

Lived Experience Experts Network Terms of Reference

Purpose

This document outlines the roles, expectations, and decision-making process for the Victims of Crime Commissioner's (The Commissioner's) Lived Experience Experts Network (LEEN).

LEEN members will be called on as required to provide the Victims of Crime Commissioner (the Commissioner) with feedback advice and input on issues affecting victims of crime.

Understanding the views of victims of crime assists the Commissioner in their role, outlined in the Victims of Crime Commissioner Act 2015 (Vic).

Group Objectives

The LEEN is a group of community members with lived experience as victims of crime who are organised to:

- provide feedback, advice and input on key issues and topics affecting victims
- contribute to the work of the VOCC, including specific projects such as evaluations, reviews or systemic inquiries. The LEEN embeds Lived Experience expertise within the work of the Commissioner and the VOCC Office and more broadly the justice system and its services.

Membership

The LEEN consists of community members with lived experience as victims of crime in Victoria.

A person can become a member by completing an Expression of Interest form. The form is available through the VOCC website or from the VOCC Victim Engagement Team.

Prospective LEEN members will need to speak with a member of the Victim Engagement Team and provide some information about their experiences and areas of interest before being appointed to the LEEN.

The LEEN is open to people with a range of experiences and from diverse communities. We understand that Lived Experience members can speak about their community or identity group, but do not expect them to act as a formal representative of their communities.

Participation in the LEEN is entirely voluntary, and you can contact us at any time if you no longer want to participate.

Involvement

Participation

The topics for engagement will be decided by the Victims of Crime Commissioner and VOCC Office staff incorporating advice from LEEN members. The VOCC Office respects the time and expertise of LEEN members and will choose issues and topics that have the potential to achieve positive change for victims of crime.

LEEN members can be involved in the following ways, including:

- surveys
- email feedback
- interviews
- focus groups and workshops.

LEEN Members will receive emails and newsletters about opportunities for engagement and can choose which activities to take part in. Depending on the activity, participation could be a few minutes to a few hours.

The VOCC may provide opportunities for LEEN members to participate in forums or events arranged by the Commissioner.

If LEEN members want to provide input into other issues, the VOCC Office will try and put them in contact with the relevant department or organisation.

Roles and responsibilities

Secretariat

The Victim Engagement Team provide administration for the LEEN. The team will:

- prepare regular communication to LEEN members
- coordinate feedback from LEEN members
- prepare monthly reports for the Commissioner and advise the Commissioner on key issues raised by LEEN members.

The Victims of Crime Commissioner is responsible for decision making and action related to LEEN activities.

The team will aim to respond to any correspondence within 3 business days of receipt.

The Commissioner

The Commissioner will consider the input and perspective of LEEN members. As an independent statutory officer, the Commissioner will make decisions about actions and consider information provided to them by LEEN members.

LEEN members will be updated about decisions and progress, including:

- the topic
- feedback from the Commissioner
- required actions
- any progress made.

The Commissioner will also:

- Represent the LEEN's feedback and ideas at meetings, public and stakeholder event and forums
- Represent the LEEN's feedback and ideas in public speaking and social media.

LEEN Members

LEEN Members will choose how they would like to be communicated with and which activities they want to participate in.

Support to participate

Most activities will take place over email or on online platforms such as Teams or Zoom. Some activities will take place at the Commissioner's Office in the Melbourne CBD. We can provide support to members to help them participate, when required.

Payment

The Victims of Crime Commissioner values every involvement and contribution made to this work. Membership and participation in activities as part of the LEEN are unpaid unless specified otherwise.

Confidentiality

Any information that LEEN members share will be treated as confidential. Information will only be used for the purpose stated. The VOCC Office will ask for consent to share any feedback. Feedback and input can be de-identified, or pseudonyms used if required. Please refer to the Privacy Policy for more information.

Conflicts of Interest

The VOCC Office recognises that victims come from a range of backgrounds and workplaces. Given the Commissioner's legislative independence, including from government and regulatory powers, managing real and potential conflicts of risk is critical.

When joining the LEEN we will ask questions about any current paid and voluntary work and will speak to you if we think there is a conflict of interest related to your participation on the LEEN.

Media Liaison

Only the Commissioner has authority to speak to the media on behalf of the LEEN. LEEN members must not speak on behalf of the Victorian Government or Victims of Crime Commissioner unless they have been given permission to do so.

Contact information

The Victim Engagement Team coordinates the VOCC Lived Experience Program. If you have any questions, please contact the team at engagement@vocc.vic.gov.au.