

Training Session Notes: Transition from Observership to Alumni

Key Themes

- Transitioning from Observership to board roles
- Building a strong **Board CV** and **personal statement**
- Developing a **Board Value Proposition**
- Networking and positioning for future opportunities
- Due diligence before joining a board
- Diversity and governance considerations

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Reflect on Your Observership Experience

- Document key discussions, governance challenges, and resolutions.
- Note your contributions (subcommittees, leadership support, problem-solving).
- Identify skills developed and relationships built.
- Remember: Directorship is a **relationship business**.

2. Crafting Your Board CV

- **Timing matters:** Update CV while experiences are fresh.
- Keep it **max 2 pages** – nobody reads page 3.
- Focus on:
 - **Personal Statement** (values, passions, lived experience)
 - **Governance experience** (Observership year counts!)
 - **Skills Matrix** (transferable skills for board roles)
 - **Strategic outcomes**, not operational tasks.
- Highlight community involvement and voluntary work **at the top**.

3. Board Value Proposition

- Your elevator pitch: *Who am I as a director?*
- Articulate:
 - Core strengths and leadership qualities.
 - Impact and outcomes you can deliver.
 - Unique perspective (e.g., sector expertise, diversity).
- Refine iteratively with feedback from mentors and peers.

4. Cover Letters

- Demonstrate genuine interest and research.
- Avoid generic openings (“I am writing to express...”).
- Keep it **one page**, three paragraphs max.
- Build bridges between your experience and the organization’s purpose.

5. Networking & Positioning

- Connect with board members on LinkedIn.
- Share updates (career changes, board appointments).
- Use strategic keywords in your profile.
- Join alumni groups and stay visible.

6. Due Diligence Before Joining a Board

- Research:
 - Organization's purpose, annual reports, ACNC listing.
 - Board composition, chair leadership style.
 - Diversity matrix and genuine commitment to inclusion.
- Ask about:
 - Director indemnity insurance.
 - Financial health and risk exposure.
- Be cautious about joining subcommittees—understand **shadow director liability**.

7. Diversity and Inclusion

- Diversity can be a value proposition, but test authenticity.
- Avoid tokenism; ensure the board's commitment to change.
- Consider whether you'll have support or feel isolated.

NEXT STEPS AND ACTION ITEMS

✓ Update your Board CV:

- Include Observership year experience, governance exposure, and strategic contributions.
- Add a skills matrix and personal statement.

✓ Develop your Board Value Proposition:

- Draft and refine your elevator pitch.
- Test with trusted peers or mentors.

✓ Network strategically:

- Reconnect with host board members.
- Optimise LinkedIn profile with Observership experience and keywords.

✓ Research target boards:

- Identify sectors and organizations aligned with your values.
- Conduct due diligence on board composition, leadership, and diversity.

✓ Prepare for applications:

- Draft tailored cover letters.
- Position yourself for impact and outcomes.

✓ Stay engaged with alumni programs:

- Update contact details.
- Explore mentoring and professional development opportunities.