

Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate Governance Strategy

Commitment to Governance

The Environment, Planning and Sustainable Development Directorate (EPSDD) is committed to implementing and maintaining good governance. The Director-General of EPSDD has confirmed his expectations of and commitment to the organisation's governance through the *EPSDD Governance Commitment Statement* (February 2018).

Governance refers to the arrangements, practices and culture that enables an organisation to set its direction, manage its operations and achieve expected outcomes. The right governance arrangements are needed so we can support our Ministers and community by demonstrating transparency and accountability and improving organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Our stakeholders want to know that we are considering the best interests of the community and acting with integrity whilst meeting our objectives.

The Directorate provides this assurance through systems that support sound decision-making and by strengthening our collaboration with the community and other stakeholders to "...enhance the openness of the way we govern, encompassing transparency, participation, and collaboration" (Chief Minister, June 2011).

Governance Goal

The Directorate's governance goal is to ensure that we have good governance embedded in our culture and behaviours and that we are always seeking to improve how we deliver on our organisational objectives through demonstrating good governance. Understanding the Directorate's purpose, objectives, risks and required outcomes is central to achieving this goal.

Good governance is supported by:

- Principles
- Structures
- Systems, and
- Tools.

The principles describe the framing values and philosophies that underpin our governance; they provide the reasons for doing good governance. These principles, governance structures, systems and tools are tailored to the organisation's functions and business needs. The structures provide clarity of roles, responsibility and accountability. Systems and tools describe and instruct on 'how' business and governance is to be delivered. They comprise standards, policies, plans, processes and requirements of how the business is to be done.

Governance Principles: Leadership; Accountability; Transparency; Stewardship; Integrity; Efficiency

Governance Structures: Organisational; Boards and Committees; Control and Support Functions; Reporting; Delegations

Governance Systems & Tools: Quality Management; Risk Management; Issue Management; Assurance Plans; Records & Document Management; Policies; Procedures

Leadership and Accountability

Strong leadership from our executive is key to embedding a positive governance culture and behaviours. The leaders' role is to model good governance for everyone in the organisation, to set the right 'tone at the top', establishing and promoting clear objectives, setting and communicating the strategic direction and focussing on achieving high performance within the public sector's legislative and policy frameworks.

Staff are enabled to accept responsibility and accountability for their decisions and actions through:

- Organisational structures that provide clear lines of responsibility and ownership
- Clearly communicated and understood organisational objectives and strategic direction, and
- Visible reporting lines supported by regular and constructive performance monitoring and feedback.

The Government and the community will be assured by governance supported by independent reporting focused on areas of risk and agreed performance measures that demonstrate that our objectives are being achieved without compromising organisational integrity.

Behaviours and culture

Governance is everyone's responsibility and it must be part of our decision making and actions. Everyone in the Directorate needs to understand how effective governance improves performance and achieves goals.

We aim to develop a governance culture that demonstrates and values:

- Regular communication that helps embed governance into our daily operations and decision making
- The discussion of risks, constructive review and a willingness to continually improve
- A commitment to meet obligations under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994* and other legislation
- The ACT Public Service's core values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation, and
- Active collaboration and engagement with our colleagues and our stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of the Directorate Governance Strategy (the Strategy) is to outline our approach to ensuring that the Directorate has good governance in place through:

- principles that are understood and applied
- structures that are appropriate and operating effectively, and
- systems, processes and tools, which produce a culture and behaviours that embed and support good governance.

This purpose is influenced by the increasing complexity of the Directorate's operating environment. The Directorate has diverse responsibilities for planning and land development; parks and conservation; maintaining the region's heritage and environment; and creation and implementation of climate change and sustainability policy and initiatives.

Machinery of government changes took effect on 1 July 2017 and added to the complexity of our governance responsibilities. Under the *City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency Act 2017* (CRASLA Act) and associated Administrative Arrangements 2017 (No 1), the Directorate is responsible for a range of strategic land supply and development functions. It is also the administrative arm through which the responsible ministers under the CRASLA Act hold the City Renewal Authority and Suburban Land Agency to account for their performance and implementation of robust operational governance.

These changes and the added diversity have created the requirement for a Directorate-wide understanding of governance arrangements. We need to do a Directorate 'governance assessment' to know what governance is in place, and how effective, comprehensive and integrated it is.

Approach

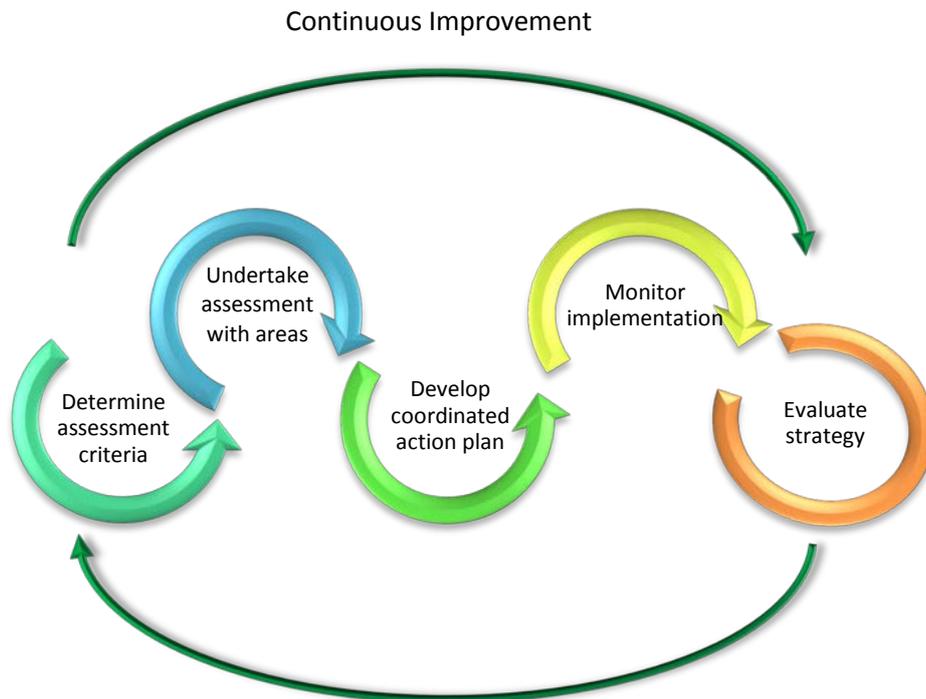
This Strategy's approach is to identify and assess existing governance systems and:

- where they are effective, to build on them
- where there are gaps or areas of risk, to address them, and
- where systems are absent or substandard, to establish or improve them.

To determine the effectiveness and maturity of our existing internal governance principles, structures, processes and systems we will develop assessment criteria based on good governance principles, standards and guidance from verified sources such as international standards.

To productively explore opportunities, mitigate risks and embed good governance, the assessment will be undertaken collaboratively between the Governance Team and each business area.

Assessment Cycle



The assessment cycle comprises the following steps:

Step 1 – Determine assessment criteria. These will be based on recognised and relevant best practice.

Step 2 – Undertake an extensive assessment exercise collaboratively with all business areas. Map the structures, systems and tools that are in place and determine if they are effective. This will identify if the principles are being supported, applied and reflected in the business area's policies, procedures and practices.

Step 3 – Upon completion of the assessment, identify and document the gaps on an Action Plan, risk assesses them to determine if impact goes beyond business area and propose appropriate remedial actions.

Step 4 – Submit completed Action Plan to the Performance and Business Management Committee (PBMC), which will endorse recommended prioritisation of activities, allocation of responsibilities and monitor implementation.

Step 5 – Evaluate the strategy. Document lessons learnt, revise as required to support continuous improvement.

The assessment cycle forms part of an ongoing body of work that has prioritised key organisation-wide governance activities based on risks identified in previous audits and the requirement to establish effective governance practices. Open recommendations from the previous audits will be included in the proposed action plan to ensure they are addressed.

A timeline for this body of work has been provided at [Attachment A](#).

Outcomes

Successful implementation of this Strategy aims to ensure that as a Directorate we use our governance arrangements to contribute positively to our overall performance and the delivery of our services and programs, whilst providing assurance that we are meeting all legislation, regulations, standards and our community’s expectation of probity, accountability and openness.

Successful outcomes will include:

- A strong governance culture based on the governance principles of leadership, transparency, accountability, integrity, stewardship and effectiveness.
- A leadership team setting the Directorate’s strategic direction, monitoring organisational performance against agreed indicators and implementing a culture of governance awareness
- Effective organisational and committee structures
- Transparent record keeping, reporting and decision making
- Clear and understood roles, responsibilities and accountabilities
- A managed and standardised suite of policies and procedures relevant to the business needs
- Implementation of best practice governance systems within the Directorate.

Best Practice Governance Systems

The systems outlined below will be strengthened across the Directorate as part of the strategy.



Key organisational outputs of the strategy include:

- Action plan/s documenting systematic approach to identifying actions required to strengthen governance.
- Implementation of risk management, quality management, issues management and assurance management systems.

- Organisational commitments register establishing and ongoing monitoring and reporting cycle established to ensure the Directorate is meeting its obligations to Ministers and the community.
- Electronic Document and Records Management System (Objective) rolled out to all officers along with records management training and compliance monitoring processes.
- Portfolio wide policy and procedure register and standardised process for policy governance.
- Standardised project management methodology and templates.

Attachment A - Assessment Timeline

