

Webinar Transcript

The importance of the board consent agenda

Welcome everybody. Really, really thrilled to see so many people interested in board consent agendas and really interested to know whether you're interested because you're using one and you love it and you want to use it more or because you're not using one or because you're using one and it's not working. So feel free. I keep an eye on the chat, but if you would like me to answer a question, let's answer a question as we go. So type your questions in the Q and A, and if I'm not clever enough to answer them, I've got some help. So maybe is there a slide that introduces us all?

There certainly is.

So just on the Q and A, try and use the Q and A button on your toolbar, everybody. It just enables us to keep a track of everything as we're going through the session.

And finally, as you exit the webinar, at the end of the session, there'll be a short one minute survey. It's less than a minute, which we really hope you'll complete for us. The results of that particular survey help us plan our future events and speakers. So it's a really great help to us. Thanks very much.

So for those not too familiar with BoardPro, we are a board software provider, sometimes called a board portal. We serve just over thirty five thousand users around the world, about four thousand boards and about eight hundred, eight hundred, about eight thousand committees around the world. And we enable board administrators, company secretaries and CEOs to prepare for and run their board meetings more effectively and efficiently with less time and deliver more impact and value for the organisation.

And as much as we are a board software provider, part of our wider mission here at BoardPro is to make the fundamentals of governance free and easy to implement for all organisations, but especially those organisations with resource constraints. And one of the many ways we do this is by providing free access to hundreds of governance templates, guides, and all sorts of great resources, which you'll find funnily enough in the resources section of our website.

And these webinars that we host every week are a great way of accessing key governance knowledge without the time commitment and costs associated with in person events.

So as Julie said, just sit back and relax for the next forty five odd minutes. Enter the discussion by asking as many questions as you would like.

A full recording of the webinar along with the slide deck and the other resources will be sent to you tomorrow now.

So let me have our team introduce themselves, starting with you first, Julie.

Hi, wonderful. Good morning. I'm Julie Garland McLellan. I'm possibly known to a few of you because I am the producer of the Director's Dilemma Newsletter.

I'm very sorry if I'm sounding echoey, I don't normally sound echoey. Give me better?

That's better.

Okay, right, there we go, that was easily fixed.

I work with boards and directors to help them be more effective and efficient, and I just love solving governance problems. Over to you, Graham.

Yorra, everyone. My name is Graham Marquis. I'm based mostly in Wellington in New Zealand. I'm the co founder of a specialist governance practice called Boardworks.

I'm gradually working my way out of that job, but I'm still very interested in contributing to the governance debate about various things that can make governance more effective.

Danica?

Thank you. Kia ora koutou, everyone. I am Danica McLean from IGS, or Independent Governance Services. We're a governance business here in New Zealand that provides support. So the bottom end of the governance triangle, we really help boards to do their best work by taking away the administrative burden for them. We do that by facilitating the admin for all board meetings through being board secretaries or the hiring company secretary work through to helping with some of those foundational governance documents and processes when you are setting up a board.

And I'm very happy to be here talking about consent agendas today.

Thanks, Tanika. Right, over to you, Julie. Let's get us started.

Wonderful. So I guess I thought I would start by talking about the problem.

And because I do quite a few board performance reviews and generally run-in packs of directors and governance professionals, the common complaints that I hear are one, that directors don't prepare. They don't come to the meeting ready so you get bogged down in having to read the papers and tell them what's in the pack.

Or two, the directors prepare but that just leads them to ask lots of questions or it leads them to spend too much time on the unimportant issues so your meetings still get bogged down. The third one is there's too much just general bump, bump is a technical governance term, on the agenda so you waste a lot of time on routine or non decision items and the real impact of all of those complaints is that directors just feel exhausted. The agenda either doesn't get finished or

it finishes with a ghastly rush so that the last few things are not done properly and your strategy never gets a decent discussion.

Graham, do you see this too?

Yes, I do. I don't think there's any board I've ever come across that wasn't looking to leverage its time more effectively, and that's why I like the consent agenda idea.

Okay, we've got a question in the chat immediately. Nothing wrong with asking probing questions based on their reading of the board pack. A lot wrong if the questions are on the noting and reporting items at the beginning of the pack, which then soaks up the meeting time so you never get to the substantive strategic discussions later on.

We might move to the next slide. Thank you, Sean.

In terms of understanding what a consent agenda is, it's a mechanism that you can use in your meetings to extract items from the discussion agenda and place them into a single agenda item that you pass with one motion.

So this is where you put routine and noncontroversial agenda items, one vote, no discussion. However, because it is your duty, as Paul has pointed out in our chat, and thank you, Paul, getting the conversation going, because it's your duty to diligently ask things, it's really important if a director feels that one of those items actually does require a discussion or does have some deep questions for the board, they can ask for that item to be removed from the consent agenda and reinserted back into the normal board agenda so that the board discuss it. But those questions must have a strategic import.

Is that how you use them, Danica?

Yes, yes. And it's really important to note that it doesn't say that you cannot discuss any of those things in the board pack. Absolutely have a right as a director to say that you want to talk about something in one of those items. And then that will be extracted out of the consent agenda resolution and you'll be able to ask those questions.

It's really to be able to take away the formality of all of those kind of backend governance functions. So the things that we're doing in the background, all of your minutes, your interest registers, any operational reports, The work is still being done and the groundwork is still there. But unless anything has changed or is new, they can be simply, you know, can be approved without much discussion. Unless you've got a question, in which case you have the right to remove that and to be able to ask the question. But things like small typos or things that are just very minor corrections don't need to be discussed around the board table. That can be corrected outside the board meeting and not take up all of that space. So the purpose is really to free up discussion for more strategic items and things that the directors really add value to.

Excellent. Couldn't agree more. Sean, can you pop us on to the next slide? So the key principles are that the board is still responsible for proper diligent reading and consideration of all of the material in their pack.

Once they have read and thought about the pack and undertaken, as is the legal standard in Australia, diligent, specific and independent analysis into the matters therein. Then they get to the meeting and they want to focus their time on the collective discussion on directors' input to decisions that the board and the organization need to make, to forming a shared view of an item. Different directors might have different perspectives, so getting that united board view really helps the executive team to make the best decisions and to deliver the best performance. And of course, the really important job of the board which is making the choices and the decisions that create the future you want for the company.

I'm assuming everybody's happy with that idea.

So we might hop on to the next slide.

Good things to put in your consent agenda, non controversial items that are unlikely to provoke debate.

Here's a copy of the advert for the new CEO that we've all approved previously, but here it is and here's a list of the places that we posted it, for example. Matters within existing delegations and established practice.

You might want to tell the board that you'd used your delegations as the CEO and that you'd done things that they'd asked you to do, but you don't really want to be spending your meeting time talking about that.

Anything that has previously been discussed or explained that the board has simply asked for a written record of and any administrative or routine papers.

I quite like to see minutes in the consent agenda, but that is because all of my boards do a very quick treatment of their minutes and they sign off or they agree that they're happy with them within a week of the meeting, which means when you get to the board meeting, there's not really any cause for discussion. If your board doesn't approve the minutes until the next meeting, then don't put them in the consent agenda. Make sense?

A couple of questions that have just come through, which I'll read out at the moment, Julie. One's from Rachel here.

Is the idea that the consent agenda is legalised rubber stamping, and a lot of organisations need to run a decision to the Board, even though the substance of the matter has long since been dealt with.

Yep. I don't like the idea of boards rubber stamping, but yes, I think when it is something that the board has already previously agreed, then yes, I would say that is a good way to explain it to people.

Some good questions here. Rachel, is the consent agenda only for non controversial matters or can it also be used if you have a lot of papers for noting? Yes, as long as your noting papers aren't controversial, I'm just trying to think. If I was sitting on a board and I suddenly saw a noting paper that the company has made a statement in support of one side or the other in a war, and it's here for noting, I'd consider that controversial and I'd want it taken out of the agenda so I could talk about it.

If I've got a paper there that says, you know, here's our usual quarterly report to our bondholders, I'd just note it. I'd assume that was not controversial.

And yes, the chair and usually the company secretary.

Danica and Graham, you know more about company secretaries than me, but my preference is always for the chair and COSEQ to sit down and work out the final versions of the agenda before the meeting.

Yes. And that's not to say that you can't, at the beginning of the meeting, state which items you want to put into the consent agenda. So you may actually decide at the time that you're going to include items XYZ on the agenda for consenting. And so long as that's really clearly documented in the minutes, and that that minute states that everyone's had an opportunity to ask any questions and draw any of those items out, then they can cover that off. So it is good to have it clearly documented at the start on the agenda as to what's going to be included in the consent agenda, but that doesn't stop you from including other items if you haven't had that on the agenda to start with.

In fact, it's good practice, I think, to actually confirm the agenda at the start of the meeting, including the consent agenda, because a lot of things can change between the Board pack coming out with the agenda in it and the circumstances that the Board faces on the day of this meeting.

Yes, I think you are right.

Going through the agenda and altering it at the beginning of the meeting is a very useful practice. And you rarely see a board that makes it through a year without having at least one of their agendas altered. Often because somebody is running late and so we rearrange things to do things without them or because planes and buses and trains are not running on schedule or whatever reason.

Auditors and lawyers coming in often change the time at last minute. And you can usually accommodate this. Another couple of good questions: The consent agenda is a part of the normal agenda, so responding to that question there.

One runs within the other and we'll get to how that works in a moment. And yes, some boards, Kerry, do put the CEO report into the consent agenda.

Some boards leave it out because there are things there that need to be discussed.

And this is where directorship is all about having good judgment.

You have to decide does this need discussion or can they read it and know it and any of the things that need discussing are going to come up when we discuss the other items that are on the agenda.

And if you have a CEO report that you have items that you want to highlight but it has a lot of dashboards that could just be noted, I would take the approach of saying my CEO report is taken as read and I just want to highlight these key points, dashboards are for noting, then the minutes will reflect that, that the director's noted the dashboards. It doesn't have to mean because they're there and they're not in the consent agenda that a lot of time and discussion needs to be spent on those items. You can still have papers for noting or dashboards that are part of the board pack. So the consent agenda is really just to take out those onerous time consuming items that don't need to be discussed because they are generally acceptable as they are.

Really good. So I thought I'd pop down, I just grabbed one of my board meeting packs when I put these slides together, and this is what we had in our consent agenda.

So we had the minutes of the previous meeting which had already been circulated and everybody who wanted to comment had commented.

We had some routine things that staff had done that we expect them to do, but they like to tell us that they've done them. We had regular financial operational reports. That was the CFO report and the operations report with a few dashboards in there with KPIs. We had some correspondence.

We're a regulator, so we had correspondence that we'd sent and we are also regulated by other regulators, so we had correspondence from them.

We, in that meeting, also had some attestations, which is because of the timing of that particular meeting and the timing of our lodgement of accounts. So the CEO and the CFO making a declaration that to the best of their knowledge, there are no major issues.

If you're a grant funded organization, you might have your grant acquittals in there. And as Danica mentioned right at the beginning, our registered conflicts of interest. We all read them. We all check them. And at the beginning of the meeting we might mention if any of them are pertinent to any of the items on the agenda, but the register itself is there in the consent agenda item.

I think we might move on to the next slide.

So this is where the rubber hits the road.

When you introduce these to your board, really, really important, don't just spring it on them. I'm sure you wouldn't, but just in case you were tempted, get talk to them first about what it is and what you're trying to achieve and get them to agree to have a go with it. The first time that you give them a board pack with a consent agenda, mention it in the covering letter or in your portal, the note that goes out to say your board papers are in the portal, go and get them. Actually, can edit that note and say, by the way, please remember, as discussed, we are going to try our consent agenda this time. So you will notice that these items are grouped in the consent agenda.

Start really small.

Put very, very simple non controversial items there that usually get passed with a nod anyway, just to start getting people used to the fact that the consent agenda is not for discussion.

Be very clear with people if you want to recognize what's in the consent agenda and what's not. This is how you recognize it. I love color coding.

It just makes it easier. But there are some boards I know that have a slightly different template. Some boards have an asterisk next to them on the agenda page so that when you look down the list, you can see which ones have an asterisk. They're the ones you're not supposed to be discussing. Whatever works for you.

I also like when I tell people how things are identified to tell them if you want to talk about something.

There's a lovely comment on the chat from Brian about how do you handle items that are technically routine, but there's a long term strategic implication. As a director or as an executive, you might go, look, there are some implications here. I think I'd like this paper removed from the consent agenda because I think we need to talk about those this month. Then you identify this is how we extract them and usually you either ring the chair or you ring the company secretary or you email them.

Sometimes it's one and copy the other, sometimes it's both, but that's usually the way I like to have an extraction window.

Simply because if you are taking something big out of the consent agenda and you are asking some probing questions that are going to generate some real deep strategic thought, you've got to find time in the agenda to accommodate that. So giving people that forty eight hour window and particularly if you say, I'd like to extract this, this is why, this is what I want to talk about. Now it gives the executive a chance to get the information to hand, to be prepared for the questions and the discussion, and it gives your company secretary and chair sufficient warning that they can rejig the agenda and try to fit everything in.

Really important to be very firm on the rules. I was talking to a board the other day, without a word of a lie, they spend about eleven hours once a month on a Saturday in their board meeting and they've been using a consent agenda for the last two years, but they still ask questions and discuss the items in the consent agenda. So basically it's just a waste of time identifying the items and separating them out.

And when they said, oh, but the consent agenda doesn't work, it's like, well guys, you have to make it work.

And people will make mistakes.

And the first few times you say, Look, I'm really sorry, but that's actually in the consent agenda. Does that question come up in association with any of the other items we are talking about today?

Or do we need to make an exception just this once?

But you really need at the beginning to be quite firm that the consent agenda, unless it is something strategic and you want to take the item out, does not get discussed. Otherwise you might as well not bother. The other important thing if you've got sleepy directors is to remind them that they still have a duty of care. The fact that you are not discussing it doesn't mean that you don't have to read it and think about it and make diligent, specific and independent inquiry into the issues if you think there is something there.

It takes a bit of guiding and reassurance.

Often directors are a bit worried. Are you sure we're doing our duty? Or are you sure this is okay?

And it takes quite a few meetings before it really clicks and starts to become part of the DNA. What I have noticed is when I have new directors join a board where we've been using a consent agenda, they're always very impressed once they get used to it, at how efficient it is in helping them to focus meeting time. Danica?

Thanks, Julia. Think it's, you know, what you're saying there, it's important to differentiate that it's not an excuse to not read those papers. You're still very responsible for understanding and read everything that's in the board pack. And there's just a few questions coming through around the actual mechanics of how you do it on the agenda.

The way that I like to do it is to have on the agenda at the beginning resolution for a consent agenda, and then under that to say proposing that the board approve that these items, duh, duh, duh, duh, are resolved to be accepted as part of the consent agenda. And that lets you see in advance either which items they are or you might state the items with an asterisk next to them on the agenda. So it's really clear both for you as a director, for the chair who's doing the resolution and for the board secretary or company secretary to know what to record and so that when you're reading the board pack you know in advance that oh I've got a question on that

paper so when the question comes up at the board meeting, we're going to do this resolution to accept these items, does anyone have anything that they'd like to pull out to discuss, you have that trigger there to say yes actually, I'd like to discuss this point so can we please pull that paper out.

And it's really, it's not there necessarily to make the meeting shorter. It's to make the meeting more efficient and more productive.

So items that the chair would normally say, Right, now we're coming to the minutes. Can we have an approval that these minutes were a true and accurate record of the previous meeting? Everyone say aye, can we get a mover, can we get a seconder. That time is just taken away because it's already been approved And when you get to those papers saying, All right, now we're at this point for noting, do directors have any questions?

That point gets removed. So that's where the time saving comes in.

Julie, if I can just add a point too about making the practice become routine. I think it's a good use of the post meeting board meeting evaluation, that ten minutes or so at the end of the meeting when we say, how did we do today? Just ask the question: was there anything that we ended up dealing with that actually probably should have gone on the consent agenda?

Oh, that's a good idea. Yes, I like that one.

I shall add that to my post meeting review list of questions I ask. Thank you Graham.

And I think as you go on with your meetings it becomes fairly clear where you spend the time on as a board And when you routinely adjust saying yes, we have been a note of this paper, or you have very basic questions or it's corrections or it's relating to something else that's in the board pack that you can discuss as part of another paper, it becomes apparent once you start thinking about what can be on the consent agenda, which papers will comfortably slot in there.

You can reinforce that as well by agreeing on a decision tree for consent of general items. And then just having a discussion in the theoretical sense around something like that is also another way of cementing the idea.

It is.

So we've got a couple of questions about, in fact, strangely enough, the meeting mechanics, which is what we're on to now.

I would say if you've got things on your agenda for noting, put them into the consent agenda so that it's very clear that there was no expectation that these would be discussed. That way, if heaven forbid, you should be one of those rare companies that winds up in court having their minutes and the recollection of the meetings. You don't have items on your agenda and people say, well, I don't remember discussing it. You can confidently say, well, your honor, it was part of

the consent agenda, so therefore, although we read it and considered it, it wasn't slated for discussion time.

That is going to be a much more confident response. So in the meeting mechanics, the consent agenda is a single item in your agenda. And it lists the papers that form part of the consent agenda. So when you look at that page that tells you your start and finish times, it's got one thing on it, is your consent agenda, and then it lists the papers that are in it.

I like the chair to ask formally just for noting for directors to confirm that they've received and read their papers, and then to confirm that, does anybody want to remove an item from the consent agenda? And this is really ideally for the minutes.

If you want something taken out, you should have told the chair before the meeting, not at it. Otherwise, you're sort of ambushing. But it's a good idea for the minutes to note that people consented to the items being in the consent agenda and there was nobody that really wanted to discuss anything. You adopt them with one motion. You just say, okay. Now we've got to item four and it's the consent agenda all in favor, everybody glances up from their screens and nods. And then you can glance back down to the next item on your agenda, which is the first one that you're gonna start discussing.

Really important that minutes record that the consent agenda was adopted and that the minutes list the constituent papers in the consent agenda, and, of course, that your minutes note if anything was extracted from it for discussion.

Your minutes are a really important record. They are the record.

The other thing to note is when you adopt the policy of using a consent agenda, it's a good idea to make it part of your official governance framework.

So I would look at what does our governance framework or our governance manual or our policy say about how agendas are put together and just make sure that there is something in there about the fact that you will use the consent agenda. I would suggest that the governance manual, which hopefully forms part of your induction pack and maybe even your letter of appointment for new directors, has a sentence about the use of the consent agenda so that people really start getting their heads around it when they look at how meetings are run.

And, of course, your policy and your governance framework and manuals should record who can ask for something to be taken out, when they should ask, who they ask to do this for them, and how that is noted and handled.

Fairly simple, but just make sure you've got all your ducks in a row.

And I think also just an encouragement, you know, that board culture being there that it's okay to ask those questions or to take those papers out, that it's absolutely within your rights as a director so that any directors being on boarded aren't kind of frightened away from being able to pull up those items for discussion.

Even in a not for profit board, you are legally responsible and can be liable.

So you absolutely have the right.

It's just that if you use your right to discuss items that aren't very important, you might then run out of trouble to discuss out of time to discuss items that are.

Some practical tips on using them. I like to, every six months or so, sit down and have a look at what was in my consent agenda. And as trust develops, you might start popping more things in there. I like to group similar papers so that all the finance stuff is in one place, all the HR stuff, all the correspondence.

I really encourage directors when they ask for something to be taken out of the consent agenda to explain why or possibly share the question they would like to ask.

It helps to prepare a better response and it also helps when you tell other directors because it's a good idea if somebody said can we take this paper out to let the other directors know so that they can now prepare for discussion and say, look, this paper's been removed.

This is the question. This is the issue that's likely to be discussed when we reach it on the main agenda.

Make sure you've got a good audit trail in your minutes so that you can see what has been approved or noted, and then go back to point one and have another look because by that time, six months will have gone by and your levels of trust or the level of, volatility in your environment will have changed, and you might want to put less or more into your consent agenda. Make sense?

I have seen people attempt to put things into a consent agenda to avoid discussion when actually they were pretty important things and should have been discussed. It's not a good idea. I really love the picture on this slide. I just adore it. But going quickly over something which is difficult and needs a careful and nuanced discussion is not a good idea. So don't put anything in that agenda that needs strategic judgment or that has reputational risk or that has a material finance implication or a material policy precedent. And I'd also encourage you, if you want management to explain or talk about something or if you want the directors to debate something and start to form a board view, even if you're not looking for a decision, I would be very in favor of keeping those items in the main agenda because you don't want to train people that they can talk about stuff in the consent agenda.

It doesn't matter who they are. That's my theory. What's yours?

I think if you have any confusion about what could be going in there or if it's appropriate, kind of just asking why is that paper going to the board and understanding the purpose and what your ask is from the board. What do you actually want them to do?

Is it just a simple mechanic of well they need to note this or this is for their information, or is this something that you need feedback on? Do you need discussion on? Do you need a robust decision on? Or does it impact the strategic landscape? Does it impact the financials of the company? Does it impact their stakeholders or their customers?

Anything that has that kind of implication shouldn't be on the consent agenda.

Look, I agree wholeheartedly with that, Danica. One of my bug beaters is when you get a noting paper as a director without any clue at all as to why noting it would be important.

Yep. And the other thing is, if you've got things going into your agenda, whether it's in your consent agenda or in the main agenda, and you don't know why they're coming to the board, it's probably a really good candidate for not putting in the board pack. Because the whole idea of looking at your agenda and using a tool like the consent agenda is that you want to free up time. So if there are things that you can remove from your main agenda and then remove even further from your consent agenda because you really don't need to know, it's worth it.

The time they spend not reading something that's not important, and I'm aware of all the negatives in that statement, but the time that they have saved, they can put into a deeper and better analysis of the really high value big ticket items. And the other thing is make sure that you spend more time talking about those rather than at the beginning of every meeting talking about the rules of engagement and how you're going to use the consent agenda. Once you've got it in, you really shouldn't be talking about it very much at all.

Rudy, one of the really valuable things about having a discussion about these sorts of things around the board table and with the staff supporting the board, is that it produces much greater clarity between the board and the staff supporting the Board as to what the Board wants to see, what it wants to engage with, and what it is merely us dealing with as a matter of administrative convenience or whatever it is, and there's got to be a good reason for doing that as well.

Yep, totally agree.

Well, that is I mean, it's such a lovely simple concept. I'm almost surprised that we spent forty minutes talking about it already, but I'm not that surprised because I talk a lot. And I'm also not that surprised because I do think it's a useful and valuable and helpful tool.

So any questions? Pop your questions in the Q and A.

We have a few questions in here, Julie.

Oh gosh, yes we do.

Me see Yeah, quite a few of them are about the actual agenda itself and how the consent agenda is represented on there. And it really is, the way that I would do it is you have your agenda, this is the meeting of the XYZ company on this day, these are the people that's present, this is the location, here is the agenda, welcome and opening, Consent agenda resolution.

Under that you'd say we're asking the board to approve that we accept the following papers as part of a consent agenda. And then you have items two, two point four, two point six for example.

That might be the interests register, the minutes, the noting papers, for example. And then you'd still have underneath that minutes of the previous meeting. You'd have your interests register, you'd have your actions list, you'd have your CEO report, your CFO report, etcetera. So it looks like a normal agenda, you just have that item slotted in saying approval for the consent agenda.

So it doesn't remove those items from the normal agenda. It's very simply just a line item and it comes through as procedural when you start the meeting to say this is the approach we're going to take, everyone's accepted that they've read these papers, does anyone have any questions that they want to pull out? Hopefully they have let you know in advance and you don't have to actually go through the mechanics of that and then you move on. And so that means you can skip over those items.

You can skip over the minutes, the interests register, the noting papers as you come to them on the agenda.

What about the question from Lisa, Julie?

Yes. Absolutely, Lisa. You can definitely have more than one consent agenda item. That's why we call it an agenda. So for example, your consent agenda might say, here are the items in the consent agenda.

Item one, policy one, item two, policy two, item three, policy three. Each one of those would have its little paper in front saying this is what's been updated and here's a copy of the policy. And you would just note the consent agenda, one item, for those six plus all of the other things that are in there. It really when you start approving five policies in one go, it really saves a lot of time. And to answer Michael's question, yes, there is a document that will be sent out to you and you will be able to see a sample agenda and also some carefully written, slightly more coherent consideration of how you use it.

Some decisions can be pro forma and just looking at the anonymous question where there are regular certification type matters is there merit in alternating the item into consent agenda?

Yes, sometimes you might have things that you discuss and then when they come back to the board, it's in line with what the board wanted. So that would be popped straight into the agenda consent agenda because you don't need to discuss it again. So that's a really good use of your consent agenda.

And I'd just like to give an example of what you would have in the minutes as part of this. So you would have the agenda item consent agenda, and then you'd have a simple note saying something along the lines The chair invited directors to identify any items for extraction from the consent agenda.

No items were extracted.

The board resolved to approve the consent agenda comprising the items four point one to four point five as circulated, or that same thing but item XYZ was identified for extraction and the Board resolved to approve the consent agenda covering off items four point one, four point two, four point three and four point five because four point four was the one that was extracted.

Yep, good point.

Yeah, it does need to be simple but it does need to be there and clearly documented.

Yep and just quickly picking up on some of the other questions.

It's a good idea in your board in camera to have a chat about we've tried this consent agenda. We've given it a go for three or four meetings now. How do we feel?

Is it improving our quality rather than just shortening our meetings?

As long as it's not detracting from your quality, I would still use it. A short meeting is a good meeting. And my advice to Catherine is when I have had granting bodies that say this must go through the board, they are quite happy if it is on the consent agenda rather than the main agenda. In fact, they don't seem to treat it any differently because as directors you're on the hook for everything on your agenda.

And you can clearly see if you're being audited that those papers were in the board pack and that they were, so therefore the directors have seen them, and then there's the minute saying that directors have accepted and approved, that those papers would be noted under that consent agenda.

So they've acknowledged on writing that they've seen those and it's there in the board pack to evidence that it was there, and they've seen them too.

Perfect.

Do you want anything to confirm or support Brian's comment that makes the distinction between shorter meetings and better quality meetings. I think that's the ultimate test of a consent agenda. Has it improved the quality of the meetings, not just the timeliness?

Yep. But if it's reduced the time and the quality is the same, it's still a good thing. Now it's a question of what do you do with that extra time you've saved.

Personally, I'd go to the gym, but hey.

We're out of time, team.

So please feel free to connect with our great presenters today on LinkedIn. I'm sure they'll look forward to your connection. And if you'd like to be put in touch with Julie, Graham, or Danica, please indicate your interest on the survey just as you exit.

We have some fantastic webinars coming out over the next six to seven weeks. Next week's agenda item, or not agenda item, but webinar item is your new board director journey, where do you start? That's with Lisa Cook. That's going to be a great webinar. So I'd highly recommend you have a look at that on our website.

So you'll receive an email from me tomorrow, which will include a recording of today's webinar, the transcript and the presentation slides as well. And they'll also be hosted on the webinar library on our website forty eight hours after the session.

If you're considering board management software for your organization, then obviously we'd love to hear from you. So better still, why not try our free thirty day free trial? It's really simple and straightforward.

There's no risk. You don't need a credit card to get started.

So here we are. Thanks again everybody for your attendance. I hope you've enjoyed the session. I know I did. Please don't forget to complete our one minute survey as you leave the webinar. It really helps us to deliver this programme for you.

Thanks again Julie, Danica and Graeme for your great conversation today. I look forward to seeing you all at our next webinar everybody. Have a great day.