

# Governance Story for Aboriginal Corporations

## Planning for the future



## Governance Story for Aboriginal Corporations series

These books help members and directors of Aboriginal corporations understand governance.



The Central Land Council (CLC) and Aboriginal corporation directors in the CLC region made these books.

This book is only for learning. It is not advice. If you have a question or a problem, talk to a lawyer. The writers of this book, CLC and ORIC are not responsible for things you do because of this book.

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# Hard words

## **corporation**

A group of people want to hold land, make money or work together. So, they make a legal person, called a corporation. A corporation is only a person on paper.

## **members**

The Aboriginal corporation belongs to a group of people. These people are the members.

## **directors board of directors board**

The corporation members choose a small group of members to govern and make decisions for the corporation.

## **operations**

The everyday work of the corporation.

## **chief executive officer (CEO)**

The CEO is the staff person who manages the operations of the corporation.

## **committee**

The board makes a smaller group to talk about special jobs or ideas.

Committees help the board make decisions.



**strategic plan**

The plan that has all the ideas about what the corporation wants for the future.

**business plan**

The plan for the corporation's operations. It shows how the corporation will do the things in the strategic plan.

**achieve  
achievable**

Achieve means to make something happen. Achievable means it can happen.

**objectives  
goals**

The things that the corporation plans to achieve.

**resources**

Everything the corporation needs to do its work. Resources can be things like money, people, tools, buildings, cars and computers.

**monitoring**

Watching what the corporation is doing and checking the plans are right.

# Strategic planning

The board of directors plan the future of the corporation. They decide what the corporation will do to achieve that future. Achieve means to make that future happen.

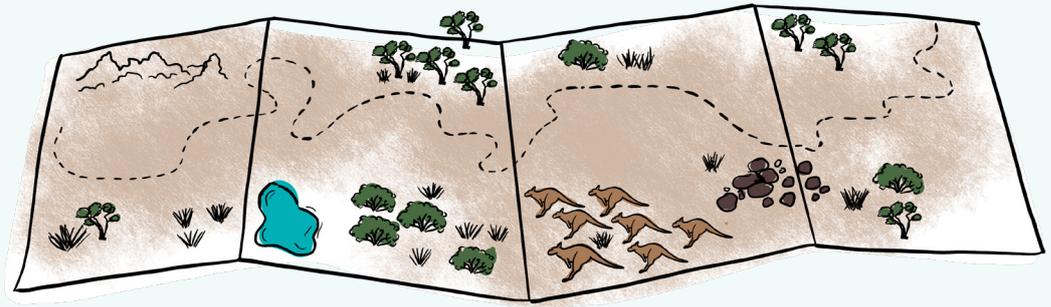
Strategic planning is like getting ready for a long trip. We ask these questions before we start.



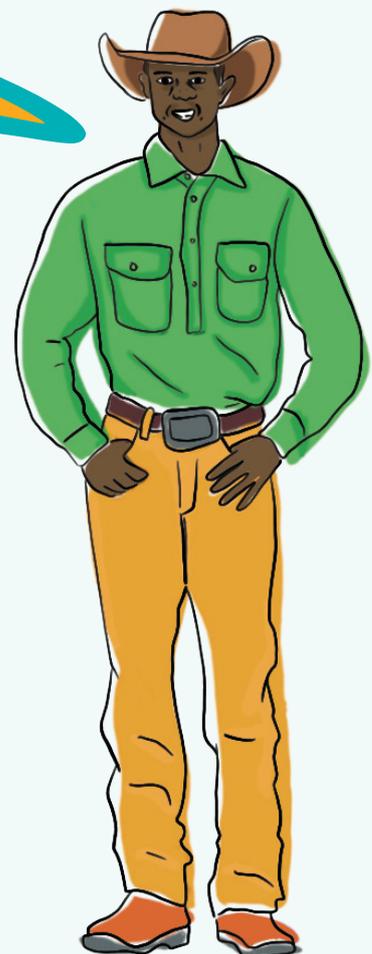
## What is a strategic plan?

The strategic plan is the plan that the board makes at the end of strategic planning. It has all the ideas about what the corporation wants to do.

The strategic plan is like a road map that says where the corporation wants to go and how to get there.



The strategic plan is our map. It helps us keep on track. It stops us getting lost. It helps us make decisions on the way.



## Who makes the strategic plan?

Different corporations make their plans in different ways. It is the board's job to make sure the strategic plan is right.

When the board says "yes" to the strategic plan, it is called approving the plan.

Sometimes the board writes the plan. Sometimes, they ask for help from other people, like:

- a committee – a small group of people
- a consultant – a person from outside the corporation
- staff, like the CEO, managers or other workers.

Committees, consultants or staff can help:

- directors to work together
- find the right words to talk about the corporation's future
- write the strategic plan.

Other people can write the strategic plan, but the board has to approve the plan.





## Making strategic decisions

Sometimes, the best way to get to the goals might not be the quickest or cheapest way. The strategic way is doing the right thing for the:

- country
- traditional law
- culture
- community
- corporation.

When we make a strategic plan, we think about the next 5 years, 10 years and 100 years.

We think about the best things our corporation can do for our country and people.



## What are stakeholders?

A corporation cannot achieve the goals on its own. It needs to work with other people and organisations. They are called stakeholders.

A stakeholder is a person or organisation that:

- does something for the corporation
- gets something from the corporation.

When we do strategic planning, we need to think about who our stakeholders are.

The strategic plan can help us decide who we work for and who we work with.

It can help stakeholders decide if they want to work with us.



## Many corporations have these stakeholders



# Making a strategic plan

Every strategic plan looks different. These are the main things that go into most strategic plans.

**Vision** What the corporation wants the future to be.

**Purpose** What the corporation does to help achieve that future.

The directors think about things like:

- who the corporation wants to work for
- why it wants to do that work.

Another word for purpose is mission.

**Objectives** The big goals for the corporation. These are the things the corporation wants to achieve.

**Activities** What the corporation does to achieve the goals.

**Values** The beliefs that guide how the corporation works.

Example: If the corporation was a football team

**Vision**

We are the best community football team in the NT.

**Purpose**

We play good football.



**Objectives**

- To make our community proud.
- To win prizes.
- To win all the games.

**Activities**

- We train.
- We play all our games.
- We stay fit.

**Values**

- We follow all the rules.
- We play as a team.
- We do not get cheeky.

Example: If the corporation was a shop

**Vision**

Our community is strong and healthy.

**Purpose**

We sell healthy food that everyone in the community can buy, when they need it.



**Objectives**

- To have fresh healthy food for sale.
- To keep prices of healthy food low.
- To have a community that knows about healthy foods and how to cook them.

**Activities**

- Plan for what the community might buy.
- Open the shop 6 days a week.
- Do healthy meal training for the community.

**Values**

- We respect country and culture.
- We work for the community.
- We look after our workers.



## Resources

Always think about the resources the corporation needs to do the activities. Resources can be things like money, staff, computers and cars.

Our football team needs these resources to achieve our goals:

- a good coach
- team uniforms
- a bus and fuel to take us to games
- a field to train on.



Our shop needs these resources to achieve our goals:

- workers
- a building
- shelves, fridges and freezers
- a truck to bring food.



# Consultation

When making a strategic plan, directors need to consult with stakeholders. Consulting is 2-ways. It means to talk and listen to stakeholders to find out what they want and need.

Consultation helps:

- build trust and good relationships with the community and other groups
- people understand how and why the board made the plan.



When directors listen to what stakeholders want, they can make a better plan. If stakeholders can share new ideas, then:

- the plan will work for everyone
- directors can find and fix problems before those problems get big.



# Sharing the strategic plan

It is good for the corporation to share the strategic plan with stakeholders.

The strategic plan tells our stakeholders what we want to do. Stakeholders look at our plan to see if we want the same things as them. This helps them decide if they want to work with us.



Some corporations put their strategic plan on their website for everyone to see.

# Using the strategic plan

The corporation uses the strategic plan to:

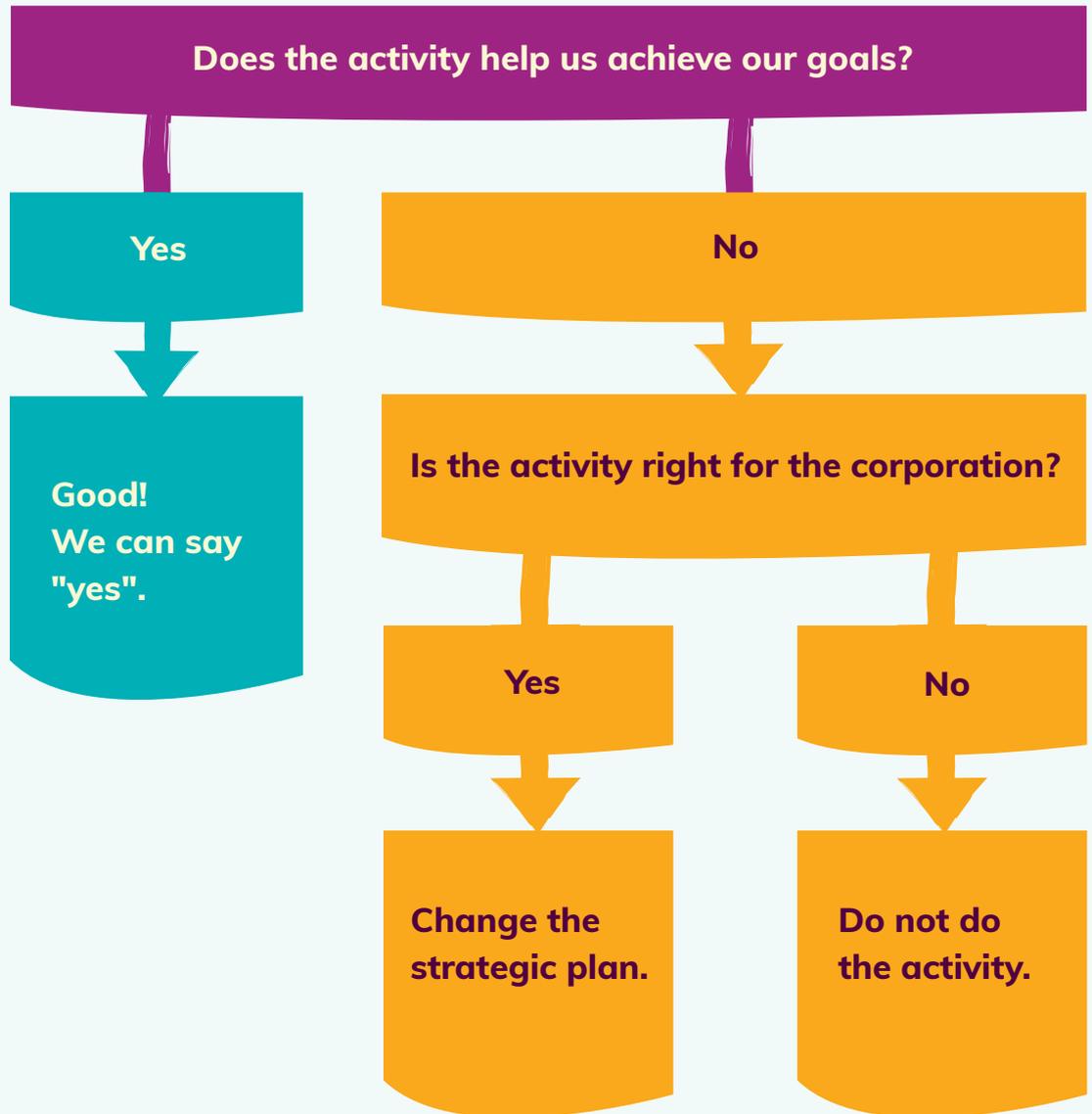
- plan how to do the activities
- decide how to use resources
- check if the corporation is achieving its objectives or goals
- check if the CEO or other managers are doing a good job
- help the corporation stay strong in the future
- make strategic decisions.





## Deciding on a new activity

When the board of directors decides on a new activity, it is good to check if the activity fits the strategic plan. The activity needs to help achieve the corporation goals.



If the corporation says "yes", it has to make sure:

- it has the resources to do the activity
- it can achieve the activity.

Sometimes the activity is not right for the corporation, but it is right for the community. Then, it can be good to find another organisation to do that work.

We have an art centre. Some of our artists needed someone to look after their little ones so they could paint. We thought about having a childcare service.

Looking after little ones is not in our strategic plan. But the whole community needed it. So, we talked to the school about this idea. Now the school is building an early learning centre.





# Business plan

A business plan is for the corporation's operations. Operations is the everyday work of the corporation.

A business plan shows:

- how the corporation will do the things in the strategic plan
- what resources the corporation needs to do the activities.

The strategic plan shows us where we want to go.

The business plan shows us how we are going to get there.



The corporation can have a business plan for:

- all the corporation work
- different projects or programs.

We have a business plan for the shop. It says all the things we need to do and how we will do them. This plan is for 3 years.

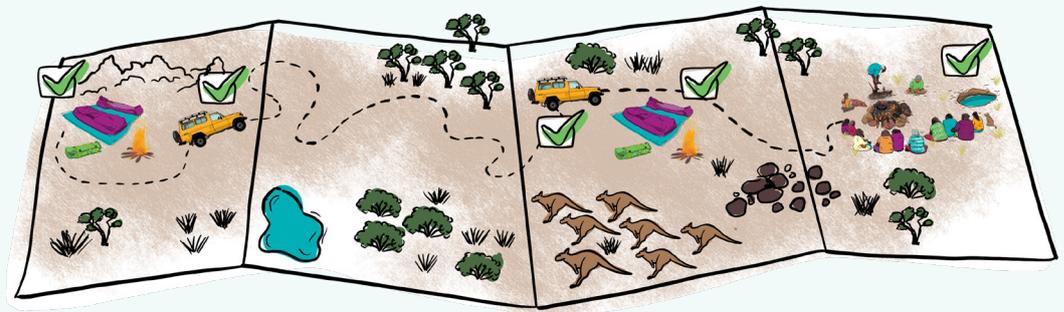
We also made a business plan for our healthy meal training program. This plan is for one year. It helped us get the money for the program.



## Goals in the business plan

The corporation needs a way to check if it is achieving the objectives in the strategic plan. So, the business plan breaks those big objectives into smaller goals that the corporation can work on.

It is like places on a map that you visit on your trip.



## SMART goals

It is good to have SMART goals in the business plan. SMART goals help the corporation know when it has achieved the goal.

**S**

**S is for Straight**

The goal has to be very clear.

**M**

**M is for Make**

The corporation has to know if it has made the goal happen.

**A**

**A is for Achievable**

The goal can happen.

**R**

**R is for Right**

The goal has to be important to the vision and the purpose.

**T**

**T is for Time**

The goal has an end time. The corporation has to achieve the goal by that time.



## Example SMART goal for a footy team

Objective: To win prizes.

**S** **Straight** Which prizes does the team want to win?  
The Central Australian Football League Senior Men's competition premierships trophy.

**M** **Make** How do we know if we made it happen?  
There is one trophy. Did the team win it or not?

**A** **Achievable** Can the team win the trophy?  
Yes. The team is strong.

**R** **Right** Is winning the prize right for the team's vision and purpose?  
Yes. Our vision is being the best community football team in the NT. Our purpose is to play good football.

**T** **Time** When will the team achieve it?  
This year.

So, the SMART goal is:

To win the Central Australian Football League Senior Men's competition premierships trophy this year.



## Example SMART goal for a shop

Objective: To keep prices of healthy food low.

**S** **Straight** What foods?  
Fresh fruit and vegetables.

**M** **Make** How do we know when we have made low prices?  
When the prices of fresh fruit and vegetables are the same as at Coles.

**A** **Achievable** Can the shop sell these things at the same price as Coles?  
Yes, if we make a good plan.

**R** **Right** Is selling fruit and vegetables at low prices right for the shop's vision and purpose?  
Yes. Our vision is to have a strong and healthy community.  
Our purpose is to sell healthy food that everyone in the community can buy when they need it.

**T** **Time** How long will this take?  
We will do this in 2 years.

So, the SMART goal is:

To sell fresh fruit and vegetables for the same price as Coles in 2 years.





# Monitoring plans

Monitoring means:

- watching what the corporation is doing
- checking that the plans are right.

The board of directors has to check:

- what the corporation is doing
- that the corporation is getting closer to its goals
- that the plans are still right for the corporation.



## Questions to help monitor plans

Ask these questions to look after your strategic plan.

What has changed inside the corporation?

**Are all the activities happening?**

Are the activities happening the right way and at the right time?

**Is the strategic plan still right for our country, community and corporation?**

What has changed outside the corporation?

**Are the activities helping to achieve the goals?**

**How can we do things better?**

**What else is happening because of the activities?**

**Does the corporation have enough resources to do the activities?**

Are those things good or bad?





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