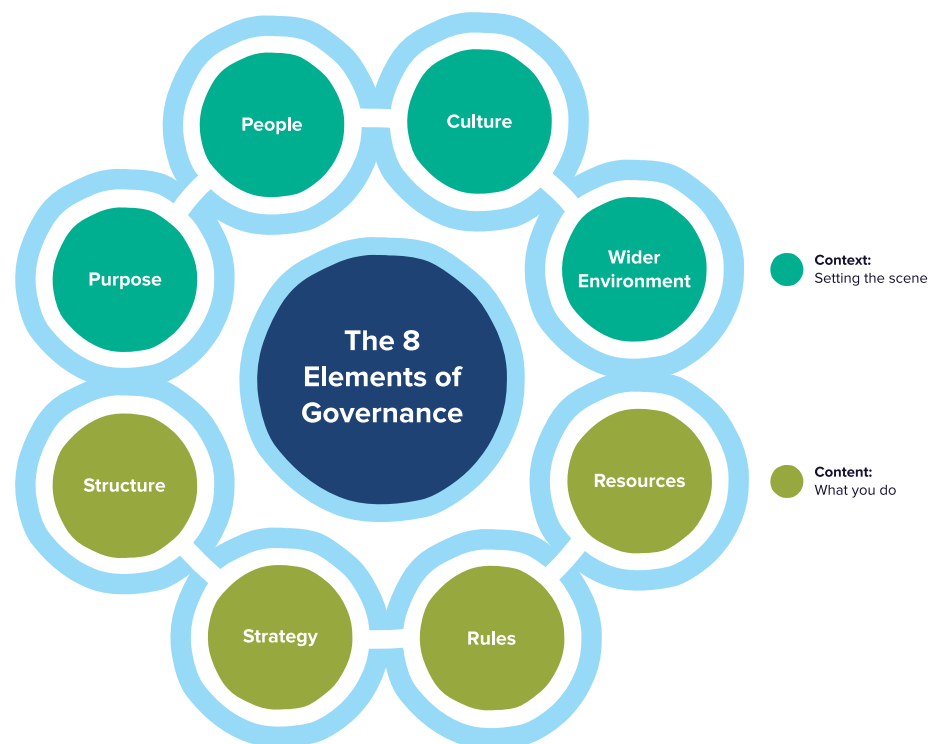# The 8 elements of governance

There are 8 elements of governance. All are equally important and linked together. For your organisation, community or nation to be effective, these elements need to work well together.

The first 4 elements – purpose, people, culture and the wider environment – are about your context: they set the scene.

The other 4 – structure, strategy, rules and resources – are about your governance model (content): what you do.

Below you will find questions to discuss about your governance in the 8 areas. Knowing the answers to these questions can help you keep your governance on track.

Context

Element	Example	Questions to ask	Your answers
Purpose (what brings you together)	A cultural connection – such as family, community or nation, your vision or mission and/or a project, program or service	• What's our shared goal? • What do we want to achieve? • Why are we coming together? • What is our shared history?	
People (who does it and who is it done for)	Elders, directors, managers, staff, volunteers, partners, members, clients, community, stakeholders	• Who do we represent? • Who are the members of our community? • Who do we want to be involved with? • Who will be the decision-makers? • What experience, character, skills and qualifications do our team need?	

Context

Element	Example	Questions to ask	Your answers
Culture (the way you do things)	Knowledge, beliefs, ideas, values, powers, laws/lores and rules, meanings, and relationships	- What responsibilities do we hold? - Who holds knowledge? - Who can speak on behalf of others? - Does our governance reflect our community's culture and values? - How can we include language or cultural practices in the way we work together?	
Wider environment (outside influences)	Other groups, organisations, communities, networks Governments, Regulators (ORIC, AISC, ACNC), funders	- Who do we need to be considerate of? - Who else do we want to work with? - What legal or regulatory obligations do we need to think about?	

Content

Element	Example	Questions to ask	Your answers
Structure (the type of group you form)	Club, corporation, association, peak body, committee, working group	- How do we want to work together to achieve what matters to us? - What structure best aligns with our purpose? - Do we want to legally incorporate or stay informal?	
Strategy (what you do)	Plans, goals, outcomes, activities, programs, milestones	- What are our priorities? - What are the steps to make them happen? - How can we monitor to make sure we stay on track? - What could go wrong and what can we do about it?	

Content

Element	Example	Questions to ask	Your answers
Rules (how you do it)	Policies, processes, procedures, roles and responsibilities	- How will we make decisions? - If we don't agree, how will we resolve disputes? - Do we have clearly defined roles and responsibilities? - How will we be accountable to our members? - What policies and processes do we need to support our governance?	
Resources (what you need)	Knowledge and skills, relationships, funding, technology, infrastructure, and natural resources	- What do we need to make it all happen? - How will we get it? - How will we manage it?	