

# Maintaining a healthy Board

**We need to bring people onto “the team” well and develop teamwork**

It helps to think about governance in sporting terms – a sporting team trains in between games to build teamwork, develop strategies and cohesion. If they just turn up on game day and “make it up” it doesn't go well. House staff get to work together daily, build formal and informal relationships and teamwork. However, often Boards expect to just turn up every four to six weeks for a couple of hours and magically and seamlessly work together.

We need to bring people onto “the team” well and develop teamwork through a good induction process, engaging together outside of Board meetings to build relationships, and by reviewing our performance as a “team” every year.

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## Recruitment

- Neighbourhood House Boards must come from people who live and/or work in your community, (under the Neighbourhood House Strategic Framework) so recruiting a Board that has a blend of the necessary skills needed AND local people who are willing to learn and develop governance skills is essential.
- Recruit people who are open to asking questions, to learn and to think outside the square
- Recruit according to the most benefit to the House, not by popularity or friendship circles



## Staying healthy

- Conduct an annual performance review of the Board. Ask:

**How are we going?**

**What should we start doing?**

**What should we stop doing?**

- Remember to use the Mission filter to decide what new work to take on or what to stop doing.
- Identify pre-existing relationships, both good and bad, with staff, volunteers and other Board members. Be honest – this will help to create open, transparent dealings when making decisions with your Board hat on.
- The Board is not static, nor caught on a mouse wheel, going round and round doing the same thing all the time. It should be dynamic and pro-active in how it goes about its work.

## Induction

- Starts before the first Board meeting
- Is an on-going process of support and mentoring
- Involves providing a good, up-to-date package of information to the new member and a process to step them through it
- Ensures the new member can more easily grasp the processes, procedures and aims of the House.
- The faster they become comfortable within their new role, the faster they will contribute

