

Governance and working with the board in a crisis

Discussions with Forum CEO members during April and May 2020 have informed this concise support document. These are the strategies and support provided by some Board of Directors that were identified by CEOs in helping them to lead the organisations through the first few weeks and months of Covid-19 in New Zealand.

Five key areas were identified for Board members to consider.

- 1. Support.** Act as a sounding board and accept that the organisation is in uncharted water.
- 2. Clarity of direction.** Provide that clarity at a strategic level (not in the weeds, that's our job, or second- guessing operational decisions).
- 3. Breathing space.** Recognise that it takes time to run the financial models, reconfigure the business and to get our head around this unique challenge.
- 4. Kindness and compassion.** Recognise that the management team is shouldering a huge burden and that we are human too (we make mistakes, get tired, worried etc.) Regular weekly check-ins with the Board Chair or Board members are helpful.
- 5. Leadership.** Stepping up, being visible and being an "equal". Are directors taking pay cuts when they are asking their staff to make huge sacrifices? Are directors focusing on the people within the organisation and their needs? Are they working in partnership with management and being supportive of what's needed to reconfigure the business?