

First Peoples Directions Circle

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Written and endorsed by the First Peoples Directions Circle

February 2021

Terms of Reference

First Peoples Directions Circle

Preamble

We recognise and acknowledge that the ongoing conflict between the colonisers and Traditional Owners of Victoria has not been settled. In this Country, our people have never ceded sovereignty through any agreement or treaty.

Sovereignty allows us to make our own laws and administer them over our territories.

Unceded Sovereignty means we as First Peoples Nations, have not relinquished our rights to our traditional country.

It needs to be recognised that Aboriginal people have a physical and spiritual connection to Ancestors and Country.

"The all-encompassing idea of Country embodies our people's outlook on life. When we speak of Country, there is no delineation between people, flora, fauna, and land. It is all these things. Within Country there are places of great importance, places of births, place of abundance, food sources and above all places of significance relating to the beliefs and ancestral story places. This Country, these places are one of the hearts of every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person."

(Author unknown)

"Through our Elders and ancestors of Victoria as artists and performers we practice our creativity over 60,000 years of knowledge, art, and culture - over 2,400 generations of our place and stories in this land." (First Peoples Directions Circle)

Self-Determination

The Victorian Government must continue to recognise Aboriginal people's rights to Self-Determination that encompasses the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous People's Rights in line with the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 11 Self-Determination Principles.

The First Peoples Directions Circle's self-determining voice and decisions made by the Directions Circle are to be respected and actioned by the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria. It is important that the Victorian government formally acknowledges what the First Peoples Directions Circle position is to ensure that we are protecting our cultural future when working collaboratively with the Victorian Government.

We will be supported to voice our aspirations about what our core focus is and what we would like to do culturally that considers the future aspirations of generations to come.

The First Peoples Directions Circle will engage with the Victorian Aboriginal creative community through an annual First Peoples Creative Industries Forum, a commitment of *Creative State 2025*, to celebrate and grow Victoria's First Peoples' creative industries sector. These First Peoples Forums ensure a best practice approach to truly engage with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians to ensure culture and identity are front and centre in all conversations held.

The First Peoples Directions Circle will ensure that our consultation and engagement process is flexible, responsive and culturally strong, supporting innovation and creative thinking. We agree to work respectfully and support a diversity of opinions by means of working through consensus and quorum.

It is agreed that there are no boundaries for participation – our traditional custodian sovereign groups are supported to participate in our work.

First Peoples First

Since time immemorial, art, culture and creativity have been at the very core of life, land, and lore of the First Peoples of Victoria. For this rich and diverse creative practice and cultural knowledge to continue to thrive, Aboriginal self-determination – a human right as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – must be embedded in our creative industries. This means putting First Peoples at the forefront of decision-making and forging strong and enduring partnerships with First Peoples creative communities.

Led by the First Peoples Directions Circle, Creative Victoria will work to grow and promote First Peoples arts, culture, and creativity in Victoria; increase employment and economic opportunities for First Peoples at all levels of the creative industries; and ensure Victoria's creative industries are culturally safe, inclusive, and free of discrimination.

As outlined in *Creative State 2025 Guiding Principle 1 - 'First Peoples First'*

“First Peoples knowledge, practice, protocols and cultural authority will be at the heart of the creative industries, forging stronger and enduring partnerships with First Peoples creative communities. Led by the Creative Victoria First Peoples Directions Circle, we will work to ensure that opportunities are maximised for First Peoples and to increase First Peoples representation and employment in Victoria’s creative industries across the state.

We will apply this principle by:

- Taking Directions from Creative Victoria’s First Peoples Directions Circle in program design and implementation
- Prioritising time and resources to ensure meaningful First Peoples engagement and self-determination
- Ensuring all Creative Victoria staff undertake First Peoples cultural awareness and safety training
- Effectively promoting all programs and opportunities to First Peoples communities
- Employing more First Peoples at Creative Victoria.”

(Creative State 2025 – page 22)

Context

1. The First action of ‘Creative State: Victoria’s First Creative Industries Strategy 2016-2020’ was to develop a First Peoples Action Plan; of which the first action was the establishment of a First Peoples Directions Circle.
2. Established in 2019, Creative Victoria’s First Peoples Directions Circle was formed to grow and promote First Peoples arts, culture, and creativity in Victoria.
3. The partnership between Creative Victoria and the First Peoples Directions Circle will advance Aboriginal autonomy through equitable participation, shared authority and decision making underpinned by cultural protocols and principles.
4. The First Peoples Directions Circle will have shared authority and decision-making responsibility for the development and implementation of all Creative Victoria First Peoples programs, processes and initiatives including representation on panels.
5. Creative Victoria as part of the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) will be accountable to the First Peoples Directions Circle in the delivery

of Creative Industry policy and programs for Victorian First Peoples Communities.

6. The First Peoples Directions Circle will provide direction to Creative Victoria on the development and implementation of all Victoria's creative industries strategies.
7. In partnership with Creative Victoria, the First Peoples Directions Circle will uphold the *Creative State 2025* guiding principle of First Peoples First.

Group Responsibilities

1. The First Peoples Directions Circle have embedded Aboriginal self-determination and community voice throughout the current *Creative State 2025* strategy and will drive all First Peoples Actions, strategic initiatives, and policy development.
2. The First Peoples Directions Circle will:
 - Work in partnership with Creative Victoria and provide direction and recommendations on all future Creative Industries Strategies in Victoria
 - Convene First Peoples Directions Circle working groups to achieve a stated objective of *Creative State 2025* as required, with the option to include any external members whose skills and expertise reflect the relevant specialisation in each case
 - Champion Victorian First Peoples creative industries and the opportunities arising from the strategy through their respective networks.

Membership, Authority and Administration

1. The First Peoples Directions Circle will comprise up to 11 members, each appointed for a period of two years, commencing from the date of the first meeting of the First Peoples Directions Circle (23/11/2019).
2. The First Peoples Directions Circle will agree to the continuation of up to 50% of the members beyond the expiration of the first two-year term (23/11/2021), to ensure the continuation of knowledge and experience. (The two-year term can be extended dependent on extenuating circumstances under agreement of the First Peoples Directions Circle).
3. All First Peoples Directions Circle members will be appointed by a First Peoples selection panel convened by Creative Victoria to include the Chairperson, two First Peoples Directions Circle ordinary members and at least four external representatives including Elders, regional and young First Peoples. First Peoples Directions Circle members will be appointed as per establishing process for the First Peoples Directions Circle, of naming the Selection Panel

to ensure probity and transparency. Future appointments will be secured via a public EOI process.

4. Members shall be paid an honorary fee for meeting participation and will be reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred in the course of their work for the First Peoples Directions Circle including travel and accommodation related to meeting attendance requiring long distance travel. A schedule of fees is contained in the Arrangement of Honorary Payments document provided to group members.
5. Ensure that First Peoples Directions Circle can actively participate in First Peoples Directions Circle meetings and Working Groups (support and respect for members who need to take Sorry Business and Cultural Leave when a First Peoples Directions Circle meeting is being held, will supersede minimum meeting attendance requirement).
6. A quorum of the First Peoples Directions Circle meetings will be no less than 6 members. If the meeting does not have a quorum, then a new date will be proposed.

Member's Obligations

1. Members must adhere to First Peoples Directions Circle Aboriginal cultural protocols and must adhere to confidentiality and conflict of interest arrangements, as determined by Creative Victoria, and will adhere to Aboriginal ways of working including an agreed set of collaboration standards.
2. The First Peoples Directions Circle will meet a minimum of four times a year, or as otherwise determined by the Chairperson.
3. First Peoples Directions Circle members need to attend at least three of the four meetings as a minimum and attendance can be by phone, online, in person). Apologies for not attending meetings must be submitted to the Chair of the First Peoples Directions Circle prior to the meeting.
4. If a First Peoples Directions Circle member resigns this must be submitted in writing to the Chair of the First Peoples Directions Circle.
5. Removal of a First Peoples Directions Circle member must be done in agreement with a majority of First Peoples Directions Circle members and a letter sent to the individual/s by Chair.
6. First Peoples Directions Circle members have a responsibility to actively inform community members of key actions and directions of the First Peoples Directions Circle and to bring back community member input and advice to the First Peoples Directions Circle meetings.

7. Review Group membership and structure every six months and make any changes to amend the structure when needed to have more representation.

Secretariat Support

Creative Victoria will provide secretariat support to the First Peoples Directions Circle and First Peoples Directions Circle Working Groups.

A First Peoples Directions Circle position have been designated to:

- The Victorian Aboriginal Employment and Economic Council providing a strong link to Aboriginal Economic Development Branch, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions

The remainder of the group will comprise up to ten members from regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne who will:

- Have a minimum of five years' recent experience in, or related to, First Peoples creative industries
- Have a passion for strategic and cultural development
- Have a commitment to collaboration for the benefit of First Peoples creative industries
- Represent the voice and needs of their region, artform, and the broader First Peoples creative industries agenda

First Peoples Directions Circle Cultural Protocols

A First Peoples Directions Circle Cultural Protocols Document will be developed focusing on 'Nothing about us without us' guidelines, that covers cultural protocols and cultural safety, to be applied for all First Peoples engagement across Creative Victoria.