Appendix 3: The Stages in a Good Appointment Process

(1) Preparation — the process and vacancy profile. The first step is to agree on a process and timeline for the appointment. After the process has been agreed, the board should carry out an assessment of its current skills and expertise so as to identify gaps that need to be filled. The assessment would need to consider required expertise in line with the current and emerging priorities of the board. It would also need to consider personal qualities that are required for board members generally. Following this process, selection criteria for a specific vacancy or vacancies would be drawn up in line with the criteria that has been set for board membership as a whole.

(2) Locating suitable candidates. Suitable candidates who meet the position profile (or selection criteria) need to be located and encouraged to apply in accordance with the agreed appointment process. To promote transparency and diversity, this would typically involve the publication of a job advertisement. For certain appointments, there may also be a need to target particular individuals on the recommendation of ministers, departments, professional recruiters and other relevant organisations. An important part of this stage in the process is the provision of information to potential candidates. Under the Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies for England and Wales, for example, information packs must be sent to all applicants. These packs must contain an application form, a role description and position profile, an indication of the required time commitment, remuneration details, information on the organisation and a complaints leaflet on the commissioner for public appointment’s complaints procedure (OCPA 2005b: 30).

(3) Assessing and vetting potential candidates. After suitable candidates have been identified, a selection committee needs to assess candidates against the selection criteria. The candidates’ qualifications and prior experience also need to be verified and an understanding gained of the extent of the candidates’ commitment to fulfilling the responsibilities of the position (i.e. probity check). Part of this process involves the evaluation of potential conflicts of interest.

(4) Selection and appointment. This stage in the process usually involves the selection of a candidate from a shortlist in accordance with relevant statutory and customary requirements. At the federal government level, this often involves a decision being made by a minister after consultation with the prime minister, Cabinet and other relevant individuals. Whatever processes are followed, they need to comply with any pre-determined, merit-based procedures and all applicable legal requirements.
(5) *Audit.* A less common element of assessment processes is auditing, whereby an internal or external group reviews the documentation that has been kept throughout the assessment so as to determine how appointments have been made. As discussed, the *Code of Practice* for England and Wales now dictates that regular audits be conducted on appointments that are made by organisations that fall within the remit of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. No such process currently applies in Australia, although it offers a number of potential advantages, including greater rigor and transparency, which can help to promote public confidence in public sector boards and appointment processes.