

Position Description – Board Director

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BACKGROUND

AgBiz Assist Ltd (ABA) is a not-for-profit community company that and its predecessor organisations have been delivery rural financial counselling service throughout the region since 1991. For many years we mostly relied on financial counselling as a source of government funding. However, over the years these programs and funding amounts have fluctuated and progressively yielding decreasing amounts of total income requirements. ABA progressively applied for and delivered a variety of other funded programs to maintain income, however it became increasingly difficult to maintain, and the Board directed that we needed to generate other forms of income. In 2022 ABA established a social enterprise to both generate income and assist the organisation fulfil is vison and purposes. Community Business Connect has gradually grown its commercial business whilst managing a major grant that took significant focus. In December 2024, ABA established a fully owned subsidiary Company called Assist Partners (AP) with the specific aim of separating the social enterprise from the government funded service delivery to resolve some market confusion and concentrate effort. AP will now focus on generating income to increase financial sustainability and support the work of the charity under the social enterprise model.

AgBiz Assist is widely known and respected for the work we do assisting farm and small rural business experiencing or at risk of financial hardship, managing structural adjustment, supporting industry and community recovery and providing relief to rural families.

Community Business Connect is becoming known for our work facilitating mobile connectivity upgrades in bushfire impacted communities and assisting people with managed IT services, digital business training and connectivity solutions along with Click Region and Startup Shakeup.

Directors are appointed to both AgBiz Assist Ltd and Assist Partners Ltd Boards, noting that AgBiz Assist Directors will hold a controlling interest in the Assist Partners Board.

ONE VISION, TWO MISSIONS

Vision

“We enable people, business and regional communities to develop solutions, manage change and prosper”

Mission for AgBiz Assist

We provide relief, service, and support to enable individuals, families, and their rural and regional communities to recover and build resilience.

Mission for Assist Partners

Deliver services through social and commercial enterprise and activities, to provide funds to AgBiz Assist Ltd to fulfil its charitable purposes.

Our Strategic Focus:

- Funded Service Delivery
- AgBiz Care
- Social and Commercial Enterprise

Strategic Partnerships

Partnerships underpin all we do. Our intent is to develop partnerships to increase early referrals for people needing our services, and to deliver our commercial activities

Our Strategic Enablers:

- Our people and Culture
- Financial Stability
- Governance
- Marketing and Communication

WHAT WE DO

AgBiz Assist

We provide government funded services:

Currently

- Rural financial counselling services (RFCS) trading as Rural Financial Counselling Services Victoria – North East which is funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments.
- Rural Connectivity for Rural Recovery program under Community Business Connect has delivered a bushfire recovery project facilitating the installation of mobile boosters and mobile repeaters in three LGA's.

Previously

- Small Business Support Services, Farmer and Rural Wellbeing, Dedicated Dairy Support, Rural Skills Connect, Wine industry recovery support,

We operate a charity:

- AgBiz Care is the charity name we use to accept donations and distribute household relief services to rural families experiencing hardship. AgBiz Assist Ltd is a registered charity with PBI and DGR status.
- Programs included grocery gift cards, Re-seeding the Upper Murray, Nariel mobile repeater project, CPU's for isolated rural people, UM Dairy Recovery vouchers, GV Rotary Support voucher program, IT for disaster recovery and direct relief for farm families/communities experiencing hardship.

Assist Partners

We operate as a social enterprise: Trading as Community Business Connect that is in the process of being transferred to Assist Partners.

- Community Business Connect, is engaged in a variety of commercial and project based services and program delivery, and business consulting activities that are aligned with our mission and values that build business, industry and community capacity. Activities include managed IT services, connectivity services, digital training services, business contracting, agribusiness contracting and consulting.

OUR VALUES

Our values reflect how we work with our colleagues, stakeholders, and the wider community. We demonstrate our organisational values in the following ways:

Organisational Value	Demonstrated behaviour
Respect	We will show respect and consideration to all those with whom we deal, by treating them with dignity, empathy, and courtesy.
Integrity	We will be honest, fair, ethical and trustworthy at all times, and take responsibility for our actions.
Positivity	We will encourage positivity within our organisation, and discourage negativity. We will effectively adapt to changing circumstances.
Team Spirit	We will work together as a team, working in partnership to achieve the goals of our organisation.
Clients	Because we care about the people and community in which we live, we will provide the best service we can to our clients, by ensuring that we are well trained, well qualified, and work in a timely manner according to the published processes and procedures of the organisation.
Caring	We will advocate and support each other and assist everyone to reach their full potential. We will contribute to ensuring that our working environment is enjoyable for all. We will encourage safe working practices in our fellow workers, and actively discourage unsafe working practices.
Involvement	We will encourage one another to be involved in activities within the organisation, by contributing to, influencing, and challenging the processes and decisions made within the organisation.
Communication	We commit to open honest and timely communication within the organisation, and open and transparent decision making.

COMPANY GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

AgBiz Assist Ltd: is a Public Company Limited by Guarantee trading as AgBiz Assist (Social Enterprise), Rural Financial Counselling Service Victoria – North East and AgBiz Care. Australian Company Number (ACN) is 120418582. It is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC). It is registered with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR), Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) and Income Tax Exempt Charity. AgBiz Assist is a certified Social Enterprise with Social Traders.

Assist Partners Ltd: is a Public Company Limited by Guarantee. Australian Company Number (ACN) 651917172, registered charity with ACNC with Income Tax Exemption, is registering as a Social Enterprise and is fully owned subsidiary of AgBiz Assist. Trading as Community Business Connect (CBC), Click Region, and Startup Shakeup providing telecommunication & IT services a small business, agribusiness contracting, digital training and consulting services.

POSITION DESCRIPTION

The Board is responsible for the overall Governance of the organisation/s by:

- Fulfilling their obligations as Company Director in compliance with the Corporations Act, ACNC and ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and regulatory bodies
- Determining and maintaining the strategic direction
- Ensuring financial viability
- Monitoring the performance of the EO and the organisation as a whole
- Individual Directors are expected to act in good faith and to the best of their ability in the interests of the organisation as a whole

Directors are required to demonstrate:

- Understanding of the organisation’s Vision, Mission and Values
- Relevant experience and/or qualifications as a Director, including an understanding of

their legal, ethical, fiduciary and financial responsibilities

- Expertise in strategic planning, including the ability to develop and review strategic priorities through constructive questioning and suggestion to contribute to effective decision making
- An understanding of the Board’s responsibility in Risk Management and its role in Board decision making
- The ability to understand financial reporting, with an understanding of corporate finance
- An understanding of the Board’s responsibility in legal and regulatory compliance
- A broad understanding of the not for profit sector, working with Government programs and social and commercial enterprise.
- Business acumen and business development experience, understanding of agribusiness and small family business operations.
- The ability to work collaboratively with a diverse group of people and opinions
- Other specialised knowledge, skills or experience relevant to the purpose and operation of the organisation

Key Responsibilities

As a Director of the organisation/s you are responsible to:

- a) Contribute to the Boards strategic planning processes and monitor the EO’s performance and regular reporting on progress against the current strategic priorities.
- b) Consider and approve annual budgets, financial targets and monitor the regular financial reporting against budgets and key result areas.
- c) Monitor and appraise all matters concerning the viability and sustainability of the organisation, including compliance with relevant legislation and Standards.
- d) Understand the Boards governance framework, ensuring that the Board operates within the framework and assist in any policy review and development as required.
- e) Understand the Boards risk management frameworks, ensuring that the Boards operate within the frameworks and review as required.
- f) Inform the Boards of any activities or interests that may conflict with, compromise or restrict you from fully meeting your responsibilities as a Director.
- g) Prepare for all meetings by reading, considering and raising relevant questions on all reports and information made available to the Boards.
- h) Attend and actively participate in all Board meetings, including additional meetings scheduled as required, making your timely apologies for any meeting that you are not able to attend.
- i) Participate in at least one Board committee as required, ensuring adequate reporting to the Board to provide for effective decision making.
- j) Undertake training and professional development to enhance your knowledge and skills.
- k) Participate in any evaluation of the Board’s performance, providing and accepting constructive criticism with the aim of improving the Board’s overall performance.

THE ROLE

Term of office:

The term of office for a Director is two years. On occasions, the first term may be either one or two years to ensure that the Board maintains a spread of Directors whose terms expire in any one year.

Meetings:

The ABA Board holds ten board meetings days per year (excluding December and January). Meetings are held monthly on dates and times set by the Boards annually and, usually meet in person for Board meetings at Yarrawonga/Mulwala. Whilst attendance in person is preferred, Directors can where necessary and with prior notice, also attend meetings by telephone or video conference. Sub-committee meetings are usually held bi-monthly and conducted electronically.

The Annual General Meeting is held in November each year.

Directors are also required to attend special meetings held in person or by conference calls and participate in other decision-making outside of Board meetings (often by email).

Directors are required to sit on at least one of the Board's committees or Project Board:

- Finance (including remuneration and EO performance management)
- Risk and Governance

The Assist Partners Board meeting usually precedes or follow the AgBiz Assist Board meeting on Board meeting days or by electronic as determined by the Assist Partners Board members.

Directors are at times required to represent the Board and the organisation at National, State and regional meetings, events and reviews.

REQUIREMENTS

Essential:

- A desire to enhance the economic and social wellbeing of people and businesses in primary production, agribusiness, small regional businesses and regional communities
- Must demonstrate strong alignment with our values, culture and commitment to our strategic intent.
- Ability to maintain confidence regarding Board and confidential service matters
- Fulfil the requirements of a director under the Corporations Act, thus:
 - Must be validly appointed (in accordance with the Constitution)
 - Must be over 18 years of age
 - Must not be personally insolvent under administration
 - Must not be disqualified under the law (an un-discharged bankrupt, convicted criminal)
 - Be resident in Australia
- Honest and trustworthy - Must provide an appropriate National Police Check on appointment (indicating no convictions of fraud or violence).
- Ability to work within the Board's policies and procedures
- Excellent communication skills
- Specialist skills in one or more of the following areas:
 - Social Enterprise, business transition and development
 - Marketing and communications
 - Information Technology, Telecommunications and digital transformation
 - Commercialisation and entrepreneurship
 - Climate adaption
 - Rural Health and wellbeing

Desirable:

- Not for Profit Company experience or For Profit company director
- Relevant Tertiary qualifications.
- Management experience specific or nonspecific to the industry
- Other specialist skills in one or more of the following areas:
 - Information Technology and Telecommunications
 - Business Development, commercialisation and entrepreneurship
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Leadership
 - Finance (Accounting, business management, Economics)
 - Human Resources (Organisational development)
 - Agribusiness and agribusiness finance
 - Social Enterprise
 - Marketing / Media
 - Management /Governance
 - Government
 - Legal
 - Education and training
 - Social work, Community Services, Charity
 - Community / Economic Development
 - Risk Management
 - Climate adaptation
- Full Drivers Licence