better® boards conference

Master the Art of the Boardroom

Changing Nature of Governance

Better Boards Conference 2027
Friday & Saturday 23-24th July
RACV City Club, Melbourne, VIC

Apply to Speak at: https://app.betterboards.net/speakers/apply
Applications Close: Tuesday 22nd December 2026

Speaker Applicant Information

Better Boards Conference 2027

23-24th July, Melbourne

Not-for-profit organisations (NFPs), social enterprises and community businesses fill essential gaps and provide support and services in areas of need. The survival and success of these organisations is essential to achieve their mission, function and purpose.

Traditional governance models and strategic processes are being tested in today's rapid economic and societal change. Organisations need governance that withstands turmoil in society, adapts safely in the face of rapid change, and future-proofs the journey to organisational success.

Our theme for 2027 is ***The Changing Nature of Governance***

Are regulatory and legislative updates are being formed to assist? Are additional hurdles being created? What changes would cut boardroom red-tape and allow a productive path towards purpose?

Leaders are looking for innovative solutions to make their budget or resources go further - what strategies, processes and innovations can beat rising costs and dwindling resources? What characteristics will boards themselves need to remain fit for purpose as the environment the organisation operates in continues to evolve?

The Better Boards Conference assists boards, CEOs and executives of NFP organisations with timely insights, practical tools, solutions and strategies to support governance and leadership roles and responsibilities, to help build better boards for our NFP organisations.

The organising committee is now accepting original papers and presentations that assist board members and CEOs to succeed in their role to provide leadership, direction, innovation and resilience through strategic thinking and governance best practices.

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Who should apply?

- **Directors, CEOs, chairpersons** (leaders) of organisations or companies.
- **Researchers** in the field of governance, strategy, decision-making.
- **Individuals** who in their field of endeavour have a powerful and practical message that is aligned to the conference theme.

Topic Guidance

Can you help board members and CEOs of NFP organisations to:

- Develop strategies for efficient leadership and operations.
- Anticipate emerging risks, identify opportunities or gaps for innovation.
- Understand emerging drivers, forces and trends.
- Lead through uncertainty, create enabling conditions and guardrails.
- Co-create solutions, scale impact.
- Build partnerships, alliances and influence key stakeholders.
- Lead financially sustainable operations.
- Understand and apply leadership co-design principles and practices.
- Develop adaptable frameworks and approaches to evolving challenges.
- Embody adaptability, resilience and initiative.

Suggested topic areas include:

- Governance best practices
- Building board capability/agility
- Changing legislation or regulation, or updated interpretations
- Director's role in unlocking innovation
- CEO Chair relationship
- Building resilient boards
- Governance structures for turbulent environments
- Directors duties
- Adaptive strategy and decision-making
- Economic outlook, strategic planning, policy and innovation
- Models for co-governance
- Models for organisational transformation
- Change management for directors
- Risk management, conflicts of interest,
- Strategic leadership, succession planning
- Policies, processes and systems
- Board dynamics, culture and leadership
- Business or financial models for innovation/scale/surviving turbulent times

Case studies:

Chairpersons and CEOs are encouraged to present their board's innovative governance and leadership success story, highlighting actionable takeaways for conference delegates (mindful that it aligns with the '*Changing Nature of Governance*' conference theme).

Examples could include:
- Innovative governance and leadership success story.
- Managing a major strategic change.
- Leading an organisational transformation.

Note that:

Presentations must not be advertorial in nature, or specifically promote commercial products and/or services either during the presentation or by means of banners, flyers etc within the venue.

Selection Criteria
What are we looking for?

Does your proposal:

- Relate to the conference theme (in conjunction with the topic of your choice).
- Use evidence-based research, or form part of a research project.
- Provide realistic strategies, clear actions, practical solutions, processes or tools.

We are looking for proposals that support these outcomes:

- Governance and leadership strategies, solutions, ideas and best practices to develop and drive organisational adaptability and success.
- Assist leaders to support their organisation to operate efficiently.
- Enhance the capacity and capability of directors.
- Unpack relevant strategic insights and substantial ideas.
- Offer practical tools, processes or frameworks to assist directors and support their CEO and/or executives.

Does your presentation offer practical steps and actionable strategies for boards and directors to explore the *changing nature of governance*?

Have you included exercises to practice in-session or complete in small groups in the room?

IMPORTANT NOTES:

Promotion of commercial products or services
Presentations deemed to promote specific commercial products or services may not be accepted. If you wish to promote a product or service, please contact Better Boards for sponsorship information.

Topics featuring AI:
Proposals featuring AI as their main solution will be critically assessed. Only include AI discussions or tools if it is part of a tried and tested evidence-based solution.

Applications written with AI:
Proposals that appear to be largely written with AI rather than the author's own style may be disadvantaged. It is critical to include a video with your application that discusses your propossed topic in your own words.
See video notes on page 7.

Co-presenters:
Applications proposing multiple speakers are less likely to be accepted.

Audience

Who is in the Audience?

The audience typically consists of chairpersons and directors (70%), CEOs (20%), and senior managers of Australasian not-for-profit organisations.

These leaders attend to:

- Equip themselves with realistic ideas, strategies and practical tools to assist with and refine their governance and leadership journey.
- Discuss key industry/sector trends, stay up-to-date with new ideas, strategic insights and information.
- Find support, solutions and best practices.
- Connect with fellow change-makers and leaders in the NFP space.

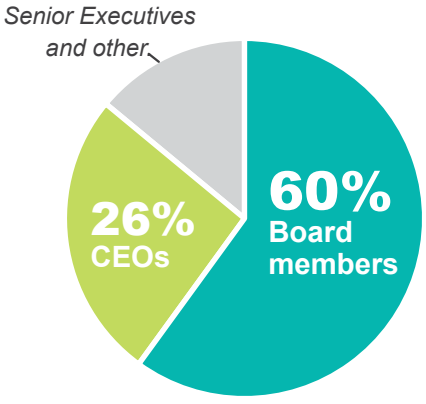
Attendees represent a diverse range of NFP organisations from a wide variety of industries/sectors throughout Australasia. A large proportion represent Aged Care, Disability and Community Service organisations of varying sizes.

Uniting factors include:

- The challenges faced in their governance and leadership roles.
- A focus on financially sustainable operations.
- A commitment to boardroom excellence and to making a difference in the communities and regions in which they operate.

Can you offer this audience:

Realistic strategies, tools, insights, case studies, innovations, processes, governance best practices, updates, exercises, practical ideas and takeaways?



Total audience attending Better Boards Conference 2026

Make sure you know what you're getting into

As a speaker you get:

- Complimentary registration to the conference (Friday-Saturday).
- A nationally recognised platform from which to influence the discussion and direction of governance and leadership in the NFP sector, raise your profile and cement yourself as a governance thought leader.
- A qualified audience of Australasian NFP directors and CEOs. Approximately 90% of the attendees are directors or CEOs.
- Promotional materials that you can distribute to your network.
- A copy of the recording of your presentation (where possible).
- Opportunity to submit an article for publication in the Conference Magazine.
- Opportunity have your article published in the Better Boards Newsletter (an audience of approximately 5,500+ NFP directors and CEOs).

Note that you will need to cover the cost of any technology, accommodation and travel arrangements you may require to get to and from the conference.

Format

The conference may be held in a hybrid format. Presentations may be pre-recorded as part of the preparation. Speakers must intend to present in-person.

Workshop style presentations will be up to 40 minutes total duration including questions and discussion (problem-solving) on areas of interest.
Plenary style presentations will be up to 20 minutes duration, and questions may be addressed separately in panel format.
Case studies will be approximately 25 minutes duration.

Location

The Better Boards Conference 2027 will be held in-person at the RACV City Club in Melbourne, VIC, Australia.

SAVE THESE DATES:

Friday 23 July
Better Boards Conference Day One
Leadership Networking Function (evening)

Saturday 24 July
Better Boards Conference Day Two

How do I apply?

The application form redacts identifying information allowing ALL applications to initially be reviewed and evaluated anonymously on equal footing.

We recommend applicants submit more than one proposal to increase the chance of inclusion if multiple proposals are received on the same topic.

You will need on-hand for the application:

- Brief biography (as relevant to this audience)
- Photo (JPG, high resolution – at least 1MB in size)
- Presentation Title (max 10 words)
- Presentation Description (max 300 words)
- 3 Key points and your number 1 outcome or take-away for delegates.
- A short informal video (5 min max) – to tell us **why your topic is important**, and what key take-aways you have for the audience.
  We recommend uploading your video to a cloud-based storage (e.g. wistia, youtube, dropbox) and paste the link into the application form.

Do I need to do an application video?

This is important. The video usually separates similar applications covering the same topic. It's critically important if you wish to distinguish your application from applications written by AI and tend to include similar phrases!

The video doesn't need to be formal, it should be a candid discussion about your proposed topic. It shouldn't match your application text verbatim.

The most important thing to cover in your video is
- **why your proposed topic is important for directors, and**
- **key takeaways for the audience.**

APPLICATIONS CLOSE

Tuesday 22nd December (2026)

APPLY AT

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Contact

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