



WHITE PAPER:

Looking Ahead: Challenges Facing School, College, and University Boards in Australia

Table of Contents

Key Challenges Facing Education Boards	3
Equity and Access	3
Teacher Workforce Shortages	3
Curriculum and Reform Fatigue	4
Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity	4
Student Mental Health and Wellness	4
Assessment and Standardisation Issues	5
Governance and Policy Complexity	5
Sustainability and Environmental Concerns	5
Keys to Achieving Effective Governance	6
Establish a Clear Governance Structure	6
Commit to Strategic Alignment and Oversight	6
Organise a Diverse Board	6
Conduct Efficient and Effective Board Meetings	7
Promote Transparency and Accountability	7
Commit to Technological Innovation	8
Master Crisis Management	8
Encourage Ongoing Education	9
How OnBoard Influences Better Outcomes	9
Build Effective Meeting Agendas	9
View Key Trends	10
Get Assistance When You Need It	10
Follow Up on Key Decision	10

How OnBoard Influences Better Outcomes for Higher Education Boards in Australia

Education boards in Australia face a wide range of challenges as they seek to effectively navigate the complex demands in a globalised, multicultural, and technologically advancing society. From board administrators and directors to trustees and general counsel, board leaders must be fully equipped to solve for a seemingly endless list of Australian Higher Education Challenges. Fortunately, OnBoard is designed to help with a variety of potential problems, streamlining meeting management and real-time collaboration in a platform designed for higher education.

Key Challenges Facing Education Boards

Education boards find themselves dealing with increasingly complex challenges in many areas.

Equity and Access

Across Australia, individuals from lower socioeconomic status are much less likely to participate in higher education. Indigenous Australians, in particular, are underrepresented in higher education settings. While enrollment and completion rates have increased substantially in recent years as universities have put forth more effort to engage and retain those students, it is still critical for college boards to navigate those measures and provide students from diverse backgrounds with the support they need—including study options, financial aid, and social and emotional support.

Teacher Workforce Shortages

Nationally, Australia is struggling with a shortage of teachers, including those at the college and university level. While the 2022 National Teacher Workforce Action Plan aims to decrease the gap and attract more people to the teaching profession, teacher shortages continue to leave districts struggling—and the Board of Directors scrambling to get trained professionals in those roles.



Curriculum and Reform Fatigue

Over the past several years, Australia has identified many of the gaps in its educational process and challenges its students may face. The National School Reform Agreement strives to address those gaps and create a more effective curriculum. However, ongoing educational reform and changing curriculum can create high levels of stress for many teachers and administrators. Schools may need to continue to change things up to remain in regulatory compliance. That can lead to a high level of fatigue at every level.

Digital Transformation and Cybersecurity

Even as curriculum reform rolls out, teachers and administrators are faced with digital transformation requirements in their schools. That means utilising technology as effectively as possible for students. It also requires school boards and individual schools to meet stringent cybersecurity measures and regulatory standards. Teachers and administrators alike need to learn how to use new tools, establish new protocols, and take the steps necessary to protect themselves and their students.



Student Mental Health and Wellness

Student mental health and wellness is essential for not only educational outcomes, but overall well-being. Unfortunately, Australian students report increasing mental health challenges, with 39% of 16-to-24-year-olds reporting a mental disorder within the past year. Schools must take action in order to support student mental health and wellness, including decreasing student stress as well as providing students with the tools they need to excel.

Assessment and Standardisation Issues

While standardisation requirements aim to ensure students receive the same high-quality education no matter where they are educated, many schools are struggling to adapt their programs to meet those standards. Standardisation requirements can lead to "teaching to the test," a practice that may narrow student learning. Also, the existing assessments, known as the National Assessment Program—Literacy and Numeracy, may not accurately assess the learning of all students, particularly those that may have unique educational needs. Disadvantaged students also show consistently lower outcomes in standardised tests than their peers, which can impact them in the classroom and outside it.

Governance and Policy Complexity

Australian educational systems are complex, with multiple governing bodies that influence the educational process. Not only can different states and territories have their own unique requirements, rising national standards may also influence educational policy. Board meetings may be spent arguing over who has jurisdiction over specific educational issues, and many schools may struggle to navigate those complex requirements. Furthermore, policies are often highly complex, leaving administrators with little idea what comes next.

Sustainability and Environmental Concerns

Australia's Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards have undergone immense changes in the past several years. ESG reporting in Australia is now mandatory in many industries. By July 1, 2027, all entities will have to provide their reports and meet sustainability standards.

Businesses must include information about:

- Climate-related financial risks and opportunities
- Climate metrics
- Targets for changing emissions and environmental impact

Understanding these regulations is among the Australian Higher Education challenges. Schools are hurrying to make needed changes that will improve overall sustainability and decrease environmental impact or to achieve key ESG certifications in Australia. Taking ESG courses in Australia, which are specifically aligned with those requirements, can help organisations determine the best strategies for their needs.

Keys to Achieving Effective Governance

Creating a governance strategy with the right tools and strategies can help schools at all levels, including colleges and universities, address the Australian Higher Education challenges they face.

Establish a Clear Governance Structure

Make it clear who is responsible for making decisions about specific educational priorities and plans. That includes setting out who is responsible for setting policies at the school level as well as state, territory, and federal-level governance. Ensure it's clear who is responsible for making specific decisions to streamline them and avoid conflict.



Commit to Strategic Alignment and Oversight

When you are in alignment at all levels of the educational pipeline, it is much easier to keep everyone on the same page and make decisions that may not have been discussed previously. For example, when schools are aligned on curriculum and expectations with others across the country, they will not face unnecessary interventions.

Schools at all levels should also have clear oversight that makes it easier to keep them on-track. When there is no oversight for individual schools, they may find it more difficult to stay aligned with state and federal expectations.

Organise a Diverse Board

A diverse board provides the key to ensuring all demographics are represented and understood. Boards of directors that come from diverse backgrounds, economic statuses, and genders are in a better position to represent the entire student body and other school stakeholders, including prospective students or parents. Diverse representation can also help with unique solutions to problems or changing directives, which can help you address the challenges that may appear.

Conduct Efficient and Effective Board Meetings

Endless board meetings that drag on and fail to address the issues at hand can be a waste of time and energy for everyone involved. Efficient board meetings, on the other hand, can help you better address the issues at hand while respecting your board members' time.

Effective board meetings may include:

- A clear agenda that everyone can see ahead of time so they know what will be addressed
- Efficient materials handling and preparation
- Taking the minutes precisely and effectively, and sharing them afterward

Providing training to board members ahead of time can also ensure they have the information they need to participate actively in the discussion, make critical decisions, and use any technology needed for the meeting.

Promote Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are a key part of meeting new guidelines and expectations. They can also ensure schools have the funding they need to achieve their goals. For example, key ESG funds in Australia may invest in schools and organisations that are committed to environmental sustainability and reform. But providing a full accounting of the steps taken toward sustainability may be necessary in order to maintain that funding.

Transparency and accountability are also essential for schools. That could mean offering key information to students and parents. It could also mean ensuring communication amongst the schools, their boards, and all levels of government.

Transparency may include:

- Providing a full account of what occurs at board meetings, including accurate minutes, to all stakeholders (including parents, school staff, etc)
- Offering reports about new technologies, policies, and measures introduced in schools
- Providing full access to records about student performance, including both allowing parents to see their students' records and allowing education authorities to monitor student performance
- Ensuring transparency in fee structures
- Showcasing alignment with national goals and requirements

Using the right software and solutions can make it easier for schools to report data and maintain their accountability to those regulatory requirements.

Commit to Technological Innovation

As regulatory standards increase and change, technology is a vital tool to ensure schools are able to keep up. That may include utilising a variety of platforms and solutions. Some examples include Learning Management Systems (LMS) like Blackboard Learn, Canvas, or Schoology. Cloud solutions that make it easier to scale and keep up with data are another example, as are effective collaboration and communication tools like OnBoard, which can streamline meeting management and increase alignment for key stakeholders.

By taking advantage of those available technology solutions, you are better positioned to ensure that you are able to remain in compliance with changing expectations and requirements.

Master Crisis Management

When you're dealing with challenges in an educational setting, crises are part of life. From navigating a lack of sufficient teachers to staff your classrooms to unanticipated funding shortfalls, those crises can introduce stress. By mastering the art of crisis management, you can deal with those crises more effectively.

- Make sure you understand your priorities and requirements
- Align your individual schools, your board, and government requirements to ensure everyone is on the same page at every stage of the process
- Clearly allocate funding (including an emergency fund)
- Put a process in place for dealing with crises, including who is responsible for dealing with given situations

When you master crisis management, you can keep your schools running effectively even when disaster strikes, allowing you to keep up with students' needs when things are rough behind the scenes.



Encourage Ongoing Education

When you are in education, you already know the importance of ongoing learning. However, in some cases, it can be difficult for educational professionals to maintain their own education. Embrace and encourage an attitude of ongoing learning. That may include pursuing new certifications and opportunities, or branching out into other areas. It could include encouraging your board members to pursue ESG training or allowing teachers to seek out further training that will help them better address potential challenges. As you encourage ongoing education, your staff and board members will be better informed and better prepared to handle whatever may come their way.



How OnBoard Influences Better Outcomes for Higher Education Boards in Australia

If you're looking for solutions that can help your school succeed in the face of Australian Higher Education Challenges, OnBoard delivers on a range of expectations that can help you accomplish your goals. Whether you're struggling to keep up with changing environmental regulations or dealing with a teacher shortfall in the coming academic year, OnBoard can provide the tools necessary to streamline board meetings and help you keep up with the needs of your students, teachers, and administrators.

Build Effective Meeting Agendas

Most educators have tight schedules. They are often taking on unpaid work outside of school hours or juggling a variety of committees, research requirements, and student needs. It's more critical than ever that you keep your board meetings clear and concise.

OnBoard can help you generate a clear meeting agenda that will cover the essential issues at hand and keep everyone on track. Your meetings can run smoother, and it can reduce the time spent developing those agendas ahead of time.

View Key Trends

OnBoard's Insights AI solution can reveal trends and track engagement across a variety of areas based on the data provided. Thanks to that information, your board can easily assess school performance in a variety of areas. Let's say you are examining admissions and enrollment statistics or exploring student outcomes post-university. With this information at your fingertips, you are better positioned to make decisions in the moment. Without it, you'll likely have to gather that data and come back to another meeting in the future.

Get Assistance When You Need It

With Assist AI, you can take a copilot into the boardroom with you for assistance with reviewing reports, reviewing data, or simply seeking a quick answer to a question. Assist AI is there to provide the information you need.

You can type in what you're looking for and, just like if you were asking a colleague, it will provide you with the information you need — right there at your fingertips, when you need it most.

In addition to keeping up with submitted information, Assist AI can provide insight into government regulations, updates, and educational standards, ensuring your decisions remain in alignment with those requirements.

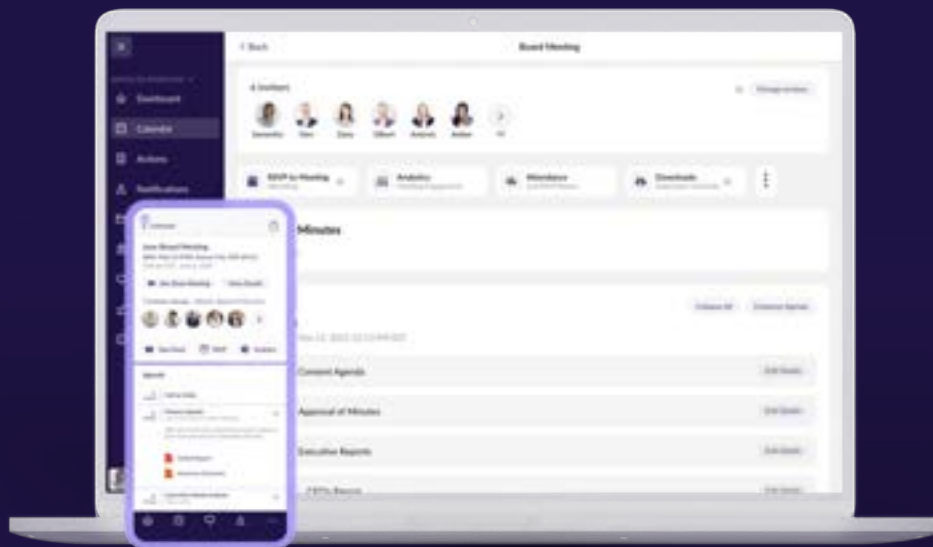
Follow Up on Key Decisions

So many changes take place across curriculum requirements, sustainability initiatives, and even enrollment standards. It can be difficult to keep up with all the decisions you've made and the steps you've taken to implement new policies. With Assist AI, you can follow up more easily—and set reminders to ensure that you follow up on vital areas as needed.



Get the Solutions You Need to Navigate Challenges in Education

Are you ready to find the solutions you need to navigate the challenges facing schools, colleges, and university boards across Australia? OnBoard provides the tools you need to streamline meetings, keep track of data, and ensure your board of directors is able to more smoothly address potential challenges.



Request a trial to [learn more](#), or [contact us](#) for more information.