



GOVERNANCE RISK & OPERATIONS

Board Self-Evaluation: You Assess the CEO. Who Assesses Each Director?

APRA's 2018 governance review found boards commonly evaluate themselves collectively while individual performance goes unchecked

APRA's 2018 thematic review of board governance at 29 superannuation funds found a documented pattern worth every association board recognising in itself: boards commonly assess their own performance as a collective, while individual director performance goes unassessed. This connects directly to the CEO performance review discipline discussed earlier in this series, applied now to the board's own evaluation of itself.

Which rules apply to your association?

The law depends on how your association is set up. A **company limited by guarantee** follows the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and its constitution. An **incorporated association** follows its state or territory associations Act and its rules. A **registered charity** also follows the ACNC Act and the ACNC Governance Standards, and some Corporations Act rules are replaced for charities that are companies. Check your own governing documents, and get advice before decisions with legal consequences.

In this resource

1. [A Documented Gap Most Boards Share](#)
2. [Why Self-Assessment Alone Falls Short](#)
3. [What A Comprehensive Evaluation Actually Covers](#)

A Documented Gap Most Boards Share

The regulator's review specifically identified a lack of proper framework for addressing board underperformance, board performance assessed only as a whole rather than at the individual director level, and board self-assessment frequently serving as the sole method of evaluation. While this specific review focused on superannuation funds, governance commentators, including the AICD, have noted that its observations are relevant to boards in other sectors, including associations. A board that has never asked whether each individual director is contributing, distinct from asking whether the board collectively functions well, has a real gap in its own governance discipline.

Why Self-Assessment Alone Falls Short

Self-assessment allows introspection, but it carries a well-recognised, inherent bias risk: directors evaluating their own board's effectiveness, and sometimes their own individual contribution, are not positioned to see their own blind spots clearly. Sector guidance recommends a hybrid model specifically for this reason, combining director self-assessment with peer feedback and periodic external facilitation, periodically bringing in an independent reviewer, commonly recommended at least every three years, for an objective, in-depth review including direct observation of actual board meetings. A board that has only ever evaluated itself has never actually tested whether its own self-perception matches how it functions. External review exists precisely to close that gap, not to imply the board's own judgment cannot be trusted.

What A Comprehensive Evaluation Actually Covers

A well-designed board evaluation examines board composition, skills, diversity, and succession planning, board culture and relationship dynamics, the quality of strategic and risk discussion, and the effectiveness of board committees and their reporting back to the full board. Many boards still rely on self-managed evaluation, and fewer use external facilitation. Check whether your own board has ever had an independent review, and treat any gap as worth closing rather than accepting as normal.

- Assess individual director performance separately from overall board performance, agree in advance who sees individual results, and link outcomes to development plans, chair conversations and renomination decisions within what your constitution allows, since the board usually cannot remove a member-elected director.
- Adopt a hybrid evaluation model, combining self-assessment, peer feedback, and periodic external facilitation, rather than relying on director self-assessment as the sole method.
- Bring in an independent reviewer periodically, commonly recommended at least every three years, connecting directly to the value of external perspective this series has recommended elsewhere.
- Cover board composition, culture, strategic discussion quality, and committee effectiveness comprehensively, rather than narrowing the evaluation to a brief, superficial checklist.
- Act promptly and visibly on evaluation findings, treating the review as an improvement tool rather than a compliance exercise completed and then filed away unused.

A board that rigorously evaluates its executive but has never applied the same discipline to itself has only completed half the accountability cycle good governance requires. The same rigour this series has recommended for CEO performance review deserves to be turned inward, toward the board's own individual and collective performance, with the same honesty and the same commitment to acting on what it finds. This is one of the practical governance topics built into our Board Director course, alongside the papers, tools and frameworks that turn the principle into your board's actual practice. [Explore the course](#)

Annie Gibbins

Founder and CEO, Nexus Leadership

BOARDROOM ACTION WORKSHEET

Board Self-Evaluation: You Assess the CEO. Who Assesses Each Director?

Turn the resource into evidence, a decision and an accountable next step. Keep the completed record in your association's approved board records system.

1 What is the issue or decision?

State the governance question in one clear sentence.

2 What evidence do we already have?

Record the facts, source documents and stakeholder evidence available now.

3 What evidence is still needed?

Identify the legal, regulatory, financial, member or operational information still required.

4 What is the agreed next action?

Capture the owner, timeframe and how the matter will return to the board.

Action owner	Review date	Board decision or resolution

General education, not legal, financial, tax, clinical or governance advice. Confirm specifics at the relevant primary source or with your own qualified adviser. Nexus Leadership is operated by Lipstick Consulting Pty Ltd · ABN 15 619 120 482.

CONTINUE YOUR LEARNING

Turn governance principles into practical board action.

Self-paced courses, editable resources and practical support for association boards and CEOs at nexusleadership.com.au.