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Name

The name of the Network is:

disAbility connections (Victoria)

Definitions

	Meaning:
DCV	disAbility connections (Victoria)
Committee COM	the DCV Committee of Management
Financial year	the year ending on 30 June
Member	a registered member of the DCV
Ordinary member of the Committee	a member of the Committee who is not the Chair or the Vice Chair
The Register of Members	the DCV Access Database
General membership	All members of DCV

Alteration to the DCV Vision and Mission

The purposes must not be altered except with consultation with the general membership.

Membership

Criteria for Membership

Membership is open to:

- Individuals with any disability, of any age
- Carers/family members of an individual with a disability
- All organisations, both generic and specific that support people with a disability including Government bodies, Local Government, support groups and other networks.
- The staff of those organisations (including professional/paid carers)
- Members of the community

The process for becoming a DCV member

Any person who is eligible for membership may become a member by completing a Nomination Form and returning it to the DCV Information Officer. The Nomination Form may be posted, emailed or faxed.

The Information Officer must confirm receipt of the Nomination Form and the processing of membership via email or (for members not on email) with the next mail out.

The Information Officer must enter the new members name in the register of members within 2 weeks of receipt of the Nomination Form.

All members will be assigned an individual membership number. This number will be forwarded to the member when membership is confirmed.

An applicant formally becomes a member and is therefore entitled to exercise the rights of membership when his or her name from the date of being entered onto the Register of members.

Transfer of membership

All benefits and/or obligations of a person by reason of membership of disAbility connections (Victoria):

- Cannot be transferred to another person and
- Terminates upon the cessation of membership whether by death or resignation or otherwise

Register of members

The Information Officer must keep and maintain a database containing:–

- The person's name
- Address
- Contact details
- Membership category and details
- CALD or ATSI Background if relevant
- The assigned membership number
- Date of entry into the database
- Date of membership termination
- Reason for termination if disclosed

The Register of Members is only to be accessed by the DCV Executive Officer, the DCV Information Officer, the Chair and Vice Chair of DCV.

The DCV Executive Officer and/or the DCV Information Officer may authorise other DCV Staff or Students to access the database for specific purposes only.

The Committee may authorise other people to access the database for specific purposes.

Ceasing membership

Any member, at any time, by giving verbal or written notice can cease being a member.

The Information Officer must remove the person from the Register of Members as soon as practicable.

The Information Officer must confirm removal from the Register of Members via email or (for members not on email) by post.

Discipline, suspension and expulsion of members

There are only three (3) reasons why DCV would discipline, suspend or cancel the membership of a registered member:

1. If the Committee is of the opinion that a member has refused or neglected to comply with DCV policies or procedures
2. And/or the person has been guilty of conduct unbecoming a member
3. And/or the person has been engaging in conduct that is prejudicial to the interests of DCV

The Committee may by resolution:

- suspend that member from membership of the DCV for a specified period
- expel that member from the DCV

DCV recognises the need for natural justice. Therefore any procedures arising from serious allegations will be conducted in accordance with annecto's Grievance and Dispute processes and within the guidelines of the *Model Rules for an Incorporated Association Section 7*

The Committee will therefore ensure that:

- The member, or his or her representative, is given every opportunity to be heard; and
- That any written statement submitted by the member or advocate is given due consideration
- The Member will receive all communication in writing or in the case of verbal communication the key points will be confirmed in writing

Annual General Meetings

As an auspiced organisation DCV does not need an AGM.

DCV reports as part of the annecto Annual report. The annecto AGM is in October.

The Executive Officer will provide members with an End of Year Report as part of the December Newsletter and a verbal report as part of his/her report at the December Bimonthly meeting.

Bimonthly Meetings

Bimonthly meeting schedule

The DCV holds 6 Bimonthly meetings each year.

These are set at the beginning of each Calendar year, avoiding school holidays where possible.

The Bimonthly meetings are hosted by Local Government via the Metro Access Officers. Wherever possible the Bimonthly meetings are held across a range of venues in the Northern and Western suburbs.

Dates and venues may be altered if needed e.g. to suit the availability of a high profile guest speaker. Members will be given as much notice as possible of any change from the earlier schedule.

Notice of next Bimonthly meeting

The members will be notified of the next meeting date at the end of each Bimonthly meeting.

The members will receive a notice and agenda as part of each Newsletter. This will be received at least 1 week prior to the meeting.

Members on email will receive a reminder 2 days prior to the meeting.

The dates and venues for the coming year will be included in the December and January/February newsletters.

Bimonthly meeting Agendas

The Agenda for each Bimonthly will be sent out with the Newsletter, to be received at least a week prior to the event.

Any member may ask for an item to be placed on the next Bimonthly Agenda by contacting the Information Officer or the Chair of DCV.

Any member may raise an issue for discussion, by the general membership, at the Bimonthly meeting.

Any member may pose a motion to the members present at the Bimonthly Meeting requesting action by the Network or further discussion by the Committee.

The Department of Human Services North and West and a representative of the Metro Access Officers will present reports to the membership about regional and local initiatives at each Bimonthly meeting.

Presiding at Bimonthly Meetings

The DCV Chair or the Vice Chair will generally chair the Bimonthly meetings.

If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent then the Executive Officer or another COM member will preside.

Minute-taking at Bimonthly meetings

The Information Officer will generally take Bimonthly meeting minutes.

Committee of Management

The day-to-day management of DCV is directed by a Committee of Management.

Membership

The Committee consists of 2 groups of members:

- Eleven elected (voting) members
- One ex-officio (non-voting member)

The Elected members are:

- Individuals with a disability (any age, any disability)
- Carers/family members
- Organisational or community representatives
- Individual under the age of 25 representing youth views. (This person could be an individual with a disability, a carer, a service provider representative or a community member)

The Ex-officio member is:

- annecto - the people network

Ensuring the Committee is representative of the membership and the wider community

DCV acknowledges the invaluable contribution that professional-staff make to the Network. DCV encourages people with diverse backgrounds to be part of the Committee of Management.

The Committee may invite other people to join the Committee of Management. This enables DCV to access specific expertise as required.

Determining the Committee structure

Any decision to alter the voting members of the DCV Committee of Management must be endorsed by the general membership at a Bimonthly meeting, following notification and explanation in the Newsletter.

Ex-officio members should be represented by someone within their organisation who is well enough informed to advocate service provider/ organisation views and make a positive contribution to DCV discussions.

Office Bearers

The DCV Committee has 2 formal Officers:

- The DCV Chair
- The DCV Vice Chair

Staff generally act as Secretariat to the Committee and as Minute Taker. The Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring these tasks are assigned.

The DCV does not require a Treasurer due to the hosting arrangements with annecto - the people network.

Electing the Chair and Vice Chair

The Committee elects a new Chair and Vice Chair at next Committee meeting after the election from the newly formed Committee.

All Committee members with the exception of ex-officio positions are eligible to self nominate/be nominated for Chair and Vice Chair.

If there is only one nominee, and that person accepts the nomination then the nominee will be declared successful.

If there is more than one nomination the Committee will hold a secret ballot. The Executive Officer and/or the annecto ex-officio member will monitor the election.

Ordinary Members of the Committee

Each elected member of the Committee shall hold office until the meeting after the election. This effectively means that the first meeting after the election will be attended by previous and new members.

The Committee of Management may appoint a DCV member to fill a casual vacancy until the end of the two-year term.

Committee Vacancies

An elected vacancy arises if the person –

- Ceases to be a DCV member
- Becomes an insolvent under administration within the meaning of the Corporations Act
- Resigns from the Committee in writing. The letter should be addressed to the Chair and given to the DCV Chair or Executive Officer

Filling Committee vacancies

- If the position is elected the Committee may source a suitable candidate to fill the position until the next election date for that position.
- If the ex-officio member resigns annecto will refill the position with a suitable candidate as a matter of urgency.

Elections

Election process

There are eleven (11) elected members.

The system is that all Committee Members serve for a period of two (2) years.

At the end of each year half of the Committee i.e. 5 one year and 6 the next vacate their position. The Executive Officer and the Chair are jointly responsible for maintaining a record of term expiry dates.

(The 2011 election will be the first time that DCV has used this process. DCV does not want or need all its current members to vacate. Therefore the Committee will determine who will vacate for the 2011 election based on the length of service).

Nominations for election to the DCV Committee

All DCV members are encouraged to nominate for selection for the Committee – however they are expected to be aware of and have the ability to undertake the role to an adequate level as outlined in the Position Description. They must also be prepared to accept and work within the spirit of the DCV Code of Conduct for Committee members.

Members may self-nominate.

If nominating another member the nominator must ensure that the nominee accepts the nomination.

Vacating Committee members may re-nominate for another term of 2 years.

Nomination forms and copies of the Position Description for Committee Members and the Code of Conduct for the DCV Committee will go out with the February Newsletter and members will be advised as part of the February Bimonthly meeting.

Nomination closing date

Nominations close 14 days prior to the date of the April Bimonthly.

This is to allow staff time to include profiles into the newsletter.

Election Date

Elections will take place at the April Bimonthly each year.

Advising members of the voting processes and nominee profiles

A profile of the nominees for each category and a postal and/or email voting form will go out with the Newsletter directly prior to the April Bimonthly.

Matching nominations to the vacancies

There are four (4) possible scenarios relating to the receipt of nominations for the Committee. These are:

- 1 Insufficient nominations are received to fill all vacancies in each category. In this instance the nominees will be deemed to be elected, provided they meet the criteria for undertaking the role. Nominees for vacant positions will be actively sourced by the Committee.
- 2 The number of nominations received is equal to the number of vacancies to be filled. In this instance the nominees will be deemed to be elected, provided they meet the criteria for undertaking the role.
- 3 There are more nominations than vacancies in one or more category. In this instance the Chair and/or Vice Chair may:
 - Ask any Nominee to change categories (if eligible) to fill a vacancy in another category
 - Declare the need for an election for positions within one or more categories
4. There are insufficient nominees for any or all categories. In this instance the Committee will actively source a nominee.

If there is no nominee by the date of the election the Committee will co-opt a suitable person to fill the vacancy until the next election.

Meeting the criteria for Committee membership

If there are concerns about the ability of any candidate to undertake the responsibilities of the role the DCV Chair will discuss this with the applicant, and if appropriate their nominator, to ascertain whether the concerns have any foundation and/or if there are any supports that DCV can offer to support the person in their role.

If this fails to resolve the issue the parties will follow the Grievance and Dispute processes.

Voting

Postal and email voting forms must be received by DCV no later than 5pm on the Tuesday prior to the Bimonthly meeting.

Postal/email forms that do not display the membership number of the voter will not be accepted.

Determining the Election Outcomes

An independent Returning Officer will be selected by the COM to oversee the counting of votes.

The outcomes will be determined by the numbers of eligible votes received by the due date.

Declaration

The Chair will announce the election outcomes at the April Bimonthly and these will be publicised on the DCV website as soon as practicable and also put into the next newsletter.

Induction

All Committee members will be invited to an Induction prior to the first meeting of the newly elected Committee.

The aim of Induction is to ensure that all members are aware of the issues at hand and recent topics of discussion to facilitate a smooth transition.

Any member of the Committee is welcome to attend, regardless of whether or not they are newly elected or entering their second year.

Induction will include a description of the context of service delivery including an overview of the hosting arrangement.

Committee of Management Meetings

The DCV holds 11 Committee of Management meetings each year (with a minimum of 9), held approximately monthly.

Meeting dates are set at the end of the calendar year for the following twelve months. However these can be re-negotiated by Committee members at any time.

Committee meetings are held at the DCV office in Cowper St, Footscray.

The Committee Meeting Agenda

The Agenda for the Committee meeting will be sent out at least 3 working days prior to the next meeting together with the Minutes of the previous meeting and any notes or papers that members need to read in preparation for the meeting.

Any member may ask for an item to be placed on the next Agenda by contacting the Executive Officer, the Information Officer or the Chair of DCV.

Last minute or urgent matters may be added to the agenda on the day of the meeting by request through the Chair.

Quorum at Committee Meetings

A quorum is 5 voting members of the Committee.

If a quorum is not present all motions, decisions and outcomes must be ratified by the full Committee at the next meeting.

In the event that a motion, decision and/or outcome cannot be delayed until the next meeting then the members present may agree to email the motion, decision and/or outcome to the full Committee for urgent attention.

It is the responsibility of each member to feedback their response within the timelines. Failure to respond will be assumed to be an assent to the motion, decision and/or outcome.

Confidentiality of Committee discussions

As outlined in the Code of Conduct the detail of content of discussions occurring within the Committee are confidential.

Discussion and voting at Committee meetings

All Committee members are expected to add their expertise to every discussion

Manner of determining whether the resolution is carried

In most cases a motion will be determined by a show of hands.

The meeting Chair will then declare that the motion has been:

- carried; or
- carried unanimously; or
- carried by a particular majority; or
- lost

An entry to that effect in the minutes is evidence of fact without proof on the number or proportion of the votes recorded in favour of, or against, that resolution.

Any member of the Committee may, however, request a secret ballot. Generally the Chair will preside over the ballot.

Minutes of meeting

The Minute-taker must keep minutes of the resolutions and proceedings of each committee meeting, together with a record of the names of persons present at committee meetings.

A copy of the Minutes will be sent to each Committee member at least 3 working days prior to the next meeting.

At the next meeting Committee members will have the opportunity to confirm the accuracy of the minutes and make adjustments if required.

Sub-Committees/Working Parties

The Committee may establish Sub-committees/Working Parties to undertake tasks as required.

The Committee may co-opt people from outside the Committee onto these Sub-committees/Working Parties as appropriate.

Funds

DCV funds are administered by annecto as the legal auspice.

The Executive Officer and the annecto representative to the Committee together with other annecto staff and Committee members as relevant are responsible for ensuring that the annual budget process is completed as required.

There is no membership fee.

'Network Neighbours' is an opt-in source of income and support. It will not be used as a pseudo membership fee.

DCV will source funding as appropriate from Government, philanthropic and community options.

Disputes and mediation

DCV is committed to resolving any concern, dispute or grievance in a professional and timely manner, preferably with a win: win outcome.

DCV will follow annecto's Grievance and Dispute processes, including access to external advocacy support.

DCV members are encouraged to use DCV Bimonthly, One-off forum and Committee processes to encourage quality improvement and to raise general issues and concerns.

DCV members are encouraged to use annecto's Feedback Project processes to encourage quality improvement and to raise general issues and concerns.

DCV members may, at any time, contact the Chair DCV or the Executive Officer DCV to discuss any issue, concern or idea by email or phone.

DCV members are encouraged to use the services of annecto's independent, external advocacy/support service for assistance to raise concerns.

SUPPORTING

DOCUMENTATION

Position description DCV Chair

- Is a member of the Committee of Management
- Serves as the senior volunteer of the organisation and acts as an alternate spokesperson for the organisation
- Meets regularly with the Executive Officer of annecto-the people network in order to maintain the auspicing relationship
- Oversees Committee and Executive Committee meetings
- Works in partnership with the Executive Officer in achieving the organisation's mission and to make sure Committee of Management resolutions are carried out
- Encourages the Committee's role in strategic planning
- Calls special meetings if necessary
- Appoints all Sub-committee chairs and with the Executive Officer, recommends who will serve on sub-committees. Serves *ex officio* as a member of sub-committees and attends their meetings when invited
- Chairs meetings of the Committee of Management after developing the agenda with the Executive Officer
- **Mentors the Vice and Sub-Committee Chairs as part of succession planning responsibility**
- Assists the Executive Officer in conducting new Committee member orientation
- Oversees searches for a new Executive Officer
- In conjunction with annecto-the people network coordinates the Executive Officer annual performance evaluation and informally evaluates the effectiveness of the Committee members
- Encourages and facilitates DCV members to nominate for the Committee of Management
- Periodically consults Committee members on their roles and helps them assess their performance

- Chairs Committee of Management and Bimonthly meetings and ensures the smooth running of these meetings
- Meets with the Executive Officer prior to the meetings to discuss the agenda and after the meeting to ensure achievement of tasks identified during Committee meetings
- Mentors new Committee of Management members
- Discusses issues confronting the organisation with the Executive Officer
- Performs other responsibilities assigned by the Committee
- Performs all the expectations of a Committee of Management member as outlined in the Position description for all COM members

Please note:

This position involves a significant time commitment from the incumbent. Times and tasks are a guide only:

- Monthly Committee meeting with pre and post meetings = 5 hours per month
- Bimonthly meeting with pre and post meetings = 5 hours per 2 months
- Representing DCV on other committees etc = minimum of 5 hours per month
- Reading emails & materials, researching information, giving feedback on DCV tasks etc = minimum of 8 hours per month
- Sub-Committees, strategic planning, Liaison with annecto etc = minimum of 5 hours per month
- Liaison with Vice Chair and Executive Officer (phone and in person) = min of 10 hours per month

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

FOR THE CHAIRPERSON

Before the Meeting

- Meetings are for making decisions. Be sure you understand what decisions have to be made at the meeting
- Adjust the agenda to ensure that the most important and most time-critical decisions are made first
- Make sure that reports and information necessary to make the needed decisions are sent with the agenda in sufficient time for them to be read
- Contact individuals scheduled to make a verbal report and make sure they will be present or will appoint someone else to give the report
- Note when someone comes unprepared to the meeting. Call them in advance of the next meeting with a reminder to read and think about the agenda items before the meeting
- The Committee can be severely handicapped when members are absent. Frequent absences may indicate personal problems for the member or a problem with the Committee. If you have reason to think that any member is not making a serious effort to attend all meetings, call them to find out why

At the Meeting

- DCV uses a “Consent Agenda” to dispense quickly with routine and non-controversial agenda items. Only use formal motions when absolutely necessary
- When formal decision-making needs to occur ensure that decisions are made fairly and that the rights of the majority and minorities are protected. Make sure that the rules you follow encourage adequate discussion and participation
- Ensure meetings start at the scheduled time
- Introduce and welcome all newcomers
- Summarise the issues to be discussed
- Clarify the time-line for discussion
- Keep a speakers list. Make sure that everyone who wishes to speak has done so before any speaker has a second opportunity
- Encourage the quiet ones. Direct questions to them or go around the table so that everyone can comment
- When discussion wanders, bring it back to the matter at hand

- Be alert to nonverbal behaviours signifying dissent. Ask the dissenter to comment
- When debate becomes confrontational and positions become entrenched, seek ways to identify the interests and values that underlie their positions and seek ways to negotiate resolution
- Watch for signs that the debate has run its course. Then summarise the discussion and ask for a vote or expression of consensus
- Ask the minute-taker to read all motions and any amendments to be sure that they are clear, express the intent of the mover, and are correctly entered in the minutes
- Before the meeting is adjourned (or before people start leaving), make sure that anyone who has been assigned a task is clear on their responsibilities and aware of the reporting date
- Check to see if anyone has a problem with the next meeting date and time
- End the meeting on time

After the Meeting

- Review the previous meeting to identify problems so that they can be addressed before the next meeting
- Review the Strategic Plan to see what is coming up in the months ahead. Update the annual agenda if necessary
- Review this checklist. Consider what you might do to make the next meeting better, and what long-term strategies might improve your meetings
- Consider what you might do to assist new members, deal with absenteeism, or remediate poor performance
- If you have a Vice-chairperson or if there is someone in line for the chairperson's role, include her or him in this review process

Vice Chair Job Description

This position is typically successor to the Chair.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Committee Member job description, this role:

- Is a member of the Committee of Management
- Performs Chair responsibilities when the Chair cannot be available (see Chair Job Description)
- Reports to the Chair
- Works closely with the Chair and Executive Officer
- Participates closely with the Chair to develop and implement the Strategic Plan
- Will often elect to participate on Sub-Committees
- Mentors other members of Sub-Committees

Please note:

This position involves a significant time commitment from the incumbent.

Times and tasks detailed below are a guide only:

- Monthly Committee meeting with pre and post meetings = 5 hours
- Bimonthly meeting with pre and post meetings = 5 hours
- Representing DCV on other committees etc = min of 5 hours per month
- Reading emails & materials, researching information, giving feedback on DCV tasks etc = min of 8 hours per month
- Sub-Committees, strategic planning, liaison with annecto etc. = min of 5 hours per month
- Liaison with Chair and Executive Officer (phone and in person) = min of 10 hours per month

All Committee of Management Members

Job Description

- Attends a minimum of 2 out of every 3 of the 11 yearly Committee of Management meetings
- Attends Bimonthly meetings – particularly Special events
- Attends all important related meetings e.g. Committee training and Strategic Planning Days
- Sends apology to Chair and to Information Officer if unable to attend meetings
- Seeks a Leave of Absence if going to miss 2 consecutive meetings
- Actively participates in committee discussions, is an active listener – respectful of other viewpoints, shares expertise and knowledge
- Volunteers for and willingly accepts tasks to assist the Executive Officer and Committee and completes them thoroughly and on time
- Ensures that they are well prepared for Committee meetings by reading and considering reports and other papers as required. Reviews and comments on minutes and reports
- Responds to emails and other requests for information/support in a timely manner
- Gets to know other committee members and builds a working relationship that contributes to consensus decision making
- Participates in fund raising for the organisation
- Participates in Sub-Committees as appropriate
- Mentors and supports new/less experienced Committee members
- Have DCV business at the forefront of their thinking

- Represents DCV as requested for networking and systemic advocacy purposes
- Is always mindful to be clear about when they are representing broader member views on a subject and when they are expressing their personal opinion and/or issue
- Is always mindful to be clear about when they are representing DCV's view on a subject and when they are expressing their personal opinion and/or issue when networking or representing DCV at forums, reference groups etc.

It is anticipated that non-Executive members of the Committee need to commit a minimum of 10 hours per month to DCV activities.