

Examinations —why have them?

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Even when an examiner's report isn't perfect and the corporation finds out it has committed some minor breaches, practical advice is provided and invaluable lessons learnt. 'The examination will highlight matters that may need attention and how they can be put right,' says Peter.



Do-it-yourself examination

Going through the *Healthy corporation checklist* is the easiest and probably best way for your corporation to check 'where it's at' with its compliance standards.

There's a list of questions to answer as well as links to important template documents and useful forms. The simple tick box format allows corporations at a glance to see which areas may need attention.

You can download the checklist from the 'Training and support' section of www.oric.gov.au—or order a hard copy from publications@oric.gov.au.

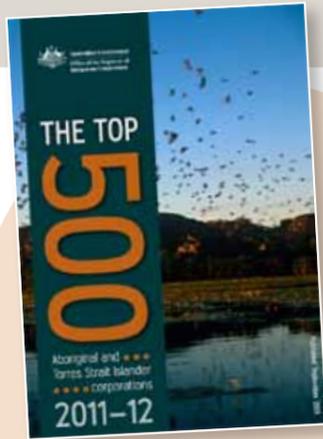


Australian Government
Office of the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations

ORIC Oracle

SCORING TOP MARKS

November 2013



ORIC's
fifth
report
OUT
NOW

The *Top 500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations 2011-12* analyses data provided by corporations as part of their annual reporting requirements. Each year the report comes up with some surprising and interesting findings.

Available under 'Publications/other reports' on the ORIC website.

Corporate governance training

The Registrar presenting corporation specific training. Photo: ORIC



ORIC offers a range of free training courses across Australia for directors, members and key staff wishing to improve their corporate governance skills and knowledge.

Find the course, location and time that best suits you on the [training map](http://www.oric.gov.au) at www.oric.gov.au. Also check out eligibility requirements and how to apply.



Examinations —why have them?

Few people like examinations. Driving exam, medical exam, school exam—we'd probably avoid them all if we could. Yet when we pass an examination we feel great about it, and glad for the experience. Of course there's a sense of relief when it's over but usually we've learnt something important and are better for it.

And so it is with examinations of corporations.

MAREEBA, QUEENSLAND:

Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre (MAC) is an Aboriginal health organisation in the Mareeba district owned and managed by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It incorporated 20 years ago and today provides high-quality, culturally-appropriate health care for all ages.

'We believe providing a comprehensive range of health care services in one central location helps families,' says director Dorothy Hastie. 'Our aim is to give everyone easy access.'

Mulungu is governed by a board of seven directors which is supported by senior administrative staff led by CEO Gail Wason, and a team of specialists, clinicians and health workers.

Earlier this year the Registrar appointed examiners Lindsay Roberts and Susan Roberts of Lindsay J Roberts, Chartered Accountants, Queensland, to conduct an examination of Mulungu.

The result? Top marks:

...the standard of financial management is excellent, there are no undisclosed material personal interests within the board, there is no misuse of corporation assets, the control, direction and management of the affairs of the corporation by the directors is very effective and there are no governance and/or operational concerns.

Lindsay Roberts said, 'This is probably the best run corporation I have examined in the past 20 years.'

Well done Mulungu—keep up the great work.



Mulungu runs clinics for children, holds men's groups and attends to women's health. It also runs a number of health and wellbeing programs and workshops. Photos: MAC

For more information about Mulungu Aboriginal Corporation Medical Centre <http://mulungu.org.au>

Compliance rates strong

Last year 95 per cent of corporations did the right thing and complied with their reporting requirements.

Only a few corporations chose to ignore their reporting obligations...**don't be one of them!**

Since 1 July 2012, as a result of prosecutions brought by the Registrar, 38 corporations Australia-wide have been convicted and fined for failing to lodge their financial reports.

Lodging annual returns is important because it ensures the Register of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporations maintained by the Registrar is accurate and up to date.

'I am determined to pursue the small minority of corporations that do not meet their reporting obligations,' says the Registrar.

Members, creditors and stakeholders are entitled to know what's in the annual returns and be able to access them easily.

MORE REGIONAL OFFICERS

Two more ORIC regional officers have been appointed—one in Darwin and another in Broome. ORIC now has eight staff located in six regional centres: Alice Springs, Broome, Cairns, Coffs Harbour, Darwin and Perth. 'It's all part of our strategy to decentralise,' says the Registrar. 'While we will retain core staff in Canberra I want to see many more of our officers out in the regions providing face-to-face service.'

See 'Contact us' on www.oric.gov.au to find your nearest regional officer.

The Registrar regularly uses his power under the CATSI Act to examine corporations' records and procedures.

'The intention of ORIC's rolling examination program is to visit as many corporations as we can each year to check that everything is going well,' says the Registrar of Indigenous Corporations, Anthony Beven. 'If there are problems we want to know about them as soon as possible so we can help the corporation to fix them before services are affected.'

Improving compliance is crucial to raising public confidence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander corporations.

The Registrar understands that sometimes corporations can feel unsettled about an examination coming up but more often than not it's a positive experience.

'A corporation can get a great boost when an examiner appointed by the Registrar comes in, looks at the corporation's books and processes and says, "Well done, you're doing a good job",' says Peter Armstrong, head of ORIC's Regulation Section.

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It's AGM time

Annual general meetings (AGMs) must be held before the end of November each year*

* unless you have applied for, and received, an exemption from the Registrar

Before you start the AGM

- ✓ People attending the AGM should record their names on the **attendance register**.
- ✓ Members should check their details are correct in the **register of members**.
- ✓ Ensure you have a person to **chair** who can manage the meeting fairly.
- ✓ Make sure someone takes **minutes** of the meeting.
- ✓ Check you have a **quorum** before you start the meeting. A quorum is a minimum number of members that must attend a meeting before it is valid and therefore can take place. Your rule book will tell you the quorum requirements for your corporation.
- ✓ Note any **apologies** in the minutes.

What happens at an AGM

The business of an AGM is very important. What happens is:

- the minutes of the previous general meeting are confirmed
- reports—general, financial and directors'—are presented
- new directors are elected
- auditor (if required) is chosen and a fee agreed
- register of members is checked
- questions can be asked about how the corporation is managed.

After the AGM

- ✓ Finalise and file the minutes.
- ✓ Follow up any action arising from the AGM.
- ✓ Lodge your reports with the Registrar.



DON'T FORGET reports are due by 31 December. Don't risk prosecution!

Lodge your reports now

Reports are due between 1 July and 31 December. All corporations must lodge their 2012–13 reports with the Registrar according to their registered size and income.

Need help? If you need help filling in your reports or are not sure what to lodge contact ORIC.

Why not lodge online—it's easy and will save you time: <https://online.oric.gov.au>