

# CMA's Essential Standards of Ministry Governance

For Christian Churches, Schools and Ministries



Gary Williams

Resource Stewardship

Director Responsibility

Program Alignment

Financial Sustainability

Proactive Integrity

God First

Executive Engagement

# CMA's Essential Standards of Ministry Governance

*by Gary Williams*



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#### **Disclaimer**

The information in this publication is of a general nature only, and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice that is specific to the needs and circumstances of your organisation.

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# Introduction

Christian churches and organisations are driven by a profoundly compelling mission – a mission that deserves our full attention and effort. However, as soon as we create *organisations* as a vehicle for better achieving that mission, we also incur some responsibilities. In return for tax concessions, we incur a responsibility to be accountable. In return for volunteer and staff service, we incur a responsibility to treat people well. In return for the trust of donors and moral owners, we incur a responsibility to govern with diligence.

Governance, the work of the board, is becoming more important in the corporate world, in the non-profit world, and in the ministry world. Scandals in all three sectors have brought increasing attention to board behaviour and effectiveness. Donors, whether major donors to large Christian charities or weekly contributors to the church offering plate, are expecting boards to ensure that their money is spent prudently. Regulators are becoming less tolerant of organisational noncompliance. The name of Christ is publicly tarnished when ministries behave badly.

The mission of Christian Management Australia is *maximising ministry effectiveness, building organisation character*; and when churches and ministries with a wonderful mission stumble because of ineffective governance, important opportunities are lost. These standards are one way CMA hopes to contribute to increased ministry effectiveness, by giving ministry boards a stepping-stone on the path to truly effective governance.

## Governance as Ministry

Governance of a church or Christian organisation is not just a mechanism to meet secular compliance obligations – *it is ministry*. It's not just about keeping things in check, although that is part of it. It's about unleashing the full potential of an organisation to achieve its mission. Organisations with dysfunctional boards will

rarely make a substantial positive impact for the cause of Christ. But organisations with dysfunctional boards regularly end up in the media bringing disgrace on the whole Christian sector. Even if the dysfunction does not lead to public scandals, it often, below the radar, injures good people, and squanders precious resources and opportunities.

## **Why Essential Standards?**

There is a proliferation of books, models, tools, diagnostic instruments and theories relating to non-profit governance – enough to bewilder the average volunteer board member. Governance is a complex discipline, despite the fact that some people seem to think it's just about attending board meetings and helping make decisions on matters of mutual interest.

After discussions with many CMA members around the country, it became apparent that they needed something that addressed the basics of governance from a ministry perspective, without getting too technical or too prescriptive. After reviewing over 100 non-profit governance publications, and conducting a number of interviews, CMA developed the principles and standards described in this publication, believing them to be being fairly universal, and widely relevant for Christian organisations.

## **What This is Not: Best Practice**

It is important to make the distinction between Essential Standards and Best Practice. Best Practice has become a popular concept in all spheres of management, for some good reasons. We should all aspire to the highest of standards. That is a noble aim, especially for Christian organisations. But there are at least a couple of problems. First, the very notion of Best Practice implies that there is a clearly defined set of standards that are the same for everyone, and that those who do not meet them are inferior. But the truth is fuzzier than that. What may be considered Best Practice for one type of organisation may be entirely insufficient for another. And while there are plenty of points in common, there are enough different descriptions of Best Practice to demonstrate that it is really impossible to agree on what is, actually, best.

Secondly, Best Practice is, by definition, a high bar to reach for. Well-meaning organisations can look at the high bar, realise it is

beyond their immediate ability to achieve, and give up altogether. Particularly for young or small organisations with limited capacity, the amount of effort required to achieve Best Practice, if it is even achievable at all, can seriously deplete the organisation's ability to pursue its real mission.

This is not an argument against Best Practice – it would indeed be wonderful if all churches and ministries operated according to Best Practice governance principles. Many already are. But for those who are not, aiming for best practice may not be the best place to start. For those organisations, Essential Standards may be a more achievable first step.

Essential Standards, as outlined in this publication, are like minimum standards. If you cannot meet these standards, you have to seriously question whether you should exist *in organisational form*. If you are not able, or not willing, to meet these Essential Standards, then maybe an *organisation* is not the best way to achieve your mission. To quote a leader in an international charity, “no matter how much someone may care for orphans in Somalia, starting an entire new ministry, with all the inherent infrastructure, just to be able to send \$30,000 per year to a Somalian orphanage, is a dreadful waste of resources – there are much better ways to achieve those outcomes.”

### **What This is Not: A Formula for Governance Success**

Good governance is many-faceted. If there was such a thing as a set of universal principles, or a checklist for success, or a fool-proof model, it would have been discovered by now, and everybody would be doing it. Governance is still only one part of an organisation's operations, and even the best governance cannot compensate for serious inadequacies in other parts of the organisation.

In publishing this set of principles and standards, CMA hopes to provide a useful stepping-stone for organisations that aspire to better governance, yet are not sure exactly what that means. This is only a small piece of the governance puzzle, and it would be a short-sighted organisation that relaxed after meeting Essential Standards. There is so much further scope for development and improvement.

### **What This is Not: The Final Word on Essential Standards**

There is no such thing as THE Essential Standards for ministry governance. Views will differ, and practitioners, experts and academics will always classify and describe these kinds of things

differently. So even though many resources and experts were consulted in the preparation of this publication, it is still only one possible expression of Ministry Governance standards.

This publication is being offered in the hope that it will be useful, but there will no doubt be room for improvement in a future version. CMA has established an online discussion group at **[www.governance.org.au](http://www.governance.org.au)** where readers are welcome to offer suggestions for a future version of the publication.

### **Where To From Here?**

Since its founding in 2002, governance has been of vital concern for Christian Management Australia. Following this publication, CMA will be working on several related projects to serve the ministry sector:

1. A companion publication which explores in more detail each of the standards, providing examples, draft policies and suggestions.
2. A certification process by which organisations can verify and demonstrate that they are operating in compliance with CMA's Essential Standards. Several Foundations have already indicated to CMA that they will look more favourably on grant applications coming from organisations who meet these standards.
3. Several training modules which may be administered remotely either by internet or by DVD.

Visit **[www.governance.org.au](http://www.governance.org.au)** to keep an eye on developments, or subscribe to CMA's governance email to keep in the loop.

# Guiding Principles

## 1. **The Principle of God First**

In the boardroom, as in all of life, the distinctives of our Christian faith need to guide and flavour every conversation, every action, and every decision.

## 2. **The Principle of Ultimate Responsibility**

Within the governing structures of an entity, there needs to be clarity about which bodies bear which responsibilities, where ultimate responsibility lies, and who is a member of which body.

## 3. **The Principle of Written Rules**

Whether contained in a constitution, or created by the board in the absence of a formal constitution, the organisation needs to have written rules which outline how the board and the organisation operate.

## 4. **The Principle of Legal Compliance**

The board needs to understand and comply with the obligations that are imposed on it by the documents and rules of its incorporation or legal framework, by the laws which govern its operations, and by the agreements it has entered into.

## 5. **The Principle of Director Responsibility**

Each board member and officer needs to understand and comply with the duties and responsibilities imposed on them individually by the law, and by the rules of the organisation.

## 6. **The Principle of Financial Sustainability**

The organisation needs to have enough resources or resource-generating options to be able to meet its financial obligations as and when they fall due.

## 7. **The Principle of Governance Diligence**

The board needs to ensure that it exercises discipline and diligence with regard to its regular governance activities such as meetings, budgets, records management and policy compliance.

## 8. **The Principle of Risk Management**

The board needs to be aware of the significant risks to which the organisation may be exposed, and have a plan to transfer, manage or mitigate those risks.

- 9. The Principle of Guiding Purpose**  
The organisation needs to have in writing a current and real purpose for existing.
- 10. The Principle of Program Alignment**  
The programs and services of the organisation should be planned, monitored and evaluated to ensure alignment with the stated purpose of the organisation.
- 11. The Principle of Resource Stewardship**  
The resources of the organisation need to be managed in a way that effectively serve the purpose of the organisation.
- 12. The Principle of Strategic Intent**  
The board needs to take responsibility for the strategic direction of the organisation, and to approve a plan at regular intervals.
- 13. The Principle of Executive Engagement**  
The board needs to be proactive in selecting an appropriate CEO, supporting them in the role, evaluating their performance, removing them if necessary, and ensuring continuity during periods of CEO transition.
- 14. The Principle of Role Clarity**  
Each member of the board needs to understand the role of the board and staff in relationship to governance and management, with particular regard to the roles of governance, volunteer and implementer.
- 15. The Principle of Board Development**  
The board needs to ensure that its own processes for the selection, development, evaluation, renewing and retiring of board members are sufficient to develop a competent, enthusiastic and fresh board.
- 16. The Principle of Proactive Integrity**  
The board needs to adopt policies and practices which model Christian organisational behaviour, protect the integrity of the organisation, and inspire confidence in its ability to achieve its purpose.

# Detailed Standards

For each of the 16 principles, there follow a number of essential standards. Ideally, a church or ministry should be able to respond to every single standard by saying, ‘This is true of our board’. These standards have been developed with all sizes and types of ministries in mind, so it would be wrong to assume that things like a small budget or a more casual board style create a loophole for noncompliance.

For each standard that *is not* currently true of a board, a helpful question to ask is ‘If not, why not?’ If the answer is simply that the board has not ever got around to it, then it is probably something that needs to be remedied. If the board suspects that the standard may be bureaucratic overkill for the organisation, it probably needs to be remedied. Too many serious board failures have occurred as a result of board members dismissing well-established principles because ‘we are not big enough to need to worry about that’. If a standard is not true of a board, and the board has a considered, compelling reason that the standard does not apply, then that is fine. However, that conclusion should only be reached after considering the standard carefully, not as an initial, instinctive response.

## **Principle 1: God First**

- 1.1 All board meetings include a time of prayer.
- 1.2 Biblical criteria are given significant weight in the selection of board members and the CEO.
- 1.3 Scriptural principles inform the discussions, decisions and policies of the board.
- 1.4 All board members strive to conduct their relationships with other board members according to scriptural principles.
- 1.5 The board aims to conduct all external relationships according to biblical principles.

## **Principle 2: Ultimate Responsibility**

- 2.1 There exists a clear governing structure for the organisation, and the delegations, accountabilities and responsibilities of the various components are unambiguous and are recorded in writing.

- 2.2 The board is made up of at least the number of members stipulated in the constitution, or, if no such specification exists, a minimum of three members.
- 2.3 The board has a unique title (such as ‘the board’, ‘session’, or ‘council’) that distinguishes it from any other body in the organisation’s structure.
- 2.4 All executive staff and members of the board know where responsibilities lie for the governance of the organisation.
- 2.5 All executive staff and members of the board know (or can find out) who the board members are.

### **Principle 3: Written Rules**

- 3.1 If the organisation is bound by any rules of a parent entity, all board members shall possess a current copy of those rules.
- 3.2 If the organisation is required by law to have a formal constitution, all board members shall possess a current copy of it.
- 3.3 If the organisation is not required by law to have a formal constitution, the board will ensure that an alternative document outlining the rules of the organisation exists, and that all board members possess a current copy of it.
- 3.4 If the board creates rules or policies in addition to the constitution, they shall be recorded in writing, compiled in a policy manual, and provided to all board members.
- 3.5 The chairman shall ensure that an index of any written rules by which the board is bound is maintained, and shall provide all board members with current copies of each document.
- 3.6 Major organisational policies and rules shall be available for staff and stakeholders to view on request.

### **Principle 4: Legal Compliance**

- 4.1 All board members understand what kind of legal and taxation entity the organisation is.
- 4.2 All board members have read, within the past two years, all written rules by which the organisation is bound.
- 4.3 All board members are aware of the legal obligations imposed on the organisation by the written rules.

- 4.4 All board members comprehend the obligations imposed on the organisation by laws external to the organisation's rules (for example, privacy legislation, industrial relations legislation, taxation legislation).
- 4.5 The board is diligent in complying with its legal obligations.
- 4.6 At least once per year, the board affirms that, to the best of its knowledge, it is operating in compliance with its legal obligations.
- 4.7 The board seeks expert advice when the expertise in the boardroom is insufficient to determine an appropriate course of action in relation to any of its compliance obligations.

### **Principle 5: Director Responsibility**

- 5.1 Each board member understands the obligations imposed on them individually by the constitution and other organisational documents.
- 5.2 Each board member understands the obligations imposed on them by laws external to the organisation's rules (for example, a Director's duty to prevent insolvent trading, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to act in the interests of the organisation).
- 5.3 All board members are diligent in complying with their individual responsibilities as board members.
- 5.4 At least once per year, all board members affirm that they are operating in compliance with their individual responsibilities.
- 5.5 Board members seek expert advice when the expertise in the boardroom is insufficient to determine an appropriate course of action in relation to individual director responsibilities.

### **Principle 6: Financial Sustainability**

- 6.1 Board members assist in strengthening the financial position of the organisation by
  - 6.1.1 Donating to the organisation; and / or
  - 6.1.2 Providing introductions to strategic contacts; and / or
  - 6.1.3 Using their personal networks and relationships to build the profile and reputation of the organisation; and / or

- 6.1.4 Helping to formulate revenue-generating plans for the organisation.
- 6.2 The board knows the actual assets, liabilities and equity of the organisation.
- 6.3 The board understands where the organisation's money comes from, and where it goes.
- 6.4 The board knows the income and expense trends of the organisation.
- 6.5 The board acts to address early warning signs of sustainability problems.
- 6.6 The board knows of any significant events, or potential events, which could seriously jeopardise the organisation's financial position.
- 6.7 The board knows if the organisation is having trouble meeting its day-to-day obligations.
- 6.8 The board puts in place mechanisms which prevent the organisation from incurring debts it cannot pay as and when they fall due.
- 6.9 The board seeks expert advice if there is any doubt about current or future solvency.
- 6.10 If the best efforts of the board, combined with expert advice, are insufficient to solve sustainability problems, and the organisation appears headed towards inevitable closure or insolvency, the board will wind up the organisation or seek to merge with another organisation early enough to ensure that all debts are paid, all employee obligations are met, and actual insolvency is avoided.

### **Principle 7: Governance Diligence**

- 7.1 A sensible quorum is defined in writing.
- 7.2 Either the board or the chairman ensures a quorum is present at meetings.
- 7.3 Clear written rules exist describing how decisions are made, who is eligible to vote, and what percentage is required to carry a vote.

- 7.4 The board has at least three meetings per year, or at least the number of meetings stipulated in the constitution.
- 7.5 An Agenda and supporting documents are distributed prior to the meeting, allowing an agreed time for board members to prepare adequately for the meeting.
- 7.6 A process exists for ensuring that all matters that require the attention of the board appear on the Agenda at appropriate times throughout the year.
- 7.7 Each meeting is chaired in such a way as to allow sufficient time to discuss each item on the agenda, and to allow and encourage input from all board members.
- 7.8 Existing board documents and policies are available for consultation during discussion and decision making, to ensure that existing policies are being followed, and to ensure that new decisions are not in conflict with existing policies or requirements.
- 7.9 Written minutes are kept of all meetings, documenting all decisions made, and summarising all substantial discussions.
- 7.10 The chairman ensures that a list of important board documents (such as CEO Employment Agreement, titles to property) is maintained, that the documents are filed securely, and that all board members know where they are stored.
- 7.11 The board members know who is authorised to speak on behalf of the board and the organisation, and those not authorised refrain from doing so.

## **Principle 8: Risk Management**

- 8.1 The organisation carries appropriate insurance coverage.
- 8.2 The board has checked its insurance coverage, in value and in scope, with a knowledgeable insurer within the last year.
- 8.3 The board has reviewed the conditions and exclusions of the insurance coverage, and has remedied any matters which may void or place at risk the insurance coverage in the event of a claim.
- 8.4 The board has reviewed the risks to which the organisation could be exposed and identified in writing the risks it considers significant.

- 8.5 For each risk identified as significant, the board has a written plan to manage or mitigate the risk.
- 8.6 The board puts in place mechanisms which monitor and document compliance with the risk management plan, and remedies any breaches in a timely manner.

### **Principle 9: Guiding Purpose**

- 9.1 The board agrees that there is a compelling reason for the organisation to remain in existence.
- 9.2 That reason is articulated in writing, either in the organisation's constitution or in a separate statement of mission or purpose.

### **Principle 10: Program Alignment**

- 10.1 The board ensures that new programs, activities or services are only launched when they have been verified as an appropriate fit with the organisation's stated purpose.
- 10.2 The board ensures that each program, activity or service is under the supervision of a responsible person whose duty it is to monitor it and ensure it remains aligned with the organisation's stated purpose.
- 10.3 A mechanism exists by which each program, activity or service is evaluated at appropriate intervals to verify that it serves a worthwhile purpose in relation to the organisation's stated purpose.

### **Principle 11: Resource Stewardship**

- 11.1 The board accepts a broad definition of 'Resources' which includes financial, personnel, heritage, reputation, and intellectual property.
- 11.2 The board ensures that an up-to-date register of assets is maintained.
- 11.3 The board installs mechanisms which protect the resources of the organisation from unacceptable levels of wastage, deterioration or loss.

- 11.4 The board installs mechanisms which limit the possibility of fraudulent behaviour.
- 11.5 The people in the organisation (staff, board, and volunteers) are managed in a way that recognises their value, reduces unnecessary conflict and turnover, encourages personal growth and productivity, and stimulates a spiritual and productive workplace culture.
- 11.6 The board installs mechanisms which ensure that as much as possible, valuable history, contacts and experience are retained when personnel depart.
- 11.7 The board ensures that resources given to the organisation for a specific purpose are expended in accordance with that purpose.
- 11.8 The board ensures that the organisation's finances are audited annually, either in accordance with legislative requirements, in accordance with the constitution, or by a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants or of CPA Australia who is external to the organisation.

### **Principle 12: Strategic Intent**

- 12.1 The board has a forward-oriented focus for the organisation, which manifests in forward-oriented agendas.
- 12.2 The organisation has a written plan which outlines its strategic intent for the future.
- 12.3 The plan is reviewed and updated at least every year.
- 12.4 The organisation applies its resources in a manner consistent with the written plan.
- 12.5 The board is a proactive participant in developing and reviewing the plan.

### **Principle 13: Executive Engagement**

- 13.1 There exists a written document (hereafter referred to as the 'Employment Agreement') which outlines any employment, contractual or other agreement between the organisation and the lead staff person of the organisation (hereafter referred to as CEO).

- 13.2 The Employment Agreement is current, and is reviewed for accuracy and relevance every two years.
- 13.3 There exists a written Position Description which outlines the duties, responsibilities and accountabilities of the CEO.
- 13.4 The Position Description is current, and is reviewed for accuracy and relevance at least every two years.
- 13.5 Formal communication between the board and the CEO is handled via the chair.
- 13.6 The board listens to concerns expressed by the CEO, and makes genuine attempts to provide any board support deemed necessary.
- 13.7 The board seeks to anticipate the needs of the CEO, and acts to meet those needs where appropriate.
- 13.8 The board installs mechanisms for dealing fairly with conflict or grievances between the CEO and the board.
- 13.9 In cases of escalating conflict, the board will attempt to resolve the matter through alternative conflict resolution methods (such as mediation).
- 13.10 The board actively resists behaviour which undermines the CEO.
- 13.11 The board conducts a formal evaluation of the CEO every year, and written feedback is provided.
- 13.12 The board installs mechanisms which ensure that Industrial Relations obligations are met when dismissing staff, including the CEO.
- 13.13 The board installs mechanisms which ensure that when staff (including the CEO) are dismissed, the process is handled with Christian love and grace; appropriate pastoral care is provided, and appropriate further support is provided.
- 13.14 The board seeks expert advice early if issues surrounding staff dismissal are deemed to warrant additional input.
- 13.15 The board is alert to the potential timing of CEO transition, communicates honestly about the issue with the CEO, and has a written plan to manage transition when the need arises.

- 13.16 A written plan exists describing how the organisation will operate in the event of the sudden departure or incapacitation of the CEO.

#### **Principle 14: Role Clarity**

- 14.1 The board understands the difference between the functions of governance and the functions of day-to-day management.
- 14.2 The board recognises the three different roles that board members perform (governance, volunteer, and implementer of delegated board tasks) and communicates these roles, as required, with other stakeholders.
- 14.3 The board seeks to spend its time in the boardroom focussing on the governance of the organisation.
- 14.4 The board delegates the management of the organisation to the CEO, and monitors this delegation through the governance activities at board meetings, and through the performance review process.
- 14.5 Whenever committees of the board are formed, it is made clear in writing whether the committees are authoritative (speaking FOR the board) or advisory (speaking TO the board).
- 14.6 Whenever committees of the board are formed, their responsibilities, delegated authority and role description is made clear in writing.
- 14.7 Board members know to leave their ‘governance’ role behind when board meetings conclude, and refrain from seeking to exert ‘governance authority’ when acting outside the boardroom.

#### **Principle 15: Board Development**

- 15.1 The board recognises governance as a skill worthy of continual development and improvement.
- 15.2 The board accepts responsibility for its own development, and takes the initiative in growing its governance competence.

- 15.3 A written document exists explaining the processes by which board members are selected, nominated, appointed and removed from the board.
- 15.4 The board is careful in its recruitment process to seek people who actually understand what board membership involves, who are prepared to take the role seriously, and who have the time and capacity to be successful in the role.
- 15.5 The board is careful in its recruitment process to seek people who are an appropriate fit with the ethos and culture of the organisation and the board.
- 15.6 The board is careful in its recruitment process to deliberately seek a diversity of relevant skills, experience and personality so that the board does not become too narrowly focused.
- 15.7 The board ensures that the governing expertise in the boardroom is sufficient for the governance needs of the organisation.
- 15.8 The board takes corrective action when it detects behaviour, situations or trends which indicate that its governance is being weakened or damaged.
- 15.9 The board installs mechanisms which ensure sufficient rotation / freshening of the board to prevent staleness, and to prevent the establishment of an unaccountable, unassailable 'power base'.
- 15.10 The board evaluates its own performance at least every two years.

### **Principle 16: Proactive Integrity**

- 16.1 The board recognises that the organisation's corporate behaviour is a vital part of its Christian witness to all its stakeholders, and to the wider community.
- 16.2 The board recognises the threat to integrity that is posed by undeclared conflicts of interest, inadequate separation of duties and undue secrecy, and ensures that there are sufficient measures in place to prevent these and similar inappropriate behaviours.

- 16.3 The board installs mechanisms to ensure that all communication, statistics and appeals coming from the organisation, and all reporting within the organisation, is truthful.
- 16.4 In cases of alleged illegal or unethical behaviour by or within the organisation, the board will ensure that mechanisms exist to facilitate appropriate cooperation with relevant authorities, and that there are appropriate processes to protect and care for all individuals involved or affected. All allegations will be taken seriously.
- 16.5 In recognising that proactive integrity cannot be reduced to a mere checklist, the board will use its best efforts to model servant leadership, and to exhibit the Fruit of the Spirit in all aspects of organisational leadership.

### **About the Author**

Gary Williams is the founding National Director of Christian Management Australia. After Bible College, three years as a youth worker, and four years at uni, Gary spent eight years as Associate Pastor (Administration & Community Care) at Southport Church of Christ, where the vision for something like CMA began to emerge. In 2001, with support from Evangelical Alliance in Melbourne and Wesley Mission in Sydney, an exploratory board was formed, and later that year he tendered a resignation to the church in order to take up the position of CMA National Director. By mid-2010 he will have graduated from QUT with a Master of Business (Philanthropy and Nonprofit Studies).

Gary and his wife Debbie and their two children live on Tamborine Mountain in QLD.

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## About CMA

CMA is a non-profit, non-denominational member-based community of leaders and managers of Christian organisations, who share an interest in the ministry of management. CMA believes that the spiritual gifts of administration continue to be an important part of God's gift to the church, but one that has sometimes been overlooked, secularised, or trivialised. CMA produces publications, resources, networking and training, with well over 1000 people each year attending conferences, breakfasts and seminars around the country. CMA is a ministry of Evangelical Alliance ([www.ea.org.au](http://www.ea.org.au))

## CMA Membership

CMA offers organisational membership to churches, denominational departments and agencies, missions, Christian schools, and other Christian businesses and organisations. Our members are CEOs, fundraisers, development officers, board members, general managers, church administrators, pastors, HR managers and executive staff of the above organisations, and Christian business people who are interested in the intersection of faith and management. Members receive a variety of benefits and discounts. See [www.cma.net.au/membership](http://www.cma.net.au/membership) for details.

## CMA Conferences, Training and Networking

CMA conducts scores of networking and training events around the country each year. The events include Business Breakfasts, CEO Dialogues, Pastors Training Days, morning seminars, and our Annual Conference with 50+ electives. For conference details, we have a dedicated website at [www.cmaconference.com.au](http://www.cmaconference.com.au), and other events are listed at [www.cma.net.au/events](http://www.cma.net.au/events)

## Website Resources

For further resources, books and CDs on ministry governance, visit our governance website at [www.governance.org.au](http://www.governance.org.au) – and sign up for our governance email. Or visit our main site at [www.cma.net.au](http://www.cma.net.au) for events, resources and material on topics other than governance.

## Have You Found This Helpful?

This publication has been provided for free by CMA, in the hope that it may be of assistance. If you have found it helpful, you may wish to consider a donation to CMA – and / or becoming a CMA member if you are not already.

CMA is a small, 2.2 staff organisation, not bankrolled by any large entity, but funded by membership fees, event revenue, sponsorship and donations. Our vision and our ideas for serving the Christian sector are far larger than our small financial resources allow, but we are 100% convinced of God's calling in our mission to maximise ministry effectiveness, and build organisational character.

Developing, designing, printing and distributing these standards has cost CMA thousands of dollars, not counting many hours of staff and board time. We give it away because we think the principles are important enough to deserve wide circulation. CMA has other similar publications and related projects in the pipeline, but our present limited capacity means fairly slow progress.

If you have found this helpful, or if you would like to assist CMA expand the development of this and similar resources, there are several ways you can help:

1. Make a donation of \$20 or \$50 to help offset the printing and postage costs.
2. Become a CMA Member (from \$95 for individuals or \$220 for organisations) and help build the strength of the CMA community.
3. Make a larger donation to help accelerate CMA's ability to create resources and training in areas of ministry leadership and management.
4. If you are a business, sponsorship provides tax-effective opportunities for supporting the work of CMA.
5. Even though CMA is not a deductible gift recipient, there are ways (for example, via Steer Incorporated) that individuals can give tax-effectively to CMA.

To donate securely online, or for more information, visit  
**[www.cma.net.au/support](http://www.cma.net.au/support)**.

For many churches and Christian organisations, the desire in the boardroom for governance excellence is not always matched by the organisational capacity to get there. We instinctively want to be 'Best Practice' boards, but just defining that can be a challenge. Actually getting there can be a huge leap.

CMA urges an interim step: Essential Standards. In this succinct publication, CMA National Director Gary Williams proposes sixteen principles to guide our way forward in the boardroom, fleshed out into 111 standards that should be true of each church or ministry. Unless there is a very good reason!

Designed with the volunteer ministry board member in mind, this publication is offered for free by CMA. We hope that it may help to maximise ministry effectiveness, and build organisational character. See [www.governance.org.au](http://www.governance.org.au) for a free PDF or Print version.

*"CMA's Essential Standards of Ministry Governance represents outstanding work which should prove valuable to ministries in Australia."*

DAN BUSBY—President, Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA)

*"These standards provide a wonderfully clear digestible governance framework for all ministry boards. There is significant practical wisdom here. I encourage all ministry boards to consider and action one principle in each meeting in the next year or so (and then start the list again). This is a great tool for continual reminder and renewal."*

ANDREW LIND—Partner, Corney and Lind Lawyers

*"Foundations need to know that the organisations they support are well governed. CMA's Essential Standards offer all organisations a practical and simple summary of the key areas we like to see in place, for the ministries with whom we form lasting partnerships."*

RICHARD BEAUMONT—CEO, Entrust Foundation

*"Good governance is about steering and stewarding an organisation to achieve its mission. CMA's Essential Standards of Ministry Governance provides a valuable guide for Boards who take their responsibilities seriously. I believe it will improve governance in ministry organisations and make them more effective."*

MURRAY BAIRD—Chairman, Moores Legal



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