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## Assess your governance

Assessing your governance involves evaluating and analysing a specific part of your governance. This can help you make more effective decisions, stay on track or improve your governance.

### Know your people

People are the foundation of your governance. Their ideas, priorities and concerns are what drive your group's decisions and actions. It's important to be clear on 'who' exactly is at the centre of your governance.

To define who you are, take the time to understand your group's identity. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are diverse in their culture, history, location, size and context. There are many different reasons why you may come together to govern yourselves, such as shared goals or culture. It is also important to consider the role everyone in your group has to play in your governance. This may involve identifying the 'doers' of your governance - people who carry out your governance - and the 'beneficiaries' of your governance - those who directly benefit from your governance.

### Learn from history

Your group has a unique governance history. Your history is the story of where your group came from and how you

got to where you are. As your governance grows and changes, looking to the past can help you make stronger decisions. Together, you can share stories and reflect on what has shaped your governance. For example what has helped you succeed, how you responded to challenges and what lessons can be learnt from these experiences.

Reflecting on your history isn't about replicating the past, it's about learning to navigate the future more effectively.

### Recognise your internal culture

A strong internal culture is integral to effective governance. Your internal culture is your shared values and beliefs. These affect how people work together in your organisation, community or nation.

A group's internal culture is different to the culture of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It is specific to your group's work environment. Nonetheless, your cultural values should also play a central role. Strengthen your internal culture by clearly defining values, documenting them, and ensuring leaders can explain their meaning.



## Assess your purpose and vision

To plan your group's path forward, focus on your purpose and vision.

**Purpose:** The reason why your group exists, reflecting your beliefs, motivations, and collective goals.

**Vision:** Your vision represents your future aspirations. It outlines what success looks like when your purpose is fulfilled.

When developing your purpose and vision, involve all group members and ensure they are accessible to everyone.

## Map your assets

Assets are your group's resources, relationships and structures. Identifying your group's assets is a great way to realise the strengths of your governance. To do this, your group can create an 'asset map' like the one below.

**Different assets include:**

**Individuals:** leaders, Elders, traditional owners, old and young people, men and women.

**Networks:** kinship groups, extended families, Country groups, advocacy groups.

**Natural resources:** areas of Country, sea and waterways your group has access to.

**Cultural knowledge:** stories and songlines that express traditions, laws and customs.

**Program resources:** material resources your group can use to get things done, such as equipment and funding.

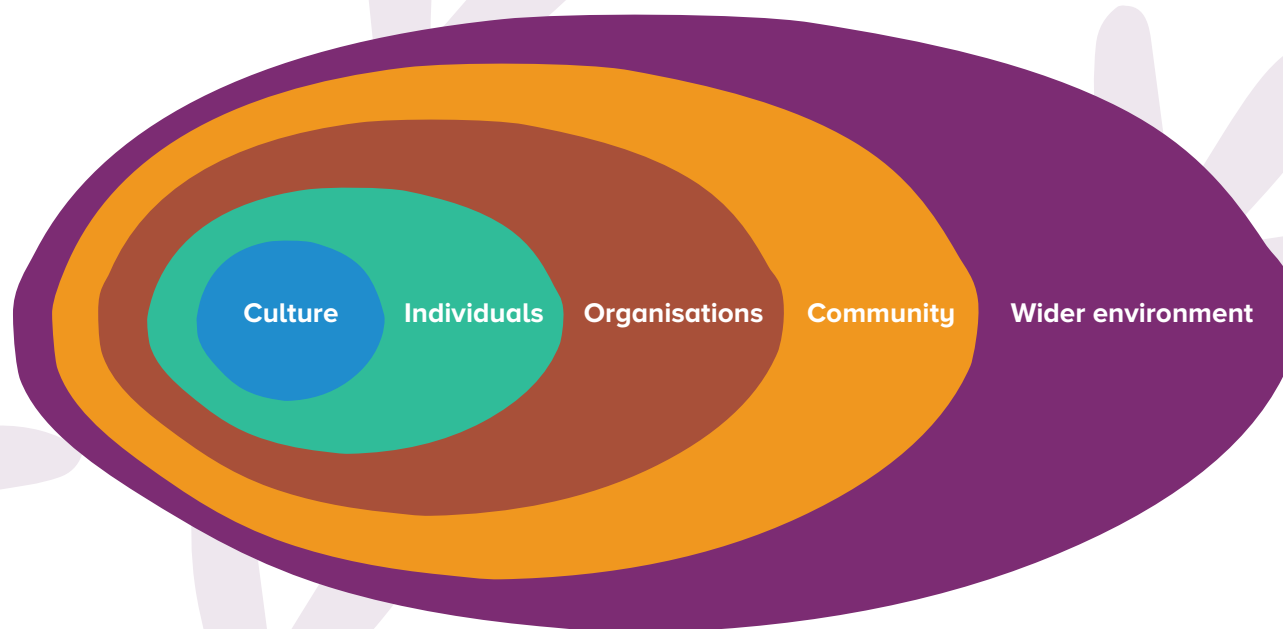
**Structures:** how your group organises itself to do governance.

## Monitor your wider environment

Your wider environment is made up of all the things outside of your organisation, community or nation. It includes the institutions, groups, people, rules and norms that impact your governance.

To govern effectively, your group needs to recognise and understand the elements in your wider environment.

External stakeholders are also part of your wider environment. They have a direct interest in your governance because they may be involved in making decisions, or are impacted by them.



## Plan for the future

A governance action plan summarises what should happen for your group to build or improve your governance.

You can use this plan to guide your future actions and get things done. Answering the following questions will help your group develop its governance action plan:

- What are your goals?
- What actions will you take?
- Who will be involved?
- What assets will you use?
- When will you achieve it?



For more information,  
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