



Department of  
Education

Public education  
A world of opportunities



# INDEPENDENT PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL BOARD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Australian Government



# INTRODUCTION



## FROM THE MINISTER



**Central to the Government's successful autonomy reform agenda in education over the last eight years has been decision making at the school level informed by the voices of the community.**

Independent Public Schools have been at the forefront of this reform with the formation of school boards.

By the beginning of 2017, more than 60% of public schools in Western Australia will be Independent Public Schools. Independent Public School boards across Western Australia involve many thousands of people committed to the education of the children and young people in their schools.

We ask a lot of school board members. We ask them to bring their expertise, skills and experiences to steer the strategic directions of their schools. We ask them to endorse schools plans, budgets and reports. We ask them to monitor the performance of their schools.

That is why a critical next step in the highly successful Independent Public Schools initiative is to provide school board members with further development, training and support. This aims to build their capacity to implement exemplary leadership and governance practices.

With Government, schools and communities working together, we can provide an even better education for students in this State.

**Hon Peter Collier MLC  
Minister for Education**

## FROM THE DIRECTOR GENERAL



**The new School Board Development Program furthers the substantial shift from a culture of decision making that is external to communities to one where communities are significantly involved through local governance.**

Every Independent Public School is empowered to make decisions that are relevant to the context of its community. This can only be done by real involvement of the community – in school planning, budgeting, monitoring performance and then reporting back to the community and to government.

These important roles need to be enacted with a high level of understanding and responsibility. And we need to make sure that all board members are sufficiently skilled and equipped to undertake their roles.

This new program provides board members with tools, learning and resources to build their capacity across a range of areas, particularly in relation to influencing the directions of their schools.

To the many people who are on school boards, thank you for your contribution. I encourage you to take advantage of the new development program to benefit your school and, most importantly, our students.

**Sharyn O'Neill  
Director General**

September 2016

# STRONG GOVERNANCE AND SUPPORT



**Effective Independent Public School boards have an important influence on the directions of their schools, with board members bringing ideas and providing expertise.**

Independent Public Schools have a different relationship with their communities because of the roles they are required to undertake.

This relationship involves participation and collaboration in unique strategic areas of governance that include:

- developing business plans which set the strategic direction of schools
- the process to review school performance against business plans
- endorsing Delivery and Performance Agreements with the Director General
- being involved in the independent review of schools.

Given this level of responsibility, it is imperative that school board members are empowered and trained to engage meaningfully in planning, budgeting, monitoring school performance and reporting.

The new development program has been informed by an [independent study](#) commissioned by the Department. Undertaken by Curtin University, the study aimed to better understand where improvements could be made to the functioning, influence and effectiveness of boards in meeting the demands of their role within the scope of existing statutory and policy settings.

The findings of the study acknowledged the achievements of boards since the first intake of Independent Public Schools in 2010. More importantly, the findings recognised that, as the Independent Public Schools initiative had matured over the years, there was opportunity for school boards to step up to the next level.

This next level entails using autonomy to enhance the climate and conditions that maximise outcomes for students by enacting more authentic and effective local governance.

The development program includes workshops delivered by experienced principals and school board chairs, and supplemented with online resources.

The School Board Development Program is aligned with our strategic plan, [High Performance – High Care](#), and complements and strengthens a more grassroots and deeply embedded culture of decision making in our schools.

## Effective school boards add value to their schools.

# SCHOOL BOARD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



**The program is for principals and board members of Independent Public Schools who want to strengthen the operations, influence and effectiveness of their school boards.**

Based on contemporary research on effective governance, the program is offered in both metropolitan and regional locations from Term 4, 2016 supported by online resources.

The program provides an opportunity for three Independent Public School board members (the principal, a staff representative and the board chair) to build their skills and gain knowledge that they can use immediately in their role on school boards.

*\* There is no cost to participants as the program is funded by the Australian Government. Regional participants can access the program at their nearest major regional centre. Travel and accommodation is funded.*

## PROGRAM COMPONENTS

**Perspectives for leading**  
(Took place on Wednesday 8 June 2016)

**Independent Public School board development**  
Program dates and registration details

## DESCRIPTION

- Forum for principals of Independent Public Schools to explore the relationship between the strategic directions of the Department and the capacity building programs offered to Independent Public Schools over the next two years.
- A two day development program for three Independent Public School board members (the principal, a staff representative and the board chair).
- Delivered in metropolitan and major regional locations.
- Access to online resources and materials.

# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

**The School Board Development Program is designed to deliver value to Independent Public School boards which are at different points on the governance journey.**

**There are nine training modules in the program incorporating workshops and online resources.**

Online resources include materials to support:

- school board induction
- membership
- meeting protocols
- elections
- decision making
- ethical practice
- productive relationships
- business planning
- performance monitoring
- annual reporting
- budgeting.

## Online training modules

### 1. Introduction to roles, responsibilities and decision making

- Relevant legislation and regulations that apply to school boards
- Board roles and responsibilities
- How boards operate including meeting and administrative arrangements

### 2. Foundations of an effective board

- How boards are formed including how to transition from councils when schools become Independent Public Schools
- Board election processes
- How boards work with other school organisations
- How principals and chairs work together

### 3. Business planning

- Overview of the business planning process
- Board role in school budgeting

### 4. Managing risk

- What is a risk?
- How to identify and manage risks
- The role of boards in monitoring risk
- Board risks

### 5. Monitoring and reporting school performance

- How to monitor school academic and other performance
- How to report on school performance
- The independent review process

**Modules six to nine build on the foundational elements of the online training modules and provide a more nuanced understanding of the role of boards and what good governance looks like in an Independent Public Schools context.**

## Face to face training modules

### 6. Adding value to the governance conversation

- The role of boards relative to principals and other Department of Education stakeholders
- Board decision making

### 7. Culture and stakeholder relationships

- The role of boards in driving school culture
- The importance of good stakeholder relationships

### 8. Strategic thinking and planning

- The difference between business and strategic planning
- Tools for developing school strategy

### 9. Shaping board performance

- Qualities of high performing boards
- How to assess board performance

This is a collaborative program under the Project Agreement to Build Stronger School Leadership and Governance in Independent Public Schools, and is funded by the Australian Government as part of the Australian Government's Independent Public Schools initiative.