



FIRST PEOPLES EXPERT ADVISORY PANEL - BACKGROUND & INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

In March 2024 the MAV launched the [Strategic Plan 2024-2027 'Shaping our Future'](#) which serves as a roadmap for the next four years. The Plan's purpose is to drive actions that supports Victorian councils to create cities, regions, and towns that are thriving, resilient and inclusive communities. To achieve this, MAV has established Advisory Panels that will provide specialist advice and guide our work.

The Strategic Plan comprises 10 enabling priorities - areas of focus, one of which is 'First Peoples local government relations':

'We will work with the First Peoples' Assembly to connect with councils across the state to build understanding and capacity in treaty negotiations and continue to close the gap.'

The MAV understands that relationships between local government and First Peoples needs to be grounded in sharing, listening, care, trust, truth-telling, and understanding. First Peoples are best placed to make decisions, develop policies/plans and design programs that meet their needs. Therefore, MAV is committed to establishing a First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel to guide our work.

This has been outlined as a one of the actions in the [MAV Annual Action Plan 2024-2025 'Shaping our Future'](#):

Major Initiative:

6.1 Deepen dialogue with the First Peoples' Assembly to support local engagement with councils.

Action:

- Support councils to engage their communities with the Victorian Treaty process.

Major Initiative:

6.2 Develop a MAV First Peoples Framework that supports the sector to progress Aboriginal self-determination and reconciliation

Action:

- Review the existing and potential relationships between ACCOs and Local Governments.
- MAV First Peoples action plan process designed, and scope confirmed.
- Model to embed the principle of a First Peoples voice in the work of the MAV developed.



INFORMATION

This document provides details of the MAV First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel.

Role

The MAV is committed to working alongside First Peoples Elders and communities. The Expert Advisory Panel aims to bring together First Peoples elders, leaders and representatives from key organisations to provide expert advice, guidance and leadership to the MAV on matters impacting First Peoples and local government. The Panel will provide advice, develop policies/plans and design programs that meet the needs of First Peoples Communities in Victoria.

Scope

The First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel members will play a key role in guiding the MAV in the development of our First Peoples Action Plan and Cultural Protocols. They will provide advice on policies and initiatives impacting First Peoples across all levels of government, and their implications for First Peoples at the local level. They will guide the MAV in identifying advocacy priorities for First Peoples and where possible be inclusive of the views and interests of those not represented. This will enable the work of the MAV to represent and be informed by First Peoples across the local government sector.

The Expert Panel will assist the MAV develop broad and innovative perspectives to strengthen its guidance and leadership within the local government sector to strengthen its relationship with First Peoples.

The Panel will also advise the MAV on related issues, activities, and opportunities within the local government sector.

The MAV recognises that the local government sector is at various stages with its relationship with First Peoples communities and Traditional Owner Groups. As a peak body MAV is keen to provide leadership through partnering with First Peoples Elders, Leaders and representative from Key organisations to strengthen those relationships.

Membership

The Expert Advisory Panel will comprise of up to 15 First Peoples Elders and Leaders representing First Peoples communities across Victoria. The panel will strive for balanced representation, of male and female members and/or individuals who identify as non-binary. Additionally, it will seek to include members affiliated with peak Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations to ensure broad and inclusive representation.

Recruitment

Expression of Interest process will be promoted to relevant First Peoples leaders, Elders, groups, and organisations through First Peoples community networks, organisations, media, and recommended channels.



Selection and Appointment

The initial selection of the First Peoples Expert Advisory members will be conducted by an assessment panel made up of prominent and well-connected leaders from the First Peoples community and the MAV Director of Community and Sector Development and MAV Strategic Lead for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Following the conclusion of the Expression of Interest the applicants selected by the assessment panel will be provided to the MAV Board to formally invite on to the Panel.

Appointment of the Panel Chair

The Chair of the First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel will play a pivotal role in providing guidance and governance in the function of the Panel. The Chair will be appointed for the duration of the term of the Panel.

The MAV First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel will select the Panel Chair. They will have the opportunity to nominate themselves for the role of Chair. Panel members will vote for their preferred nominee through a confidential process to ensure anonymity. Once a Chair is selected, the MAV Board will be informed of the outcome.

How often will the Advisory Panel meet

The First Peoples Expert Advisory Panel are expected to meet up to four times per year. Panel members may however be asked to comment on documents, provide input and take part in engagement activities between meetings. Meetings will be conducted in a hybrid format, allowing members to participate either online or in person.

Expert Advisory Panel membership term

Eligible members will be appointed for a period of three years. If there are any resignations of current members, new members will be appointed in accordance with the selection process for the remainder of the term.

Sitting Fee

The MAV will pay Panel members a sitting fee of \$300 for each meeting they attend. Panel members may be reimbursed reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by attending the meetings such as payment for transport expenses.