VMIAC AGM 2025 Minutes

Wednesday, 19 November 2025
1:30pm- 3:30pm
Virtual Zoom Meeting

1. Attendees entered into Zoom session

VMIAC Chair, Prunella Howell-Jay (Pru) welcomed everyone.

Pru informed attendees that the meeting is being recorded.

2. Acknowledgement of Country

Pru gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

VMIAC works across Victoria and acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present, and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of thousands of years of cultural, spiritual, and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We acknowledge that this land was never ceded.

3. Welcome, Quorum, Apologies & In Memoriam

Chair confirmed we have quorum (30 Members – Rule 35(2))

Pru provided an overview of VMIAC's Discomfort Agreement, zoom etiquette and responding to distress.

Pru called for a minute's silence to remember the valued members of the VMIAC community and the broader consumer community who have passed away in the last year.

Motion: To appoint Mel Sherrin as the Returning Officer. The role of the returning officer is to administer the election and to count the votes that are received in terms of the positions vacant.

Moved: Prunella Howell-Jay
Seconded: Anna Sowden

Pru passed over to Mel Sherrin (Mel) to discuss how motions and resolutions work.

Members can make a motion provide they relate to the business of the AGM.

Members were Invited member to practice raising their hands using the reactions tool.

4. Confirmation of Minutes from previous Annual General Meeting dated 5 December 2024

Motion: Only members present at previous AGM can vote – Rule 37(3)

Motion: To accept the minutes of the 2024 AGM.
Moved: Prunella Howell-Jay
Seconded: Anna Sowden

5. Review of Actions from previous Annual General Meeting

No actions from the previous AGM to discuss.

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6. Consideration of Annual Reports

VMIAC Chair Pru gave a verbal report.

CEO Vrinda Edan (Vrinda) gave a verbal report noting that a written Annual Report was circulated to members.

Treasurer, Sue Belmore (Sue) provided a verbal report referring to the financial report that had been provided to members.

- 2024/2025 pivotal year for VMIAC
- Physical upgrade of the offices
- New auditors
- New accounting system Xero
- Noted that the report that were provided had one recognised note from the auditors
- Want to ensure VMIAC have plans for catering to risk
- Regular program and project reviews to ensure maximum impact
- Reviewing budgets to ensure accurate allocation of resources
- And strategic planning for positioning VMIAC in the coming months and year
- Noted that all financial reports are available for review

Motion: To receive and approve the Financial Statements for the 2024/2025 Financial Year, and are satisfied that the organisation is viable, has met its Pay-As-You-Go and Superannuation Guarantee Contribution obligations, and can meet its commitments when they fall due.
Moved: Sue Belmore
Seconded: Anna Sowden

Motion: To receive and consider the Annual Report of the Committee of Management
Moved: Prunella Howell-Jay
Seconded: Anna Sowden

7. Election for Deputy Chair and two Ordinary Members

Chair notes that Treasurer, Sue Belmore, has been reelected unopposed.

Attendees were provided with an explanation of voting process by VMIAC Secretary.

Candidates for **Deputy Chair** position invited to provide a two (2) minutes speech to attendees:

Anna Sowden and Marie Butler-Cole gave candidate speeches.

Voting open - ballot open for 5 minutes.

Secretary announced results of vote, Anna Sowden elected to the position of Deputy Chair for another term.

Candidates for **Ordinary Member** positions invited to provide a two (2) minutes speech to attendees. Five candidates for two positions.

Claire Conlon, Ted Johnston read by VMAC Chair Pru due to connection issues, and Timothy McGregor gave candidate speeches.

Chair, Pru, reminded candidates that Marie-Butler Cole is also a candidate for an Ordinary Member position as is Dr Paul Benjamin Badcock whose candidate statement was available to members.

Voting open - ballot open for 5 minutes. Members invited to mark their top two candidates. Noting the candidates with the two highest votes will be appointed.

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8. Strategic Plan 2026-2028

Presentation by VMIAC Chair, Pru and CEO, Vrinda.

In 2024 VMIAC engaged an external consultant to produce a three-year strategic plan.

Why VMIAC is doing this work?

- To develop a shared understanding and view on the outcomes and focus for VMIAC.
- To agree on the biggest points of influence (and enablers) for delivering on the organisation ' s aspirations.
- To discuss and highlight what success is and looks like for VMIAC in the short, medium and long-term.
- And ultimately create a clear, time-bound focus for what VMIAC is seeking to achieve, the priorities to get there, and the indicators to inform good decision-making across the organisation.

What we heard: The Mental Health system

- Reform fatigue: Promises of transformation but little tangible change for people using services.
- Rights breaches continue: Seclusion, restraint and forced treatment remain prevalent.
- Weak accountability: Government updates shift from bold reforms to incremental system stewardship.
- Growing frustration: Both external experts and consumers report a sense of stagnation and harm.

Our gaps

Through this process we have learned of some gaps in our organisation and projects. Our next strategic plan will focus on closing these equity and representation gaps.

- Equity gaps continue to exist: There continues to be limited representation of First Nations, CALD, LGBTQIA+, rural and youth communities in consumer advocacy.

The voice of experts

Extensive interviews and focus groups reveal deep alignment on systemic harm, frustration with stalled reform, and appetite for VMIAC to reclaim a bolder advocacy stance. However, there are also internal tensions, such as, scope creep, unclear membership role, and divergent views on whether to prioritise rights advocacy or workforce leadership.

- External experts: Call for fearless advocacy on coercion, stronger leadership on NDIS, and clarity amid sector duplication.
- Members and LLEW: Continue to value VMIAC's unique voice but want stronger visibility, clearer support for members, and more accessible engagement.
- Staff and CoM: The team are seeking sharper focus, the rebuilding of its membership, and clearer stance between being a radical and advocate system partner.

The strategic plan

- This context will inform our next strategic plan which will deliver an updated Vision and Purpose.
- We will clarify our role in the sector.
- Strategic direction with where we lead, partner or support.

Next steps

- We will launch the actual plan early next year.
- The final strategic plan will be accompanied by specific work and project plans which will seek to achieve that.

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9. VMIAC annual subscription and joining fee

Motion: To confirm or vary the amounts (if any) of the annual subscription and joining fee.

Please note that there is currently no fee, there are no changes proposed to be made and that this item is a formality at the AGM.

Moved: Prunella Howell-Jay
Seconded: Anna Sowden

10. Announcing the results of the Ordinary Member positions

VMIAC Secretary, Mel, announced the results of the vote. The two members appointed to the position of ordinary member are Ted Johnston and Timothy McGregor

11. Other business, questions and discussion

An opportunity to raise any other items of business, ask questions and discuss matters relating to VMIAC and its work with the Chair and CEO.

12. Thank you to the outgoing Committee of Management

VMIAC Chair Pru thanked attendees for joining and their contributions to VMIAC. Pru also thanked outgoing committee member James Bell.

13. Close of meeting

Pru closed the AGM at 2:53pm

Member attendees:
Camuran Albanoi, Leanna Azoury, Saskia Barker Hussar, James Bell, Sue Belmore, Marie Butler-Cole, David Cohan, Claire Conlon, Jennah Delforce, Shay Eliot, Jessica Feldman, Narelle Fousketakis, Andrew Harman, Prunella Howell-Jay, Ted Johnston, Rebecca Langman, Joshua Lowe, Tess Marotta, Tim McGregor, Sirani McNeill, Zoe Mithen, Angela Nolan, Ali Pain, Peter Pamouktsis, Keir Saltmarsh, Alec Acott Mel Sherrin, Amanda Smith, Anna Sowden, TJ Spencer, Sam Brhaspati Stott, Andrew Swabey, Kim Warwick, Kathy Wilson, Tom Wood

Apologies:
Kate Badgery-Parker, Dr Paul Benjamin Badcock.