

Advisory Group Terms of Reference: First Nations Peoples of Victoria

Volunteering Victoria acknowledges the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples, the traditional custodians of the land on which our office stands, and we pay our respects to them, their culture, and their Elders past, present, and emerging.

Overview

Background

Volunteering Victoria is the state peak body for volunteering, focusing on advocacy, sector development and the promotion of volunteering. Volunteering Victoria has recently developed our first Reflect RAP. As part of our commitment to Reconciliation and inclusion we are building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities within Victoria.

Volunteering Victoria received funding to manage the **Volunteer Management Activity** program for the State of Victoria. The funding aims to break down barriers to volunteering or community giving, for people with disability, First Nations Peoples, and newly arrived migrants to Australia.

Volunteering Victoria as a non-Indigenous organisation, acknowledges the complexity of administering funding that aims to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We strive to prioritise the self-determination, experiences, and goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the development of organisational resources, programs, and activities that address barriers to volunteering or community giving.

Volunteering Victoria is developing a First Nations Peoples of Victoria **Advisory Group** to ensure the perspectives of First Nations Peoples that are currently living in Victoria inform the development of this work. You may ask for assistance to help you read this document.

Guiding Principles

- The right to self-determination; the ability and right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to determine and pursue their economic, social, and cultural goals
- Respect and acknowledgement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' culture and history, and their connection to country as the First Peoples of the land
- The recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples culture of giving and their valued contribution to their own communities and broader society
- The right of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to equal and equitable access to services and programs, and to live free of discrimination and social disadvantage
- The role of Volunteering Victoria as the peak body for volunteering to advocate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rights and model best practice approaches to participation and inclusion in the volunteering sector



Purpose and objectives

The First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group will provide advice to Volunteering Victoria that will:

- Guide Volunteering Victoria's engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- Increase Volunteering Victoria's awareness of barriers to volunteering and community giving, encountered by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Provide perspectives and advice on how volunteer involving organisations can address these barriers and become more inclusive for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Provide feedback to partnering organisations on efforts to break down barriers to volunteering for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- Promote the needs and goals of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in accessing volunteering opportunities, to ensure their self-determination is prioritised
- Promote the recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' contributions to the community and enhance organisational understanding of these contributions
- Review resources and materials, including the development of new resources (fact sheets, policies, etc.) and help identify gaps in the resources we offer
- Provide feedback on the implementation of Volunteering Victoria's REFLECT RAP

Membership

Criteria for Membership

The First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group membership will aim to consist of:

- At least three and at most nine First Nations Peoples currently living in Victoria
- A diverse range of group members of different backgrounds and ages
- Perspectives of people from rural / regional and metro Victoria

Terms of Membership

Members will be appointed as individuals for two years with potential for extension based on a review process at the end of term. Members of the Advisory Group will be paid on honorarium. This means you will be remunerated to acknowledge the time set aside to attend the meetings and share your experiences.

Being an Advisory Group member is optional. We understand that circumstances and commitments change. A member may indicate that they are unable to continue participating at any time. If a member can no longer participate in the Advisory Group, we kindly ask that they inform Volunteering Victoria in writing four weeks before the next scheduled meeting.



Meetings of the First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group

The meetings of the First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group will:

- Meet approximately three times per twelve-month period for approximately 2 hours per meeting
- Primarily be organised via online meetings; however, can also be held in person if the group prefers
- Have flexible meeting times; after hours options will be available depending on the preference of the group
- Be flexible
- Will be conducted in a safe and collaborative environment in a fair and unbiased manner
- Will not be open to members of the general public
- Be supportive. Depending on the nature of the topics discussed, support personnel and translator services can be made available

Meeting Practices and Procedures

The convenor of the Advisory Group will provide updates on the resources and activities of the project at each meeting. The convenor will also report back to the group on the outcomes of the group's advice and how it has been used in the project activities.

- Meetings will be convened by a member of the group or a staff member from Volunteering Victoria
- Secretariat support will be provided by Volunteering Victoria (organising meeting dates, agenda, minutes, organising support to group members, etc.)
- Papers will be provided (if required) by Volunteering Victoria and reviewed by the convenor
- The convenor and secretariat will make reasonable adjustments and ensure meetings and content are accessible
- If a member of the group has other access or support requirements, they are welcomed to discuss their circumstances with the convenor, the secretariat, and Volunteering Victoria

The convenor of the Advisory Group, with the support of the secretariat, and the project team will:

- Coordinate meetings, agenda, and minutes
- Facilitate a collaborative and safe meeting format
- Encourage active participation of all members
- Support advisory group members to fully engage in the issues on the table by providing information and research findings in a timely and accessible manner

Meetings will be as inclusive and supportive as possible.

- If required, support persons or workers of members of the First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group will be able to attend meetings to help you to share your experience
- Please note, support persons or workers of members of the First Nations Peoples of Victoria Advisory Group will not be asked to share their lived experience nor be paid on honorarium
- If members are not able to attend a meeting, they are welcome to provide feedback on proposed ideas or materials via telephone or email. Kindly note that the eligibility requirements for the honorarium payments requires you to attend the meeting.



Protocols

Confidential and privacy

Members of the Advisory Group privacy will be protected in accordance with the **Volunteering Victoria Privacy Policy**.

Volunteering Victoria acknowledges the Indigenous Cultural & Intellectual Property Rights of Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to their heritage, including traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expression as those terms are understood in accordance with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

What you share with us is your story and information. What we share will only be used with your permission. If members of the group disclose private information or details of their lived experience, it is expected that the group show sensitivity and discretion and this information be treated confidentially. All data collected during the advisory group meetings will not include identifiable private information of the participants or Advisory Group members.

The documents presented to the groups will often be in draft format and not ready for wider community distribution. Members are not permitted to use drafted documents in any grant applications, presentations, or in the private or working roles of members and may not be shared or distributed with anyone outside of the advisory group or Volunteering Victoria. Data taken from the Advisory Group meetings, research findings, general feedback, and discussions will be used to inform policy, develop, and implement resources, and be used to help reduce barrier to volunteering. Documentation and resources prepared remains the property of Volunteering Victoria.

Reporting

The Advisory Group meeting minutes and any associated reports and resources may be used to form part of required reporting to the Department of Social Services

Policies

[Volunteering Victoria Privacy Policy](#)



Definitions

Advisory Group: A group of individuals who share similar experiences from a diverse background that provides independent advice based on its member’s personal and lived experience.

Honorarium: An honorarium is a nominal reward payment for voluntary services which acknowledges time given for your attendance at the Advisory Group meetings. It notionally will cover preparation time, meeting attendance and post meeting follow-up. It is designed to assist with overcoming any barriers to participation such as transport, internet, or computer access, to advise Volunteering Victoria in this capacity. Volunteering Victoria are unable to provide tax advice on assessable income. Please find the Australian Taxation Office information on honorariums [here](#).

Priority group: Priority groups refer to one of the three groups identified as a priority in the *Families and Communities Program Volunteer Management Activity: Grant Opportunity Guidelines*. The groups include First Nation Peoples, Newly Arrived Migrants, and People with Disability.

Priority Group	Definition of the priority group according to the grant guidelines
First Nation Peoples	Any individual that identifies as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.
Newly Arrived Migrants	Newly Arrived Migrants within their first five years of settlement.
People with Disability	<p>The <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) defines disability as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions • total or partial loss of a part of the body • the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness • the malfunction, malformation, or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body • a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction • a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions, or judgment, or that results in disturbed behaviour and includes disability that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • presently exists • previously existed but no longer exists • may exist in the future • is imputed to a person (meaning it is thought or implied that the person has disability but does not).

Volunteer Management Activity: Funded by the Department of Social Services, the Volunteer Management Activity is designed to increase opportunities for people to participate in the social and economic life of their broader community through volunteering. The Volunteer Management Activity program will focus on:

- Breaking down barriers to volunteering faced by the three identified priority groups, these include People with Disabilities, First Nations People, and Newly Arrived Migrants
- The delivery of online services to build the capacity of Volunteer Involving Organisations within their relevant jurisdictions
- An increase in coverage across regional, rural, and remote area

Review of Terms of Reference

This Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on a yearly basis.

