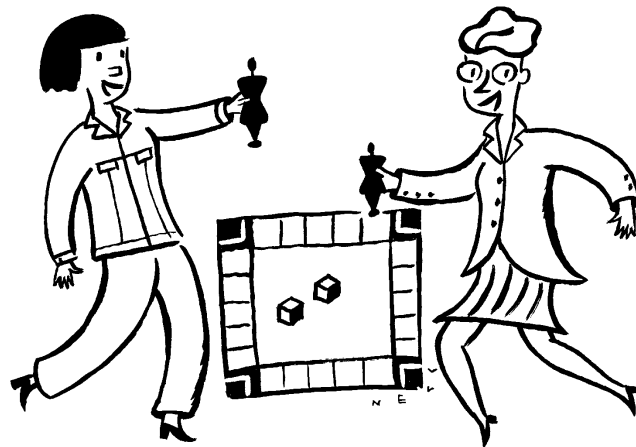


Getting onto a board or committee



First of all, decide which committee or board you are interested in. Once you have decided, take the next steps:

Get clear about your own strengths and abilities

This will help you to sell yourself if necessary. For example:

- your experience will provide a fresh perspective;
- your skills will be useful;
- you're a hard worker.

Get clear about what you expect to get out of being involved

These things are never one way. For example, some positive benefits to you might be that it is:

- a good career move (it will look good on your CV or enable you to develop new skills);
- an opportunity to create change;
- the best way for you to get issues you're passionate about on the organisation's agenda;
- good for your business, profile, income or networking.

On the downside, perhaps it means another meeting to attend. Do you really have the time to do all the reading, or do you have to let something else go?

Find out about vacancies and recruitment procedures

Some organisations hold elections for positions on their board, others call for nominations from interested individuals or representative organisations.

Let others know you're available

If you are well known in the community or in the field, you may be approached to stand by other committee members. Otherwise, it is a good idea to let members of your network know that you have an interest in standing for a board or committee. They may be able to put in a good word for you.

In the community welfare sector, some organisations are often asked to send consumer representatives to sit on boards and committees, who then keep them informed of what is happening. ACOSS (Australian Council of Social Service), the Health Consumers Forum (HCF) and the Older Women's Network (OWN) are examples of such organisations.

Promote yourself

Join relevant organisations

- Their newsletters may be useful in keeping you informed.
- Volunteer for working bees and committee work.
- Make a reputation for yourself as responsible, reliable, hard working, honest and trustworthy.

Know what you're talking about

- Chat to anyone and everyone about your concerns.
- Canvas all sides of the argument—tolerate others' opinions even when you don't share them.
- Read up—the local library might be able to help.
- Use the phone, post, fax, internet and email to contact people who are already active and well informed. They may be able to supply you with facts, figures and relevant data, and keep you up-to-date with developments.

Canvas relevant decision makers in your area

- Let them know you're interested in working with them.
- Find out how to get on local boards and committees.

Use the media

- Write letters to the editor.
- Negotiate with the editor to write an article.
- Use talk back radio.
- Phone the local TV or radio station. Let them know you are willing to be interviewed.

Get listed on the Women's Register

- Consider seeking inclusion on the Women's Register maintained by the Premier's Department. Whilst being included in this Register does not guarantee selection, it is an important resource available to Ministers when appointments are being made to government boards and committees. All Ministers are encouraged to consult the Register. To obtain information or an application form for inclusion on the Register contact the Premier's Department on (02) 9228 4677 or (02) 9228 4657.

