

## Expressions of Interest Information: Lived Experience Experts

### Background

The Victims of Crime Commissioner (VOCC) is an independent statutory officer. The VOCC:

- is not part of government or the justice system
- does not provide services to victims
- oversees how the system is working for victims of crime
- can make recommendations to government about how things could be improved for victims.

We want to hear your ideas to improve the justice and victims support system. Anyone with Lived Experience as a victim of crime is welcome to submit an EOI.

As a Lived Experience expert, you will:

- tell us your ideas and provide advice about issues affecting victims of crime in Victoria
- tell us about your experience as a Lived Experience expert to help us develop our Lived Experience approach.

There will be different ways you can be involved, including:

- joining an advisory group
- focus groups and workshops
- surveys and email feedback.

### Learning from Lived Experience: Our Approach

Many victims have told us that their experiences with the justice system were upsetting and harmful. We want to hear from people with direct knowledge and experience about how the system could be improved.

In 2024, the VOCC Office is implementing a Lived Experience pilot program. This means we will be trying different ways to make sure people with Lived Experience are able to tell us about the key issues for victims of crime. The findings of this pilot will inform our ongoing approach to embedding Lived Experience in our work.

You can provide advice, input and feedback about the needs of victims of crime and issues that affect them. The Commissioner will retain overall decision-making about the strategic priorities and policy positions of the VOCC Office.

## How can I participate?

Lived Experience experts can nominate to join:

- **Lived Experience Advisory Group:** A small group who will meet regularly to discuss issues relevant to the work of the VOCC Office. Some preparation outside of hours will be required for Advisory Group members.
- **Lived Experience Experts Network:** A network of people with Lived Experience who provide input in a more flexible manner. Network members may be invited to participate in surveys, focus groups and/or interviews. You will receive emails about opportunities to help us with our work. You can choose which activities you take part in.

## How will members be chosen?

The Lived Experience pilot program is open to Victorians with Lived Experience as victims of crime. We want to include people with different experiences. We believe it is important to hear from people from communities who are over-represented as victims of crime, and those who experience the greatest barriers to accessing services. This includes people who have Lived Experience and:

- Are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Have a disability
- Are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual or with other diverse identities (LGBTQIA+)
- Are multilingual, or from a multicultural or multifaith community
- Are a refugee or asylum seeker
- Have been employed in sex work
- Have experience of the criminal justice system.

## How will my participation make a difference?

Your input will help the Commissioner to understand key issues for victims of crime. In some cases, this may lead to immediate action. In other cases, your experience will contribute to longer term efforts to improve systems and services for victims of crime.

## Terms of Reference (Lived Experience Advisory Group)

The Lived Experience Advisory Group will develop the Terms of Reference with the VOCC. We will ask members to give us input about how the group should operate and function.

## What time commitment is required?

We understand that everyone's circumstances are unique. The VOCC Lived Experience program aims to provide different opportunities that meet the needs and availability of a range of people with Lived Experience.

Lived Experience Advisory Group members will meet every 6 – 8 weeks for two hours. Meetings are in person and dates/times will be set and provided to members in advance. Meetings will be scheduled during business hours (9am – 5pm).

They will also need time to read some documents and prepare for those meetings.

Network members can choose to participate more flexibly. They might respond to a survey request, join a focus group or give feedback on a particular topic. We will share these different opportunities with network members. We encourage network members to take part in at least one activity per year.

## Will I be paid for my time?

Paid participation is one of the ways that we recognise the contribution of Lived Experience experts. If you are invited to participate in an activity, we will tell you the amount you will be paid for your involvement. Some activities, like surveys, will not be paid.

Advisory Group members will be paid an hourly rate for attending and preparing for meetings. We will also cover reasonable out of pocket expenses if these have been pre-approved. More information is available in the VOCC *Lived Experience Renumeration and Reimbursement information sheet*.

## What support will be available?

We want to make sure that Lived Experience experts have the supports they need to take part safely. We will work with Advisory Group members to create support plans in the first month following their appointment. Support could include debriefing, therapeutic support services or attending training opportunities.

## How will the information I provide be used?

We commit to protecting your personal information.

The information you provide will only be shared with VOCC staff who are involved in the recruitment and appointment process.

The EOI form asks for information about whether you are part of a diverse community group. This information will help us to make sure that we hear from people with a broad range of experiences. You can choose whether to answer these questions.

Please contact us if you have any safety concerns about applying or participating in the Lived Experience expert using your legal name.

More information is available in the VOCC *Privacy Information Sheet*. Please contact the Victim Engagement Team in the VOCC Office if you have any questions.

## Security checks

A National Police Check will be undertaken for preferred applicants for the LEAG. The VOCC Office will support applicants to undertake these checks, including payment.

The VOCC Office recognises that many people in the criminal justice system have experience as victims of crime. We know that this is particularly so for women who have committed offences, who may also be victims themselves. We are committed to hearing the perspectives of people who have been through the criminal justice system. A positive police check will not automatically exclude you from participating. If your records indicate a criminal history, you will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context. We encourage you to contact us to discuss your personal circumstances.

## Who can apply?

To apply for the Lived Experience Advisory Group and/or Lived Experience Advisory Network, you must:

- Be 18 years or over
- Have Lived Experience as a victim of crime in Victoria
- Be interested in telling us your views about how the needs of victims of crime can be better met
- Complete the Self-Reflection questions (you do not need to share your responses with us)

## Selection Criteria

We will assess all applications once the expression of interest period ends.

We will consider the following criteria for applicants for the Experts Network:

1. Recent Lived Experience of being negatively affected as a victim of crime
2. An ability to provide advice or feedback about issues affecting victims of crime

For applicants who are interested in joining the Advisory Group, in addition to the above criteria, we will also consider:

1. Interest in systemic advocacy
2. A commitment to participating in relevant training opportunities
3. Confidence to present views about issues affecting victims of crime in LEAG meetings

4. Ability to work effectively as part of a diverse team in a culturally safe and inclusive manner. This includes listening to different views and working with others to develop a shared position.

We will assess the applicants and make a shortlist. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to attend an interview. Interview questions will be provided in advance. Applicants who reach the interview stage will have access to debriefing support if needed.

We will recommend successful applicants to the Victims of Crime Commissioner, who will appoint the Advisory Group members.

## Key dates

Expressions of interest due	19 May 2024
Interviews	28 May - 6 June 2024
Selected members notified	26 June 2024
Orientation Day for Lived Experience Advisory Group Members	17 July 2024

## What if I want more information or need help to complete my application?

We can help you complete your application if needed.

You can contact us during business hours via email [engagement@vocc.vic.gov.au](mailto:engagement@vocc.vic.gov.au) or on the details below:

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## Feedback

You can give us feedback on the Expression of Interest process via email: [engagement@vocc.vic.gov.au](mailto:engagement@vocc.vic.gov.au)