

Policy and advocacy strategy 2021

Governance Institute believes high standards of governance are essential for public trust in organisations. Well-governed organisations deliver better performance and safeguard the interests of their stakeholders, including shareholders, employees and the community.

Our 2025 advocacy objective is to be the sought-after voice that shapes the governance environment — the go-to authority for governance and risk for members, government, regulators and the community.

In 2021, our specific policy proposals are designed to achieve **three broad objectives:**

1. *Australia's governance environment enables sustainable, purposeful organisations that are both profitable and internationally competitive.*
2. *Australia's regulatory framework is clear, certain, coherent and fit-for-purpose.*
3. *To ensure the competence and professionalism of Australian governance and risk professionals.*

Our policy and advocacy are supported by long-standing relationships with key stakeholders and our members' significant expertise and experience, which informs our policy and advocacy positions. Through our policy committees, our members contribute to our policy development, which helps governments, and regulators deliver better public policy and an improved corporate governance environment.

As part of our policy development process we: ensure member representation and liaison with relevant regulatory and standard setting bodies, develop and maintain working partnerships with key national and international stakeholder groups, research and analyse current and emerging governance issues and advocate our policy positions with governments and regulators.

We communicate our policy positions by:

- proactively engaging with relevant ministers, regulators and other stakeholders
- regular columns in our journal, *Governance Directions*, frequent posts on LinkedIn and other social media channels, and
- participating in relevant parliamentary and other hearings, industry events and speaking engagements.

Objective 1: Australia's governance environment

Fit-for-purpose business infrastructure — Modernising business registers (MBR)	Advocacy campaign — Led by the ATO, this major project to modernise the business registry system will provide the backbone for transforming the way businesses interact with government. We will continue our active consultation with the modernisation project team and membership of the project's Business Advisory Group. We will continue to advocate with government about the importance of maintaining funding and momentum on this key project — Ongoing campaign.
Climate change	Thought leadership — Examine the major governance and risk issues impacting organisations when setting net zero emissions targets. Release Q4 2021.
Trusted public institutions	Advocacy campaign — Commonwealth Anti-Corruption Commission (CIC) — Corruption resilience, detection and enforcement are critical priorities for all organisations — government, business or civil society in an increasingly competitive world. Governance Institute supports the establishment of a CIC and considers it would assist in restoring trust in public institutions. We will make a submission on the Government's proposals to establish a CIC as a priority in Q1 2021.
The governance of 'S' risks	Thought leadership — Guidance — Environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors have become issues of major importance to organisations, and there is an increasing focus by investors on the social risks facing organisations. These issues include: occupational health and safety, protecting human rights, focusing on product integrity and socially positive outcomes in relation to employees. Release date 2022 (TBC).

Objective 2: Regulatory framework

Reducing complexity and red tape	Advocacy campaign — Bringing shareholder communications into the 21st century — We will continue to support the amendments to the Corporations Act to enable organisations to hold electronic meetings and facilitate electronic communication with shareholders — Q1 2021.
#fixfundraising	Advocacy campaign — As a member of this Coalition we will continue to call for reform of the laws applying to the fundraising activities of charities and not-for-profits — Q2 2021.
Regulatory reform — Watching brief	BAU — We maintain a watching brief on relevant regulatory reforms particularly those arising out of the implementation of the Financial Services Royal Commission recommendations, the Aged Care Royal Commission and APRA's revision of its Governance standards — Ongoing.
Partner with national or international stakeholder	Thought leadership — Guidance — Partnership on thought leadership and guidance with major stakeholder organisations with expertise in governance and risk is a key aspect of Governance Institute's policy work. We will continue this work in 2021 with at least one major collaborative project. Release date TBC.

Objective 3: Competence and professionalism

Risk management for directors	Thought leadership — Guidance — Update to one of our most downloaded resources. First published in early 2016, the update will incorporate material on managing environmental social and governance (ESG) risks as well as insights from ASIC's recent report on oversight of non-financial risks — Release Q3 2021.
Public sector governance principles	Thought leadership — Guidance — Update to an existing resource originally released in 2016. The update will take into account recent changes for the public sector as well as the findings of recent reviews of the sector. Release Q4 2021.
Mandate minimum requirements for company secretaries and risk management professionals	Advocacy campaign — Government should require that newly appointed secretaries of significant organisations to fulfil a minimum requirement in terms of training and professional development. The current statutory requirements mean that almost anyone over the age of 18 who consents to act, can be the company secretary of a corporate entity. Similarly there is no minimum requirement for training for risk management professionals. In light of recent operational risk failings this should be a priority. Company secretaries and risk management professionals at companies of all sizes can benefit from job-specific training and we will call on the Government to increase the focus in this area. Release date in 2022 (TBC).
Empowering governance and risk professionals with skills and knowledge	<p>BAU — Good Governance Guides — Guidance — We will revise and update our Good Governance Guides on board papers for release in Q1 2021. We will also review and update the series of Good Governance Guides related to the <i>Corporate Governance Principles and Recommendations</i> to take into account the 4th edition changes. We will continue the review and expansion of our Good Governance Guides on risk management and will expand our collection of technology governance Guides throughout 2021.</p> <p>BAU — Donated member documents — Tools — We will continue expanding our library of documents of practical tools donated by members. We will focus on expanding the collection of risk management documents in 2021.</p>