VALID is committed to the vision of an Australian nation in which people with a disability are empowered to exercise their rights, as human beings and as citizens, in accordance with the Victorian Charter on Human Rights and Responsibilities, the Disability Act 2006 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

For more information about volunteering for VALID:

235 Napier Street, Fitzroy   Vic   3065

Phone:  03 9416 4003

Freecall:  1800 655 570 (Vic rural clients/families)

Facsimile:  03 9416 0850

Email:  volunteers@valid.org.au

Website:  www.valid.org.au
About VALID

VALID – Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc. is a not for profit organisation that supports people with intellectual disability and their families.

Mission Statement

The mission of the VALID Advocacy Service is, to protect and defend the human rights of people with an intellectual disability, and to champion their rights as citizens to:

- Community Presence
- Choice
- Respect
- Community Participation
- Self Determination

Aims

The VALID Advocacy Service aims to empower people with intellectual disability at a range of levels, from the individual to systemic to:

- exert control and influence over the decisions and choices which affect their lives
- inform and influence the policies, processes and practices of disability service agencies, governments and other authorities
- exercise their human rights and citizenship status within their local communities

VALID Advocacy Support Service

VALID is funded by the Victorian State Government as a peak providing advocacy support for adults with intellectual disability and their families/carers across Victoria.

VALID’s advocacy helps people resolve difficulties they are facing such as finding appropriate information or assistance to resolve complaints up to more complex support.

National Affiliation

VALID is the Victorian member of Inclusion Australia which is the recognised national peak body with a single focus on intellectual disability. Inclusion Australia concentrates on affecting change at a national level on issues that affect the lives of people with intellectual disability and their allies, such as employment, accommodation and education.

Inclusion Australia’s mission is to work to make the Australian community one in which people with intellectual disability are involved and accepted as equal participating members.
Definitions & Principles of Volunteering & Unpaid Work

Working for VALID
VALID is a community organisation that relies on a strong and vibrant workforce of both paid and unpaid workers. Unpaid work at VALID falls into several categories. These include:

- Voluntary work
- Unpaid work placement
- Citizen engagement

Volunteering
Definition of volunteering
Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- To be of benefit to the community and the volunteer
- Both freely and by choice of the person volunteering
- Without remuneration or financial benefit
- In roles specifically set up for volunteers

Citizen Engagement
In pursuit of VALID’s vision and mission to promote and protect the human rights and well being of people with disabilities and their families, VALID encourages the engagement of citizens in its activities and campaigns from time to time. VALID also welcomes the role many citizens play in drawing attention to breaches of rights, abuse and neglect so that VALID can act to address these issues along with other disability advocacy organisations. Individuals acting in their role as citizens can provide valuable support and strength to VALID's advocacy work from time to time but have no obligations to VALID nor VALID to them in relation to accountability or responsibility for actions taken other than what might normally apply to obligations to other members of the public.

Work Experience
VALID encourages and supports individuals wishing to undertake work experience placements as students or in relation to obligations related to pensions or welfare benefits where this work has benefits to both the individual and the organisation. Work experience placements will usually be defined by contracts for a fixed period of time and the responsibilities of both the individual and the organisation and student learning objectives set out in this contract.
Volunteer Policy

VALID is committed to supporting all volunteers that are part of its activities. This includes supporting the volunteers who are part of events throughout the year.

Purpose of this Policy

This policy is intended to ensure that volunteers working at VALID have work that is safe, significant, fulfilling, and appreciated.

All volunteers shall be treated with respect and with gratitude for their contribution.

Volunteers will be engaged at the discretion of the management of VALID.

Volunteers will carry out duties assigned by the management of VALID.

All volunteers will be as far as possible protected from harm, and shall be relieved of liability for acts performed in the discharge of their volunteer functions.

VALID’S Responsibilities To Volunteers

As stated above VALID is responsible to ensure volunteers:

- are treated with respect and dignity
- have a safe working environment
- understand their role, rights and responsibilities
- have appropriate support to carry out their tasks

Volunteer Rights & Responsibilities

Rights

The rights of all involved in VALID activities are outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

All volunteers are expected to behave in accordance with the Code of Conduct outlined on page 7.
Volunteer Policy

Volunteers Role

Some individuals ‘volunteer’ as part of Committees and this role is outlined in other policies (ie. Committee Governance and the Events Policy). All volunteers have the role of:

- supporting VALID staff with activities or events as chosen by the volunteer or as allocated by their Coordinator
- treating all others with respect and dignity as per the VALID Code of Conduct
- reporting any problems (something broken) or incidents (someone is hurt)

The volunteer role DOES NOT include:

- providing personal care eg. toilet support to delegates
- providing first aid if you are not trained to do this

Volunteer Orientation & Training

VALID expects volunteers to attend orientation sessions around the event and/or program they are volunteering in. Sometimes orientation can be provided where needed on an individual basis. Orientation provided includes at a minimum the following:

- roles and responsibilities
- what their role doesn't include eg. personal care
- where things are at the office or venue
- support available for volunteers
- who to talk to about concerns or problems
- Acceptable behavior ie. Code of Conduct

General Training

General training might include:

- To Stand Beside training course that outlines the value base and process for providing individual advocacy in a way that empowers the individual to develop the skills to represent themselves
- Understanding and promoting Self-Advocacy skills

Specific Training

Specific training will be provided around the role that the volunteer will be undertaking. The length and content will vary according to the role and program. In some situations training can be provided on an individual basis.
Volunteer Policy

Police Checks Process

The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) requires that volunteers engaged by funded organisations like VALID, must have a current police check. Therefore all volunteers who are part of VALID events and/or programs, are required to have a National Police Check.

Copy of Police Checks

Individuals who already have a Police Check Certificate will be asked to send VALID a copy with their volunteer application.

Individuals who don't have a Police Check will be given the choice of applying by themselves or with VALID support.

They are then asked to forward a copy of the certificate to VALID when they receive it.

VALID will keep a copy of each volunteer’s Police Check on its protected and private Volunteer Database until the individual ceases being a VALID volunteer.

Payment

VALID will pay the cost of a Police Check for volunteers, if done through Victoria Police.

They will need to send their application with their approved identification to VALID.

VALID will then lodge their application and pay the fee.

Failed Police Check or Pending Charges

If a Police Check application returns with convictions or you disclose a pending charge, VALID will give the person the choice (they can say no) to sit down and talk about the crimes they have committed.

After this discussion the VALID Executive Officer will make a decision about whether to approve the person as a volunteer or not. VALID will let the person know its decision as soon as possible.
Volunteer Policy

Confirmation of Volunteer Role

**Trial Time**

Volunteers who are volunteering in a Program will usually be given up to eight (8) weeks in a program as a trial time.

Volunteers who are volunteering in an event will be paired with an experienced volunteer and their trial will be for one event.

VALID tries to 'match' a volunteer with a program activity or task at an event that works well with their skills and personality.

Sometimes a volunteer might not fit in well with a program or activity, which is something that happens in life.

At the end of the trial time, the Coordinator of the Program or Event will talk to the volunteer about their experience.

The volunteer may decide that the role they have been doing isn't what they'd like to do and they may trial another activity instead if the Coordinator agrees.

**Issues of Concern from the trial**

The VALID Coordinator may have feedback from staff, participants and/or other volunteers about how the volunteer has performed during the trial.

Sometimes others may raise issues of concern about the behaviour and/or skills of the trial volunteer.

The relevant Coordinator will talk to the volunteer about the issues of concern.

Sometimes VALID may decide that the volunteer's skills and/or behaviour are not a good 'match' for the role they want to do.

If there are no other volunteer roles that are a good match, then they will not continue as a volunteer with VALID.

**Complaints about VALID decisions**

If a potential volunteer is unhappy about a decision that VALID makes, eg. not approving a volunteer application, they can complain as per the VALID Complaints Policy in 2.10
Volunteers@VALID

Volunteer Registration Application

Please fill out and return (pages 9–12) to VALID
Volunteer Registration Application

First Name: …………………………….. Last Name: ……………………………………….

Address: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………. Postcode: …………..

Telephone: ………………………………… Mobile: …………………………………………..

Email: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Emergency Contact: Name: ………………………………………………………………………………….

Phone Number: ……………………………………………………………………………………………

Have you ever done voluntary work? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Where? ………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Referee’s:

1. Name:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

   Organisation: ……………………………………. Phone Number: ……………………………..

2. Name:……………………………………………………………………………………………………

   Organisation: ……………………………………. Phone Number: ……………………………..

Do you have any specific requirements? E.g. dietary, attendant care, mobility

………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

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IMPORTANT

Do you have a current police check? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Copy of Police Check Certificate enclosed ☐ Yes ☐ No

Police Check Application enclosed ☐ Yes ☐ No

Other information that may be helpful

Do you have a first aid certificate? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Volunteer Registration Application

Volunteers are needed to assist VALID staff in programs and events. For more information about the programs see page 18.

I would like to volunteer in the following program:

☐ Peer Action Groups
☐ Events e.g. Having a Say Conference
☐ Administration
☐ Campaigns
☐ Self Advocacy Network meetings
☐ Other .........................................................

I am available to volunteer on the following:

Day
☐ Any day
☐ Preferred day/s .........................................................

Time
☐ AM
☐ PM
☐ Evening
☐ Any time

Availability
☐ Weekly
☐ Fortnightly
☐ Monthly
☐ Occasionally

I have read and agree to abide by the VALID Policy and Code of Conduct and Safety rules. I will notify VALID if I am charged and/or convicted of a crime. I give VALID permission to retain a copy of my Police Check Certificate.

Signed: .................................................................
Date: .........................................................

Send your volunteer registration form to:
VALID, 235 Napier Street, Fitzroy 3065
Volunteer Policy

Application Process

VALID asks potential volunteers to complete a Volunteer Application form.

The Application information will be put on to the VALID Volunteer database including the preferred roles, once the application has been accepted.

Police Checks

The Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) requires that volunteers engaged by funded organisations like VALID, must have a current police check.

Therefore all volunteers who are part of VALID events and/or programs, are required to have a National Police Check.

Copy of Police Checks

Individuals who already have a Police Check Certificate will be asked to send VALID a copy with their volunteer application.

Individuals who don't have a Police Check will be given the choice of applying by themselves or with VALID support.

They are then asked to forward a copy of the certificate to VALID when they receive it.

VALID will keep a copy of each volunteer’s Police Check on its Volunteer Database until the individual ceases being a VALID volunteer.
Volunteer Policy

Volunteer Agreement

Volunteers will be required to sign that they are in agreement with VALID’s commitment to the vision of an Australian nation in which people with a disability are empowered to exercise their rights, as human beings and as citizens, in accordance with the Victorian Charter on Human Rights and Responsibilities, the Disability Act 2006 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Code of Conducts.

A volunteer is also entitled to have independent support, such as a family member or friend, to assist them to understand what they are agreeing to.

The agreement includes:

- role that they are going to do
- who is their supervisor
- who to raise concerns with
- time for review, such as twelve month agreement to follow the Code of Conduct and other relevant VALID policies

Reimbursements

Volunteers may be eligible for travel reimbursement. This needs to be approved by the Volunteer coordinator or VALID Office Manager.

Annual Review

The agreement includes a fixed amount of time, which usually is 12 months. Sometimes this will be for another period of time, for example six months.

At the end of this time the Coordinator of the program will talk with the volunteer about how things have gone and give the volunteer the opportunity to finish or continue in their role.

A complete copy of the Volunteer Policy will be available at the orientation day.
Important Information

Police Check

All volunteers of the are required to have a National Police Check. (VALID will pay for Volunteer Police Checks, done through the Victoria Police)

If you have a Police Check Certificate already you need to send a copy with your volunteer registration application.

What do you need to do if filling the Police Check application form online:


2. To fill out the application:

Follow the directions on the application form (note section *A, *D & *E)

- *Section A: Select National Name Check
- *Section D: Name of Employer/organisations representative is Derek Scriven
  Organisation: Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability Inc
- *Section E: Go to Option 2
  Tick: Adult Aged/Disabled Care
  Name of representative and organisation: as above in section D
  Phone number: 03 9416 4003
  CVF Number: 15/2829

3. Print your completed Police Check application and take a copy and original 100 points of ID to an authorised person e.g. JP, Police Officer

4. Send the signed application with your certified ID copies attached, to VALID, 235 Napier Street, Fitzroy 3065

- VALID will send your application with payment to Victoria Police, they will send you a Police Check Certificate
- When you receive your Police Check Certificate you need to send a copy to VALID which will also be kept on file for future conferences.
- Your Police Check will be kept private and confidential
- If you are convicted of a crime, you must notify VALID in writing immediately
Code of Conduct

The ‘Code of Conduct’ is provided to guide people as to what is okay and what is not okay. It is consistent with VALID’s values (pg 3), human rights and Australian laws.

Acceptable Conduct

All volunteers are expected to treat all people with disability with dignity and respect. This includes:

- **Standing Beside** people with a disability, assisting / supporting them to advocate their own interests
- **Standing Behind** people with a disability, supporting them to represent their own interests

Unacceptable Behaviour

While the good (acceptable) behaviour is listed on the next page, to make it clear what is not okay (acceptable), the following examples are given.

Behaviour that is NOT acceptable from any person involved with VALID includes:

- harassing or bullying any individual, including members of the public
- any act of violence toward another person or to property
- any act that discriminates against another person
- inappropriate touching of any other person
- stealing and/or touching other people’s belongings
- suggestive remarks or action of a sexual nature
- verbally abusing others eg. yelling at or saying things to others that make them feel bad
- swearing at others in an aggressive or offensive manner
- not to be on any intoxicants such as alcohol or drugs

Confidentiality

Volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality regarding information involving the organisation, the volunteer program, paid staff, other volunteers and clients.

Information must not be disclosed to anyone outside the organisation (VALID) or to others within the organisation, unless express permission is given to do so by an appropriate authority.

Breaches of confidentiality will result in disciplinary action or termination of the volunteer’s engagement with the organisation, other than where the volunteer can show specific circumstances that justify the breach.
Code of Conduct

Your Responsibilities

VALID expects **everyone** to behave and treat others with respect and in a way that reflects positively on VALID, including:

- respecting the rights of others
- acting ethically, that is doing the right thing and being honest
- contributing to a happy, safe environment
- taking individual responsibility to contribute actively to their role or to an activity
- being reliable (e.g. turn up on time)
- respecting cultural, ethnic and religious differences
- being courteous, sensitive, and fair in how we communicate (eg. talk or write) and act
- caring about the interests, rights, safety and welfare of others - such as smoking only in smoking areas
- making decisions fairly and not using your position to gain advantage for yourself or for any other person
- supporting the personal and professional development of others
- working together with others to achieve common goals and to get along in a happy, harmonious manner
- listening to and seeking to understand different points of view (this does not mean you have to agree with what the other person says, just be respectful)
Volunteer Programs

Peer Action Groups

What is a Peer Action Group?

VALID’s Peer Action Groups will be made up of between 5-12 people who will meet regularly (usually monthly) to:

- Get up-to-date information about the roll out of the NDIS and how this will affect participants in this disability funding support scheme
- Share information and ideas with other people on how to make good use of this funding
- To get new skills in making choices and taking control over decisions about work, recreation, skill development and home life
- To find out what kinds of activities and opportunities are available within the local community
- To have a place where there is encouragement to speak up and be heard
- To give advice on issues to VALID so that we can take up issues with the NDIS and seek to make systemic changes
- To get and give encouragement among peers and support to challenge discrimination and poor community attitudes to people with disabilities
- To build social connections and friendships with other peers

Volunteers are needed to facilitate some of the groups and assist support workers across Victoria

Events

Having a Say Conference (HaS)

The Having a Say Conference is the largest conference for people with disability in Australia. The conference has been held over the last 16 years in a country area of Victoria including Echuca, Horsham, Colac and in Geelong since 2006. The conference has grown each year, with over 1100 participants being involved in the 2015 conference. It to give people with a disability the opportunity to not only attend a conference, but also to be involved in planning and running a conference, along with the opportunity to become more empowered in their own self-advocacy. Volunteers play an important part of the conference by supporting people with disability to attend the many presentations, workshops etc.

There are a number of different tasks to assist people with disability at the Having a Say conference. For example: facilitating small group discussions during workshops, assisting people with disability with come & try activities, hospitality, room coordinators and general support.
Our Choice Expo
This expo is hosted by the HaS conference and is held on the last of the conference. The Our Choice Expo has a focus on supplying information to people with disability, family members and carers about the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Volunteers can assist with handing out visitor guides and directing people to the expo areas.

Administration
Volunteers can support the admin team with mail outs, photo’s and articles for the VALID Newsletter and general reception duties.

Campaigns
VALID runs campaigns as they are required with the most recent being the ‘Fight The Fee Hike’. The Victorian Government wanted people with disability to pay more for their accommodation leaving them 25% or less of their pension to live on. VALID supported people with disability, parents and family members to fight this with rallies, petitions, TV media releases and meetings held in the VALID office.
Volunteers can help to organise rallies and advertising material as well as getting petitions signed and supporting people with disability to attend campaigns so they can have their voices heard.

Network Meetings
Melbourne Self Advocacy
The VALID Self Advocacy Melbourne Networks are: SAM-West. SAM-South, SAM-East & SAM-North. The monthly network meetings provide a valuable forum for people with a disability to:
- Speak up about our rights
- Assist members to develop & use their advocacy skills
- Talk about issues and problems in order to create change
- Assist members to learn new things and gain information
- Empower members to speak up about things that are important to them
- Meet new people & socialise with participants from other services
- Provide a forum for government or other groups seeking feedback (views, ideas)
The Networks have a focus on inclusion, inviting guest speakers to deliver information that is specific to local communities.
Volunteers can assist the VALID staff e.g. by meeting and greeting people as they arrive, help with catering and minute taking.