



Governance self-assessment tool

Australian Indigenous Governance Institute



About the Governance Self-assessment Tool

Welcome to the Governance Self-assessment Tool.

This tool has been designed to help groups assess their governance and identify what areas they can improve.

Each activity in the tool matches with a topic in 'Assess your governance' in AIGI's Indigenous Governance Toolkit.

We recommend completing the activities after reading through the matching content in 'Assess your governance.'

It is best to complete the activities together with the people in your group. This might mean approaching leaders, Elders, and members of your community.

Make sure you write your responses down. You could do this on butcher's paper, sticky notes, or a whiteboard. This will make it easier to look back on your ideas and share them with others.

This tool draws on the research of Toni Bauman's forthcoming "Which way now? Our Self-determined Governance Journey: A strategic self analysis tool".

It also takes inspiration from a strategic planning template originally developed by Dr. Ian Hughes at the Yooroang Garang: School of Indigenous Health Studies, University of Sydney.



Know your people

1.1 Define who you are

The goal of this activity is to identify what organisation, community, nation, or mob you are part of.

Your group identity

What is the name of your group?

What connects your group? For example, location, culture, traditional ownership, common interests.

Who is eligible to be a part of your group?

How would you describe your group to someone else?

At what scale does your group operate? For example, local, regional, national.

What Country do you govern on?

Answers:



1.2 Governance roles

The goal of this activity is to identify the 'doers' and 'beneficiaries' of your governance.

The 'doers' of your governance

Who do you see as the leaders and decision-makers of your group?

Are specific Elders involved in your governance? If so, who are they?

Who has the cultural authority to make decisions?

Who has the right to speak on behalf of others?

Who has the skills and experience to get things done?

Answers:

The 'beneficiaries' of your governance

Who benefits from the decisions and actions of your governance?

Who do you want to serve or empower through your governance?

Who are the members of your group?

Who gets to have a say in your governance?

Answers:



Your governance history

2.1 Learn from your history

Use this activity to reflect on your governance history. If you don't know the answers to some of these questions, think about who you can bring into the discussion who does have this knowledge.

Your past governance

What do you remember – or what have you heard – about how your governance was in the past? For example, when your parents or grandparents were kids?

What were things like?

What was your group like at that time? Who belonged to it?

How were disputes resolved back then?

Who made the main decisions about your governance then?

What were your leaders like?

How were your leaders chosen? How did they enforce rules?

What kind of values and qualities did your past leaders have?

How did these leaders communicate with group members?

How were young leaders developed?

What do you think were the main strengths and achievements of your past governance?



Your governance history

2.1 Learn from your history

Use this activity to reflect on your governance history. If you don't know the answers to some of these questions, think about who you can bring into the discussion who does have this knowledge.

Answers

Think about your answers above. What are the main lessons that can help you strengthen your future governance?



2.1 Learn from your history

Use this activity to reflect on your governance history. If you don't know the answers to some of these questions, think about who you can bring into the discussion who does have this knowledge.

Your present governance

What is your group like now?

Has your organisation, community or nation changed much over the years? For example, since when your grandparents or parents were kids?

Who makes the main decisions about your governance today?

What do you think are the most important changes that have taken place in your governance?

What do you think are the main strengths and achievements of your governance today?

What do you think are the most significant challenges your governance has faced?

What are the biggest challenges and barriers to your governance working well today?

Do you think your governance has become stronger or weaker over the years? Why?



2.1 Learn from your history

Use this activity to reflect on your governance history. If you don't know the answers to some of these questions, think about who you can bring into the discussion who does have this knowledge.

Answers

Think about your answers above. What are the main lessons that can help you strengthen your future governance?



2.1 Learn from your history

Use this activity to reflect on your governance history. If you don't know the answers to some of these questions, think about who you can bring into the discussion who does have this knowledge.

Your future governance

What are your hopes and dreams for your future governance? For example, when your kids or grandkids are adults?

What do you hope will be different about your governance by that time? In what ways may it evolve and grow?

What aspects of your governance do you hope will improve?

What are your fears about your future governance?

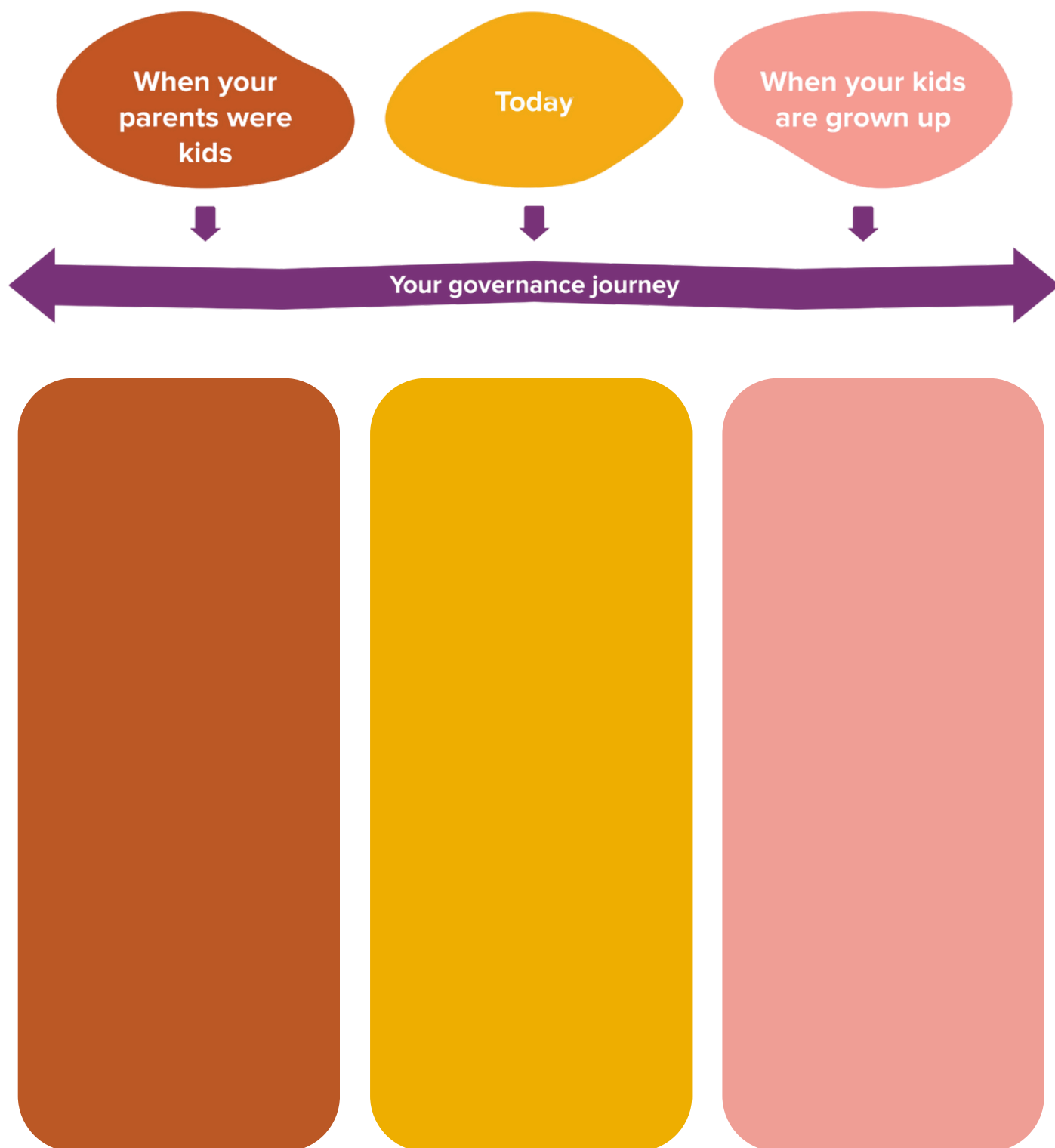
What do you think will be the main challenges that affect your future governance?

Answers:



2.2 Your governance journey timeline

Use your answers from activity 2.1 to fill in your own governance journey. You don't have to include everything – think about significant dates or events, or achievements that are important to you, your family or your community.





Assess your purpose and vision

3.1 Your governance purpose

Use these questions to reflect on what the purpose of your group's governance is.

Your governance purpose

What is the reason your group has come together to do governance?

What impact do you want your governance to have?

Who do you want to benefit through your governance?

What kind of commitment can you make to achieve this impact?

What do you need to do to meet this commitment?

Answers:



3.2 Purpose statement template

Use your answers from the previous activity to fill out this template.

The purpose of...	is to provide...
<i>[The name of your organisation, community or nation]</i>	<i>[What your organisation, community, or nation will do]</i>
for...	so that...
<i>[The beneficiaries of your governance]</i>	<i>[The intended impact of your governance]</i>



3.3 Your governance vision

Use these questions to reflect on what the vision for your governance is.

Your governance vision

What are the long-term goals of your governance?

What would an ideal world look like in the future?

What do you want your group to be like in the future?

What are your dreams and hopes for your children and grandchildren?

What can you do to achieve these aspirations?

How will you know when your vision is reality?

Answers:



3.4 Vision statement template

Use your answers from the previous activity to fill out this template.

Our ideal future is...	Our contribution will be...
<p><i>[The name of your organisation, community or nation]</i></p>	<p><i>[What your organisation, community, or nation will do]</i></p>
<h3>We will know we have success when...</h3>	
<p><i>[What your reality will be when these aspirations are achieved]</i></p>	



Recognise your internal culture

4.1 Recognise your internal culture

Use this activity to assess your group's current internal culture.

Your internal culture

What are the accepted ways of behaving inside your group?

Is there a shared commitment to your goals and values?

Do people work well together and value each other's opinions and contributions?

Is your group culture strong and resilient?

Is there any internal tension or conflict?

What drives your internal culture to be this way?

What impact does your internal culture have on how you get things done?

What would it take to change?

What behaviours and attitudes do you want to encourage among your members? For example, mutual respect, honesty, professionalism.

Answers:



4.2 Define your values

Use this activity to assess your group's values.

Define your values

What are the unspoken or unseen rules that your people all follow?

What matters most to your people?

What principles are important to your people?

What inspires your people to do governance?

What role do you want these values to play in your governance?

Make a list of your values. An example might be 'family is everything'.

Answers:



Map your assets

5.1 Governance asset map

Use this activity to map out the strengths that you can use to build or improve your group's governance.





Monitor your wider environment

6.1 Your wider environment

This activity helps you identify the different elements of your wider environment that impact your governance.

Use the categories to guide you in identifying the different elements of your own governance environment. List them next to each category.

Elements	Examples	Answers
Government institutions	(Local, state, federal government bodies)	
External stakeholders	(NGOs, academic institutions, private sector companies)	
Rules and regulations	(Laws, regulations, policies)	
Funding and resource mechanisms	(Funding programs, grants, resources)	
Economic context	(Industry activities, employment, economic development)	
International context	(Treaties, conventions, events related to Indigenous self-determination, rights and governance)	



6.2 Manage your external stakeholders

Use this activity to identify your most important external stakeholders and to analyse how they affect or are affected by your governance.

	Stakeholder 1	Stakeholder 2	Stakeholder 3
Name of stakeholder			
Importance (high, medium low)			
Key individuals or groups			
Stakeholder's main interests			
Do they support your governance goals?			
Benefits of the relationship			
Challenges of the relationship			
What can be done to improve the relationship?			



Plan for the future

7.1 Governance action plan template

- Use the answers from the exercises above to fill in your Governance Action Plan.
- Use the table below to lay out the areas of your governance that are working, and what you can do to fix them.

<p>Our group is called...</p>	<p><i>Write the name of your group</i></p>
<p>Our governance values are ... (Visit activity 3.2)</p>	<p><i>List the values you want to be a part of your governance</i></p>
<p>Our internal culture is ... (Visit activity 3.1)</p>	<p><i>List some words or terms that describe your current internal culture</i></p>
<p>Our purpose is ... (Visit activity 3.2)</p>	<p><i>Write your purpose statement</i></p>



Plan for the future

7.1 Governance action plan template

- Use the answers from the exercises above to fill in your Governance Action Plan.
- Use the table below to lay out the areas of your governance that are working, and what you can do to fix them.

<p>Our vision is ... (Visit activity 3.4)</p>	<p><i>Write your vision statement</i></p>
<p>Our goals are...</p>	<p><i>List the specific goals you want to achieve through your governance</i></p>
<p>To achieve this goal, we will use ...</p>	<p><i>List the assets you will use to achieve these goals</i></p>
<p>We aim to achieve these goals by ...</p>	<p><i>Specify your timeframe</i></p>