



Transcript – Insights from both sides: Micaela Driberg on CEO and boardroom success

Today on the Take on Board podcast, I'm speaking with Micaela Driberg about, well, board reports and her lessons learned from both sides of the table. Before we start the podcast today, I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we record. For me, I am on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation, and I pay my respects to elders past and present.

I also pay my respects to any First Nations people who may be here today. I acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters, skies, culture, and country. I support Voice, Treaty, and Truth for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and I encourage others in the Take on Board community to do the same.

Now, let me tell you about Micaela. Micaela is on a couple of government advisory groups, the Our Equal State Reference Group and Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan Sector Advisory Group. She was formerly on the boards of South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network, Connect Health and Community, which is now the Better Health Network, Women's Health East, and a counselor and mayor at Monash City Council.

She's now the CEO of Gender Equity Victoria and a strategic collaborative leader with over 20 years of experience across for-purpose sectors, including all three levels of government, universities, not-for-profit organisations, and peak bodies. Micaela has previously served as mayor and ministerial advisor.

In addition to her work with Gen Vic, she's also a teaching associate with Monash University. Welcome to the Take on Board podcast, Micaela. Thanks for having me, Helga. It is so awesome to have you here. I should also just say, for those on video rather than listening, my cat Mungo, who often comes and joins us, has just jumped up on my desk, so let's just see if we can hold this together.

Um, and he might make an appearance. Let's just see. He's got plenty to say about governance. Anyway, with that, Micaela, before we dive on into board, board reports and your learning there, as always, I just want to dig a little bit deeper about you. Tell me, what was a young Micaela like, and when did you get your first inkling that you might end up, well, as a CEO, as a board director, as a mayor, any of those things?

Tell us about young Micaela. Well, isn't it funny when you take this time to reflect on, on who you are and who you were and how it's led you to where you are today? I actually had this similar question asked to me recently when I went to my son's primary school and was talking all things local government to them, and was a rock star for a day cause they all thought it was pretty cool that I'd been a former mayor.

And upon reflection, I realized I'd actually been either the student rep or the class captain f- throughout most of my schooling. So sports captain in grade six, and then SSA or class captain every year in high school, and then sports captain again. So it wasn't really a surprise that I went on to be a community representative as a councilor and then a mayor.

Seems pretty obvious now. But to me, it was never, ever anything that I had a focus on and a goal or an aim to achieve. It was just my journey, and I think it's probably reflective of always watching my parents take on volunteer roles. And so just to me it just seemed like- You be a part of the solution, and you put your hand up to make changes you want to see, and I think that's probably what in- underpinned my desire to take on those roles in the past.

Uh, and then, you know, throughout my career, even as a junior, I was always on various committees. Uh, and then I put my hand up to be a local government counselor with no expectations in terms of what was involved with that. Thought it was an extension of being a part of a committee and then realized, no, no, there's other obligations that come with that.

Um, and even though it's not a huge amount, you do get, um, remunerated for it as well. Uh, but that's when I fell in love with governance. Uh, you know, like one key part of your role as a counselor is to represent your communities, but the other part is, is all governance. It's, it's running, you know, really efficient, uh, board meetings or council meetings that you're bound by local laws, you're bound by legislation, you're bound by processes.

Uh, but I really enjoyed that, and to this day, I really love reading constitutions and policies. It's my, it's my little happy place, and you usually find some real gems along there as well. So it was a natural extension to go from counselor to, um, to a board role, and the previous time we chatted, we compared that, um, what it's like to go from one role to another, but al- we know what the synergies are, but also how, um, some organisation s don't recognize the governance experience you have as a counselor.

So it took me a little while to translate that experience to board roles. Uh, and then once I did, uh, I think that I brought a different view to how you, uh, approach governance, and really transparent governance and being really clear about what your role is as a board director, but who it impacts. It's going beyond board decisions in a room.

It's, "Well, hang on a second. What are we basing this decision on?" It's, yes, it's part for the organisation , but it's actually impacting people, and I think that's probably where your roots in go- local government have an impact in boards as well. Absolutely. So important to remember, you know? What, who are you there for?

What are you there for? It's not- Yeah ... hopefully the ivory tower. It's real decisions affecting real people most of the time so. Oh, thank you. It's so interesting to hear as well, you know, school captain, school council, SRC, all of those things. Likewise, I, I don't know how I count my first board, but in one way, it's probably school council when I was the student rep on the school council at secondary school, so similar I think.

But I'm interested, with your kids, are they also likewise involved in all of these things? Um, not yet, cause they're still quite young. They're seven and nine. Um- Right ... the older one, uh, strays to the shy side, but he's learning to find his voice, and the younger one is Michaela 2.0. So I have no doubt that he will go on to do whatever he sets his mind to.

Um, uh, but he's a challenge right now. It's really annoying dealing with yourself. I know all the traits that you admire in adults when they become adults can drive you bonkers when they're not quite adults. Hmm, okay. Ah, practicing breathing. All right. Well, let's move on from that then. So Michaela, you have a wealth of experience in a whole range of sectors, in a whole range of different roles.

And as I said at the top of the episode, experience- I'm kind of saying from both sides of the table. I don't think there is both sides of the table. It's not a negotiation, but different hats. Let's put it that way. You've got experience as the CEO, councilor, and mayor, which is, I would say, a board, albeit a slightly different board, um, board member, committee chair, board chair.

You've got all of this different experience. So, oh, where should we start this conversation about reporting to the board and what lessons that you've learned? I think, uh, in my role right now as the CEO of Gender Equity Victoria, uh, it really hit home just how much work goes into preparing board packs and, uh, uh, liaising with your board members and some of the things that you need to take into account as operations that I, I probably wasn't really across as a board director.

And so it's, you know, it's in hindsight that I think there's lots of lessons there, and when you and I were chatting, it was, I think there's something that would be useful there to your listeners, uh, that are primarily board directors but could absolutely learn from just that better understanding of what happens at the operations level to get to the board governance decision-making.

But also if you have any listeners that are from operations that are reporting to a board, some, any tips and advice I might be able to share there because I think that I bring a uniqueness to my role because I do have the un- an understanding of what board directors want and need and have been able to introduce some of those changes at Gender Equity Victoria, uh, which I think have strengthened our governance.

Absolutely, cause it is, for some people, it's their first experience of a boardroom is reporting to a board. It's not being a board member but reporting to a board, which is such a different experience for people, and I think sometimes it can feel a bit mysterious about what the board actually does and why you're reporting and why they don't understand all of the detail that you understand when you're reporting up.

Yeah, and it really depends, uh, on individuals as well. So, you know, I am a brief person. I prefer, prefer succinct papers. Uh, and in my view, board papers are meant to be almost cheat sheets, and you speak to them, and you discuss them. There are other directors that want the details, so being able to find that balance of having, you know, a covering paper for a board report but to provide the details for those that want more information is, I think, one of the things that you need to understand in your role but also understand the dynamics of your board and understand which directors might be quite happy with a one-paper but which ones might need further details.

And anticipating that really helps, I think, to strengthen your papers and your decision-making. I'm like, "So how do you," you know, cause it sounds eminently sensible, understand who your directors are, understand how they like to receive information. But it's not like you get a guidebook when you become the CEO, uh, about how this works.

How do y- i- in practice, how have you done that? Uh, I certainly took the time to meet with all the board directors when I first started. Uh, and any new directors that are appointed, it's a part of their orientation to meet with them as well. Uh, but I think just asking those explicit questions in terms of, "How do you prefer to communicate?"

Uh, what's your preference in terms of board papers? Uh, is there a time or a, a day that you tend to do your work so you can be aware of that?" Uh, most of the boards that I've worked with are from the for-purpose sector, so they're largely volunteer boards. Uh, even if they're paid boards, y- they're often not full-time roles.

So at the operations level, you might be frustrated because you need a quick turnaround on a decision or feedback on a paper, but you need to recognize that you're dealing with people that have got other lives. So, uh, you know, a week's notice might seem reasonable to you, but it isn't for someone else that has multiple commitments and multiple things they need to be across.

Uh, so being really clear about what you need and when you need it is really useful, um, and putting in systems to help you meet your own timelines as well. So I've been a part of boards where, uh, you know, questions are raised during the board meeting like they are, but if there's-- If you're able to ask the question beforehand, and you give a timeline and off, let's say, the Friday before the following week's meeting, that gives the operations time to gather the information and to provide you that so that the meeting time can be used more effectively.

If, if question is asked during the meeting, and I, and I get it, sometimes it's just popped into your head at that time. But other times, and I'm guilty of it, I was well aware I was going to ask that question beforehand, and it's doing a disservice to the operations because we might have not had that information in front of us, or we might have to do quite a bit of work to get that information.

And so one board I was in y- they had a distinct date and time that you had to, uh, provide your question by, and it, and it was b- in writing it needed to be as well. So it made it really clear, well, what do you need and when do you need it by? And then that information could be provided before the meeting, and sometimes it was a non-event then.

You had your information, you didn't need to ask the question. Uh, and other times it, it ignited some views or analysis from across the board, and then it became a really useful discussion. So that's, that's one example that really springs to mind Interesting. So in that example, cause I've heard of another board recently who does something similar, I think their board papers are distributed two weeks prior to the board meeting, and then questions and clarifications a week before, I think is how they do it.

Is that- That sounds about right. I mean, most constitutions I've come across, there's a week notice in terms of- Yes ... agendas and papers going out. So it gets really tight if you leave it to, let's say, the Friday before your meeting's on a Monday. It doesn't allow a lot of time to gather information, and it certainly is dependent on the capacity of the organisation .

So in my position right now, I've been a lone soldier for a couple of years, where it was just me. So if the board said, "Oh, could you just, you know, get the team to look into this?" It- I had to be really clear, "I am the team. Uh, so, uh, let me see if I can fit that in." And, and my chair is, uh, you know, 100% would always back me and remind everyone, "Well, hang on.

If Michaela's doing this, it's taking her away from doing this, so we need to think about what is the most, uh, the biggest priority right now." Um, so that was really useful to have My chair, but the board have an understanding of that as one person. It's not the same as asking a really large organisation that has a dedicated governance officer, that has a dedicated company secretary, um, that they have the time and the knowledge to be able to gather further information.

And it's so inter- so, so for these... Yeah, it makes so much sense in a way, and it's so interesting. As soon as you said, you know, sometimes I had the questions before and I didn't ask them. Mm. As soon as you said that, Michaela, I went, "Oh my God. Well, I've done that. Of course I know my questions in advance."

Like, I've got my notes and have pulled them together. It's like, why aren't I raising them earlier? Okay. So you may have just already changed my board practice just with that. Well, hopefully that's- How does that happen? ... something that your listeners can do. Um- Yeah ... I mean, I know I purposely withhold them at times, because you want your colleagues to- Mm you know, to see that you're asking these questions. Uh- Yes ... or you want to demonstrate, yes, I absolutely have thoroughly read my papers. Uh, but there are other ways you can do that, and you can always refer to that in the meeting and say, "Oh, I raised this with the company secretary," or, "I raised this with so-and-so earlier.

Thanks for that information." Um, so if it's really important to you to transparency demonstrate the efforts that you're putting into your role, then you can still acknowledge that. But, uh, uh, for me, that's, that's something that I'm almost embarrassed about, um, as a former director, that I didn't give enough time and energy for operations to be able to gather the information they needed to be able to have a proper discussion.

Well, yes. That, that was what it was that, that solidified it for me. I was like, well, I have saved my questions for board, so the board can have a rich conversation, I guess. But what I'm doing there is, um, advancing the board conversation over the executive's, um, preparation. So it's interesting to level that out a bit.

So for the board, f- either for your current board or other boards that you've been on, have those questions or reflections, um, come in via the chair? H- again, how does it happen in practice? Is there a shared document that everybody puts them in? Are they emailed to, I'm hoping not the CEO, because that would just be- Well, it depends on- If everyone's emailing stuff, you know?

Depends on the organisation . So in the instance- Okay ... right now, they, they come through to me, and it's via email. Mm-hmm. Whereas other organisation s- Yeah ... have, you know, used board platforms. So, um, there are mechanisms to be able to add your comments to papers that transparently people can all view, uh, or, you know, ask you questions, or you direct it to a company secretary, maybe include the chair, or if it's a chair of a committee, direct it to themselves.

Um, so I think if there's an opportunity to direct it to the relevant operations person, and again, that depends, you know? In some organisation s, everything might need to go through the chair so they're aware of it. Um, and others, you can go directly to, uh, whoever it is in the operations. Um, but I think, you know, what would be a, a useful thing to include is also your colleagues where possible as well so that there's no surprises, especially to your board chair or a committee chair.

And I imagine doing it in that way also means that, you know, those- If I can put it this way, the rats and mites- mice questions. Oh, on page 37, I noticed... You know, and often they're not this, rats and mice, although sometimes they are. You know, can you put a comma between the and and the to? Or, I mean, like I say, it doesn't have to be quite that level of detail, but- Oh, no.

We're all guilty of that. Hell, yeah. You know, again, it's, "Look, I read my papers. Um, you forgot to cross this T." Uh, so, you know- Yes ... s- finding spelling or grammatical errors is always useful, but again, if you can point it out beforehand, uh, that's always- Yes ... I think saves, uh, a lot of people some time and energy and embarrassment.

Absolutely. It's interesting. I, I was having a conversation with somebody the other day, I don't think on the podcast, but I can't be entirely sure, and was saying that any question that starts with, "On page 37," generally is a rats and mice question, as opposed to, "In this paper I've noticed," you know, these themes or whatever.

But if it's going to an individual page, it generally is rats and mice. Not always, but can be. I find that actually just asking the question is really useful as well. Uh, so, you know, I've, I've been guilty of it. There's other directors that I've been part of discussions as a director and in the operations that might phrase things as a statement or their view, whereas if you phrase it as a question, it comes from a place of c- curiosity, and it just- Absolutely

changes the discussion. Uh, and especially- Absolutely ... if you're starting to stray into the operations, it can be really useful in terms of you might have a question about, uh, timing of an event or, um, a staffing level or, or new role. So instead of saying, "I believe blah, blah, blah," if you phrase it as a question, going, "I'm just curious about this," uh, I think that that works well, uh, uh, for people as well in terms of boards being, staying in their strategic role, but for the operations as well to feel like it's a question rather than, um, a statement that they need to respond to.

Absolutely. Yes. It, it, it brings it almost then to a collaborative kind of challenge to resolve rather than a put you under the spotlight and interrogate you about things. Yeah. So for you then, in working with the board to ensure that it's got, you know, the strongest and the best- Governance and the strongest and the best reports that go to the board.

What's helped you in that relationship with board? Like, there's knowing their styles, I think you touched on before. What else has been helpful that the board, either through the chair or individually, has provided to ensure those board reports are as helpful as possible to them? Uh, I guess if we step it, take a step back, one of the first things I did, uh, when I joined GenVic was, uh, make some tweaks to the papers.

And a part of it was that there was a gap in having, uh, staff on board at GenVic , so, um, there was a gap in corporate knowledge. So I was going through all the files trying to find the past board meetings, and they weren't as helpful as they should've been in terms of having an accurate recording. And so just by including a set agenda, standard agenda, uh, times.

I'm a real stickler for times on agendas because it helps you keep to time. Uh, um, and then having a minutes template that clearly showed what was recorded, but also who was responsible and when you would complete it by, and a separate actions list. Um, they were the types of things that I'd experienced as a board director that I found really useful and that we strengthened at GenVic , so was a bit more clear in terms of, you know, when are, when are we meeting, h- what format are we using, how long is it going to go for.

Gives you an indication if a, an agenda item's 20 minutes or five minutes about how- Yes ... long you may spend on it. But also, is this for noting, is it for discussion, or are we making a decision on here? In, again, based on my direct experience as a board director, having a proposed motion as well gave you an indication of what decision you'd be making as a board director, but also gives you a record.

So if you're looking back, you can see what was proposed, and then if you're looking at minutes, you can see how they may have aligned. Um, I found them really useful. And then introducing cover papers for all the different agenda items, uh, that are usually one page, might extend out to, to two or four depending on what the decision is or the item is.

Uh, that one was a cheat sheet essentially for people that wanted to, um, just, I guess, be- scan and be across what might be discussed. But also, if you include things like background, it's a reminder of what was discussed, what was determined, then an update, this is what's changed since the last time we met, and then that proposed resolution of what people will be making a decision of, uh, in a really clear, succinct manner.

And brevity is my strength and my weakness, hell yeah. So I can do a brilliant one-pager, but if you ask me for a 10-pager, I'm going to struggle. Uh, so board papers were my forte, uh, and I think most of our board directors have really, um, found them really beneficial. And if they need more information, then it's, it's finding ways to work with them on, on that in terms of can you provide the question before the meeting so I can prepare the additional, uh, information that will benefit not only you but the entire board.

And so introducing those changes that are little but all really add up have really strengthened our government, our governance as an organisation . But as in terms of the operations, it's really helped, uh, with preparing useful information that the board uses. 'Cause there's, there's nothing worse than when you, you've spent weeks pulling together a board paper and then it's just skimmed over in the meeting.

And again, as a board director, I've been a part of that too where, you know, you might just go, "Oh, let's just take these ones for noting," or, "Let's just skip this item cause we've been talking too much on this item." And at the operations level, it's, it's devastating if you spent a lot of time and energy on something, uh, and you really wanted to see something get through at that meeting, that it just gets, uh, delayed It can be tricky, can't it?

Because sometimes getting no questions on a board paper is actually a sign of, you know, "Well, that's awesome. You've just done-- You've presented this so well, that's all good. Yep. Tick. We, we love it." But, uh, it can feel a bit of a thankless task when they are waved through in that way. So just acknowledging the work as well, I've found quite useful.

Uh, and again, my, my board are really supportive of that. So they might not have any questions about, "Here's the new organisation al budget. Uh, it's approved, but we actually just want to take the time to acknowledge the amount of work that would've gone into this." Yes. Uh- Yeah ... that's really nice to hear as well.

Absolutely. Celebrate, celebrate the wins and the achievements. Yeah. So often we just charge onto the next thing. Uh, so it is, yeah, it is lovely to hear that the time is taken for that as well. And that they all-- You're right, they all sound like little things, but, uh, that is amazing. Like, you know, getting your agenda in order, like I've heard e- everything there in terms of the key kind of d- governance documents.

Getting your agenda in order, getting the minutes in order, getting the action list in order, getting the reports in order. I mean, that is, that's all the stuff really, isn't it? Yeah. Um, and things like, yeah, conflicts of interest register, you know, meeting our own obligations as directors to be able to keep that up to date, but responding in a timely manner.

Again, I'm very guilty of having a company secretary keep prodding me, "Michala, that's still due. That's still due." Yes. "Can you just write back, 'No, there's nothing that's required to be updated'"? You know, that paper trail can be really important to be able to meet your auditing requirements, but also, um, for, you know, a really vigilant company secretary, they're following due process.

And so, you know, what may be, "Oh, I'll get to that email at some point," can be really frustrating at the operations level. Absolutely, yes. And that is good to remember as well. Just email back. I do like picking up the phone every now and again to have a conversation, but that doesn't mean... Yeah, that doesn't mean you've got the paper trail there for the auditors who are going to ask for it later.

Um, oh, there's that- And again, I think that's- Oh, I know what it was ... you know, one of the things, sorry Helga, that I just wanted to reflect on as well- No, no, you go ... where we're talking about how different directors work differently. Uh, and you can learn that from the beginning if you meet with everyone and ask those key questions in terms of how they like to work.

Um, but they might not be even aware of it as well. And so over time, you realize there's a pattern of s- some people that are silent, and so they, you know, they're like, "They've done a great job. I might mention it in the meeting, but I don't need to respond to that email." Um, others that will respond to an email or track change documents and do it at a, in pretty good timeframe, and then others that prefer to pick up the phone and call you.

And so I've, I've learnt, um, who prefers to do a phone call, and so I try to time those discussions where I have the time to do that. Or I'll call them in the car or, um, make sure I've got that 20 minutes to maybe track those changes myself, but that's just the way that they operate. They prefer to have a conversation.

So it's much like working in any team. Different people work in different ways, and so it's just finding out, um, how that works for different people. Absolutely. I mean, they are. They're, they're a team. They're the board. That is just, inverted commas, a team. Probably not inverted commas. They are just a team of the organisation .

And, but they're a team that don't come together very often, and I think that does sometimes make it a bit trickier to learn some of the nuance that you're talking about here. So, you know, I'm hearing that you and possibly, probably your chair of the board as well, have spent quite a bit of time- Doing that, uh, to build those relationships so that you know the different styles and what's going to get the best out of everybody as well.

I feel like that's happened organically at, at GenVic . Uh, but it's certainly something that you can include during your board evaluations where, you know, you're reviewing how you operate as a board. But I think if you include the operations and how you communicate and, um, what could improve, uh, that communication or board papers or the type of information you're receiving, uh, I think that would be a useful element to include.

Uh, again, in my previous counselor life, uh, where we had a new team, a new ele- newly elected council, one of the first things we did was have a facilitator come in, and we, uh, identified the different personality types that we had in the room and our preference to how we received information. And we were then divided up into those groups and had to pitch an idea to another group, uh, which was really interesting exercise because I suspect you're probably like me, Helga, uh, where the pitch was, "We'd like to have a new park," and we went, "Great. Done. Thank you." That was enough for me. Uh, whereas some of the other groups, they wanted to know, "Well, where is it? How much is it going to cost?" All legitimate questions. Um, and the others were really, um, focused on community feedback, and they wanted to focus on that. So pitching how you prefer something to someone else that had a different preference was a really interesting exercise.

And again, if you're having your board strategy days or reflection days or evaluations, it may seem like something trivial, but it really helps the efficiency of, and I think some of the d- the dynamics of the board, but working with the operations too. Yes. Oh, that is such good advice. That is so interesting.

Um, yeah, who, who... Yep, what information is required? And of course, everyone annoyingly is different. Um, yeah, uh, although you said before- Well, that makes decision-making rich, doesn't it? If we're all the same- Absolutely ... then you have a, you know, a homogenous group that makes

decisions without taking into account- That's right how different people think and feel. Exactly. Exactly. Although I was going to say, you said before about how you're, um, you know, do the queen of the brief paper. I've never heard a board member say, "I would like these board papers to be longer." So I suspect that is something consistent that they very much appreciate.

Yeah. Oh. If anything, I, I remember one board I was on, uh, one particular report that was a standard agenda item would be 20, 30 pages long. Oh, gosh lord. And the consistent feedback was always like, "You need to... This needs to be reduced- Yeah ... mate." Like, "There is way too much information in here, but I'm really concerned about how much time and energy is going into this as well, that we'd prefer to be directed somewhere else."

So it's, it's, it's a fine balance. Um, and again, I think that came from a preference for details and not recognizing what you might need at a board director level. And again, in a previous life working with a staff member that was writing their first board paper, very, very detailed, would've been at least four pages long, and, you know, to give them the feedback in terms of you need some subheadings here, some bullet points, try to reduce it down to two pages at the most, was, um, confronting for them, and they didn't understand how that would help make a good board decision, not understanding that it's a different brain that makes those strategic decisions, and that's all they need.

Like, a bullet point can- Yeah ... feel dirty to a writer, but that's what's needed. Yes. Yeah, absolutely, because you're across a whole range of things rather than deep in any of them. Yeah. That's what we rely on the staff to do when you're in the boardroom Oh, Michaela, so much in here, like last time. What are the key things you want people to take away from the conversation that we've had today?

I think if there's an opportunity to have a reflection on the board with your operations in terms of what the board needs from, uh, board papers to help them make, uh, decisions but efficient decisions, I think would be a useful conversation to have. Uh, even things like reflecting on the meeting at the end of the meeting, what worked well, what did we stray on, what could we improve in the future, can be a really useful mechanism at a board level.

But having the conversation with the operations about the amount of time it takes to put board papers together, is the system you're using... So it may be great from a director level to use a particular board platform, but it's an absolute nightmare at the staffing level to do that, or even the cost implications for the type of platform to use.

Uh, I think that they're conversations you should have at least annually because systems change, tech is changing, so what made sense last year may not make sense this year. But also whoever's around that board table might be different as well, so thinking about that. Uh, and then I think, you know, having those individual conversations as well, um, with each director and having an understanding of what their needs and preferences are.

Um, but for the operations to feel comfortable to share what their needs are as well and where, you know, their pain points might be, but trying to find a solution rather than, "Well, this is just annoying cause we're always waiting X amount of time to get this bit of feedback." It's, "Well, I've-- Can we introduce this process so that we can have the information we need by this point in time, because then that allows me to get the papers out as agreed at this point."

Um, I find-- I think there are probably a couple of things that could be really useful for anyone that's listening to this podcast to think about from both an operations level and a board level. Yeah, love it. Such a great tip. And is there a resource you would like to share with the Take on Board community?

Uh, just a couple of things. I have, um, previously done training through the Centre for Social Impact that really looked at social impact and governance. So, um, that's a good reminder about the focus that you have in terms of a director, and just reminding yourself that, um, that's an important decision and an important, important thing to keep in mind.

Uh, for those of you that are reporting to the board as well, it's looking for those, um, courses that can help you with that. They're often targeting company secretaries or the accidental company secretary, um, which can be useful for those of you that do find yourself in a role where you're scheduling meetings and doing minutes.

Uh, but if you are in that position, it's maybe look for your own board roles as well so that you can get some insights in terms of what are directors looking for. Um, and recognize that you've got a v- lot of value to add in terms of understanding what the operational side is feeding into governance that will make you an even better board director.

And for our board directors, it's being really mindful of the time and effort and the constant cycle that it is for developing board papers, especially if you meet really regularly, I- let's say monthly. That is a constant merry-go-round that the organisation is on in terms of a draft agenda, getting that agenda approved, developing the papers to go with that.

Um, depending on your system or if you're just using a Word document and email, formatting all of that as well so it's useful. You know, putting together one board pack can take an entire day or longer. And then being really conscious of do you have the resources to do that, or are you reliant on your CEO to be doing that, and could their time be spent elsewhere?

Do you have a dedicated company secretary? Um, if you don't, maybe it's time to think about investing in, uh, some of your resources so that can be done efficiently and other people's time can be used elsewhere. Yeah. I know of one organisation I think who, um- Uh, who asked their executive to do an estimate of how long a particular board pack had taken, and they did all of the staff's time, and it was hundreds and hundreds of hours that had gone into that particular board pack, which wasn't unusual.

So I think getting an estimate, it's a great, great idea. Micaela, thank you. We will make sure there is a link to the former episode with you. You also talked about The Centre for Impact. I did a podcast with somebody about their program, so I'll put a link to that in the show notes as well, and of course, to GenVic , which has a whole range of awesome resources as well.

So thank you so much for coming and sharing your wisdom with the Take on Board community today. I really appreciate it. Um, first time and second time coming back and sharing your wisdom, so thank you so much, uh, for doing so. Thanks for having me, Helga, and it's a space that GenVic have identified that our members would really benefit from as well.

So, um, keep your eye out for webinars that are coming up, of resources that are coming up. That'll be for both the board and people reporting to the board to just help strengthen our governance across the sector. Excellent. Excellent. We love a good library of resources. Lovely. Thanks, Micaela. I have no doubt we will see you soon.

Thanks, Helga.

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