

VMIAC

**Consultation with Members on
Proposed Changes to the Rules**

Report October 2024

Prepared by Sonia Law and Sam Brhaspati Stott

Executive Summary

Members were consulted about changes to VMIAC's rules which would require assent from members at a Special General Meeting planned for November. The consultations were intended to explain the changes and assess the level of support and likelihood of acceptance to inform the change process, including the Special General Meeting.

The consultations were conducted by two independent consultants, Sam Brhaspati Stott and Sonia Law. Sam is a consumer with lived experience expertise, skilled in facilitation, co-design and adult education. Sonia is a lawyer with experience in mental health, disability and government law and as a non-executive director in the community mental health sector.

VMIAC members were given the opportunity to provide input in an online survey and via online consultation sessions in September. Forty-four people completed the survey and nine people attended consultation sessions. The proposed changes were organised into two themed sessions. Six people attended both sessions.

The following proposed changes were **generally supported** in the consultations:

- ✓ Increase the participation of members in organisational policies and submissions.
- ✓ Designate two roles on the Committee of Management for First Nations people/members
- ✓ Introduce a requirement for people to have relevant governance skills to be on the Committee of Management, and for VMIAC to be required to support people to gain relevant skills and/or experience
- ✓ Allow Committee of Management members to be paid for their work
- ✓ Introduce a minimum (suggest 7) and a maximum (suggest 10) number of members on the Committee of Management
- ✓ Introduce a maximum of 10 years membership on the Committee of Management
- ✓ Enable the Committee of Management to be led by a single Chair or two Co-Chairs
- ✓ Amend the Rules so that they align with legal requirements and to make them clearer and easier to understand
- ✓ The Committee of Management electing office bearers

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The following proposed changes were **generally not supported** in the consultations:

- ❌ Requiring people to have governance experience in order to be on the Committee
- ❌ Reduce the quorum for the Annual General Meeting (AGM)
- ❌ In terms of a change to the description of VMIAC's activities in the rules, members have provided lots of suggestions that merit further time and consideration. The current description appears to be broad enough to support VMIAC's work, so a change to the rules doesn't appear to be needed at this time, unless VMIAC considers this is required for legal reasons.

We observed that members had varied governance experience and knowledge of VMIAC's rules. People often had no context for the proposed changes, in terms of why they were being proposed or what difference they were likely to make. The consultation sessions provided a valuable opportunity to explain VMIAC's current rules, talk the proposals through and answer questions.

Participants were often more open to a proposed change once they understood the context and reasons for it.

Providing a clear explanation of the proposed changes ahead of the SGM and taking time at the meeting to explain them would improve transparency, support members to take an active role in governance and give the best chance of the rules reflecting the true intention/wishes of VMIAC's membership.

Background

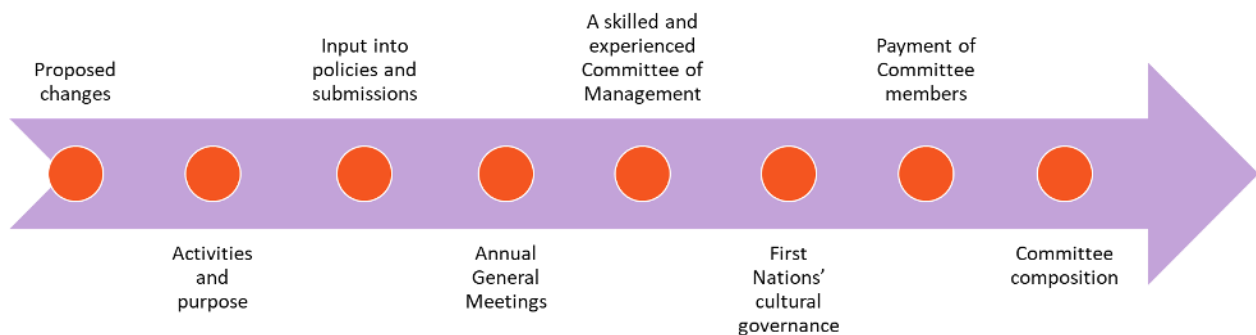
In early August 2024, Sonia Law was engaged by VMIAC to consult with members about changes to the organisation's rules being considered by the Committee of Management (CoM). Sam Brhaspati Stott was brought on as a consumer facilitator later in August 2024.

VMIAC's rules can only be changed by way of a special resolution supported by three quarters of members present at a general meeting (see Rule 40 and Rule 79). The CoM plans to seek approval of the proposed changes at a special general meeting of members scheduled for early November. Ahead of this, the CoM wished to understand the extent to which the proposed changes were likely to be supported by members to inform a decision of the CoM about which changes to take to the special general meeting for voting by members.

Some of the changes being considered were relatively minor, including some intended to improve the clarity of the rules or to ensure consistency with the model rules.

Other proposed changes were more substantive, such as enabling Committee of Management members to be remunerated for their work, requiring people to have governance skills/experience in order to be appointed to the Committee, supporting greater contribution of members to VMIAC policies and submissions, reducing the quorum for the AGM and amending the description of organisational activities. A summary of the proposed changes is at Appendix 1.

Member input on the proposed changes was gathered through an online survey and online consultation sessions with members.



Process

Session promotion

In the regular CEO update email in the week of 12th August, members were told about the plan to run the sessions between 10th September and 28th September. The sessions were promoted at the members meeting in Geelong on 2nd September. On 6th September, an email was sent to all members with more detailed information about the consultations. The email included links to the online survey and to book into the online consultation sessions. On 13th September, an email was sent to VMIAC members who had attended the AGM previously, noting their past interest in the AGM and inviting them to participate in the consultations.

On 17th September, an email was sent to all members about the dedicated consultation sessions for First Nations members, scheduled for 23rd and 25th September.

Bookings and attendance

Members who booked into an online consultation were sent pre-reading that gave a broad introduction to the proposed changes, provided a table setting out all the proposed changes in detail and a copy of VMIAC's current rules with all proposed changes marked up. A reminder email was sent to everyone booked in 24 hours before the session.

Ten online consultation sessions were organised, with a total of nine conducted between 11th and 27th September. The final session didn't go ahead as no one booked into it. This may have been because it was on the same day as the AFL grand final.

Nine members participated in the online consultation sessions, with six participating in both sessions. Several people who booked into the sessions and then cancelled or didn't turn up. Generally, if a person booked in and then didn't arrive, an email was sent to them encouraging them to attend and to rebook if they couldn't make it.

The sessions were co-facilitated by Sonia and Sam. The First Nations sessions were led by a First Nations facilitator, Neane Carter, from Terri Janke and Company, an Indigenous law firm.

Session content

The proposed changes were organised into two themed sessions, each of which was scheduled to run five times. The first session was focused on VMIAC's activities and how the

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rules can best reflect what we do and how we do it. It covered the following proposed rule changes:

- What activities to include in the Rules.
- Introducing a mechanism to give members input on policies and submissions.
- Rules updates to meet legal requirements and make rules clearer and easier to understand.
- Meeting quorum to be reduced from 30, to a suggested minimum of 10, given issues with quorum at past AGMs.

The second session was focused on the Committee of Management and covered the following proposed rule changes:

- Introduction of a requirement for members to have relevant governance skills and experience or to be supported by VMAC to build them.
- Minimum (7) and maximum (9) number of members.
- Limit on length of tenure for Co committee members.
- The ability for the Committee to be chaired by two people as co-chairs.
- Allowing Committee members to be paid for their work.
- Provision for reserved First Nations positions on the Committee.
- Committee chair and/or other office bearers to be elected by Committee members rather than directly by members.

Yarns with First Nations members of VMIAC

As one of the proposed changes to the VMIAC Rules referred to First Nations' roles of the Committee of Management, the facilitators successfully negotiated with Vrinda Edan, the VMIAC Chief Executive Officer, to enable First Nations members of VMIAC to consider this and other proposed changes in a culturally safe way.

We did this by making two of the scheduled consultation sessions open to First Nations members only and bringing on a Aboriginal co-facilitator with Indigenous governance and cultural expertise. We approached 3 First Nations consulting groups, with Neane Carter (pictured), a Senior Solicitor with Terri Janke & Co coming on board in early September. Neane is a proud Dja Dja Wurrung, Yorta Yorta, Wamba Wamba, Wergaia, and Wotjobaluk woman.



Governance Consultations with VMIAC members

10th - 28th September 2024

Acknowledgement of Country



We gathered on Zoom for a series of 2 hour consultations on different days and at different times in September 2024. VMIAC members joined from the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung, Taungurung, Dja Dja Wurrung, Yalukit Willam Boonwurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation and the Latji Latji Nation. We acknowledged the Elders past and present and thanked them for allowing us to visit and meet with purpose on their lands. In Acknowledging Country, we entered into a contract with Bunjil to bring the creator spirit and the environment into this space. We made a commitment to honour the community and

Country we are visiting.

[Sam Brhaspati Stott](#) and [Sonia Law](#) co-facilitated seven of the sessions. [Neane Carter](#) co-facilitated the remaining two yarns with First Nations members.

Welcome

- In keeping with VMIAC's Vision, we recognised people with lived experience of mental distress
- In addition, we highlighted the [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Centre for Lived Experience](#) definition of lived experience.
 - In response to this, one First Nations member reflected on [Contemplative Development Pathway Theory](#) - the shame and false self-shame, which First Nations people carry. They highlighted that it is important that recognition of lived experience is distinct from First Nations lived experience recognition.

Connecting

We introduced ourselves by sharing our preferred names; our pronouns (e.g. she/her, he/him, they/them); and one thing that attracted us to join VMIAC. Members also shared their kinship affiliations where these were known. Members purposefully shared aspects of their lived experiences relevant to their membership of VMIAC.

Being in the space together

Relational rather than transactional ways of being

- Don't be shame, be game!
- Two-way learning and knowledge sharing

Co-documentation

Everyone present was invited to record what seemed important in the chat, in the spirit of co-documentation.

Indigenous data sovereignty

VMIAC has considered the principles of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and is respectful of First Nations members' rights to control their data and how it is used. To support this, a summary of the input from First Nations members in the Indigenous-only sessions was shared with them so they could make any changes they saw fit prior to it being used in the report on the consultations.

- One First Nations member highlighted that this is especially relevant for First Nations' people who come under community treatment orders or who are incarcerated - don't know how info is being used.

The VMIAC Committee of Management

Members had the opportunity to meet and ask questions of a current member of the VMIAC Committee of Management in all but one session. These included Mel Sherrin, Anna Sowden, Prunella Howell-Jay, Tom Wood, Simon Katterl and James Bell. Committee of Members shared the context and rationale for the proposed changes and what had motivated them to stand for the Committee.

Session 1

In this session, we looked at what governance means to members, considering some proposed changes that VMAC is legally required to make, and some possible changes to VMAC's stated activities and how Annual General Meetings run. Changes to [VMAC's Rules](#) require 3/4 of members at an Annual or Special General Meeting to vote in favour of them.

Members made the following comments in relation to the Rules:

- The Rules are the the constraints of the building and the richness is what goes into the building in the form of policies and procedures
- VMAC should remove the term 'mental illness' from its name, which is a very Western way of looking at things
- The Rules have to keep up with changing times and be fit for purpose
- The rules of engagement, this is how we play nicely in the sandpit. Everyone knows how we play in the sandpit - rules, policies, expectations are very transparent

Vision and activities

What does governance mean to you?

Members cumulatively contributed to a word cloud using Mentimeter. Interestingly, no one term dominated members' understandings of governance.



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Members reflected on the word cloud as follows:

- I like accountability too. If it had 4 options, that was going to be my next suggestion.
- Transparency
- Inclusion
- Collaboration within the Committee of Management, drawing on the expertise each member brings to enable effective functioning

Changes to the Rules which VMIAC is legally required to make

Updates to the [Model Rules](#) for incorporated associations, like VMIAC, mean that VMIAC must make these changes to its Rules. Members' questions and comments are included below each proposed change.

- *Changes to the procedures to follow if a member is suspended or expelled and appeals this decision. In general, the changes give a person more time to appeal and require an independent appeal subcommittee to be set up to consider the appeal and make decisions*
 - Why would a member be suspended or expelled? Is there a bandwidth within which members' behaviour is considered ok? Can you give an example?
 - How will data about suspended or expelled members be managed so that their privacy is respected?
 - It's important for the process for suspension or expulsion to be clear and to include the involvement of a First Nations person for cultural support if the member being suspended or expelled is a First Nations person.
 - There might be other member based organisations, including Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, that VMIAC can share learnings/expertise with. Ask them, how did you approach these changes? Do you have any examples you can share? And vice versa.
 - Will changes to procedures for suspended/expelled members impact negatively on quorum/voting? Ie: Will this delay risk committee voting on acute issues that impact the entire membership? Sorry I thought this was for the Committee of Management.
- *Removing the need for VMIAC to keep proxy forms from meetings*
 - Clarify the process for declaring proxies at AGM
 - I think keeping proxy forms aids transparency. Everything we can do to increase transparency is really important - even if it's 5 years down the track - including for evaluation. Could proxy forms be de-identified? [for privacy reasons].

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- This member then clarified that proxy forms might have different uses and this comment might not be relevant for AGM voting proxies
- *Changing the term 'petty cash management' to 'cash management'*
- *Making it clearer how meetings can be held online*
- *The Treasurer of the Committee must give other all Committee members access to financial accounts and records*
- *Introducing a requirement for the Committee to keep a register of any conflicts of interest*
 - Members acknowledged that kinship relationships in Aboriginal communities might lead to perceived conflicts of interest
 - Whose conflicts of interest are we referring to? Members, Committee of Management or VMIAC staff?
 - This refers to the Committee of Management, for example if they are also employed at an organisation with which VMIAC has dealings

VMIAC's vision

"Where all mental health consumers stand proud, live a life with choices honoured, rights upheld, and these principles are embedded in all aspects of society."

One member made the following comment:

- There is space to obtain greater clarity about VMIAC's role and purpose.

VMIAC's activities

VMIAC's activities enable it to achieve its vision. From a legal perspective, it is helpful to keep the description of activities in the rules broad and general so they enable VMIAC to respond to opportunities and changing circumstances and thinking. That may mean that activities are described in more detail outside the rules, such as in policies and procedures.

At the moment, VMIAC's activities are listed in the Rules as:

- *Information provision*
 - Easy read versions
 - Media - community videos
- *Support*
 - Yarning healing circles
 - Mentorship - supporting each other, offering care through tough times
 - In Western culture, everything is bricks and mortar - why can't we shift our thinking to structures that are portable like healing hubs that don't have a

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fixed location, especially in a housing crisis especially for mob who are often off Country or don't have sovereignty over Country

- *Education and training (consumers, clinical, non-clinical staff and the general community) from the consumer perspective*
 - Lived & living experience groups visiting universities and TAFES to provide a consumer perspective in psychiatry, nursing and allied health courses. Paid where possible but unpaid education roles would be great too. Again, this might go through the Consumer Register. VMAC might need to be proactive about creating these opportunities 👍
- *Individual, group and systemic advocacy*
 - Advocating and supporting consumer self-advocacy in engagement with police, Protective Service Officers and employment rights.
 - Engaging in systemic advocacy about the impacts of mental health on financial security, housing and access to supports, including issues with the Medicare Benefits Scheme
 - Wish for some systemic & employment advocacy about workplace discrimination against consumer workers, like a union. Unions aren't really on side as their membership base is clinical staff and they openly support restrictive treatment in the name of safety. Maybe a new union established by and for consumer workers. and VMAC supports/endorsees it.
- *Research*
 - One member emphasised that research must be in partnership with consumers - led by consumers and collaborative
 - Support consumers to gain research skills and assist with procedural aspects of doing research, especially folks who are not confident to go to university 👍
 - Consumer-led research into alternative models of care

When asked the extent to which these activities fit with VMAC's Vision, members noted:

- All activities are important - wouldn't want to remove any. Captures all.
- Major problems - be clear what VMAC wants to be and what it actually can be rather than having so many broadly framed activities 👍
- Cannot please everyone. Currently too much focus on the consumer workforce without being upfront about that priority. Put practical direction in plain language each year so that members are clear.
- Existing activities are still quite broad
- Can't think of anything relevant that couldn't be covered within the existing activities

Members offered the following suggestions about other activities which would enable VMAC to achieve its vision:

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- Facilitate advocacy for consumer lived experience workers facing systemic or from personnel, discrimination at mental health services/ non-government organisations towards consumer lived experience workers e.g. funding to establish a union for consumer lived experience workers by consumers.
- Realistic plans & commitments/undertakings - Can it deliver, what will it deliver, by when, for whom (what happens if it doesn't!)
- *Volunteering* opportunities
- Art shows!
- Membership based political advocacy/action group
- Committee of Management-based political focus
- Be disciplined and consistent in its pursuit of 'measurable outcomes'
- The importance of kin and community over individualistic approaches in First Nations culture, as well as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities and LGBTQI+ communities.
- Being the 'go to' for comment on mental health issues in the media
- Idea of having people with lived experience contributing to development of mental health wellbeing plans for all different kinds of intersectionality that VMIAC could advocate to be used by mental health services. Advocate with Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations and other organisations to support the process of developing these with people so that the consumer doesn't have to go through the process a second time. Would need to consider intellectual property and data privacy - how transfer of wellbeing plans across services and sectors would be managed. If these were in the form of apps, they would need to be consumer-led too.
- Some of these issues were covered with the 76 recommendations from the Royal Commission, however they have not yet been funded for implementation.
- Political advocacy is missing - systemic advocacy is more about the mental health sector. Systemic can imply focus on MH sector - whereas political is something that impacts the sector/system. ❤️
- Regular consumer meetings definitely an activity I'd like to see VMIAC do - examples might be consumers sitting on recruitment panels, working groups👍
- More pressure on the Mental Health Complaints Commissioner to handle complaints and make sure compliance notices are issued to stop systemic abuses of power
- Regional presence
- Career pathways for members earn and learn opportunities
- VMIAC to engage in intersectoral collaboration e.g. with the AOD sector. Take a more holistic approach and make this more visible👍

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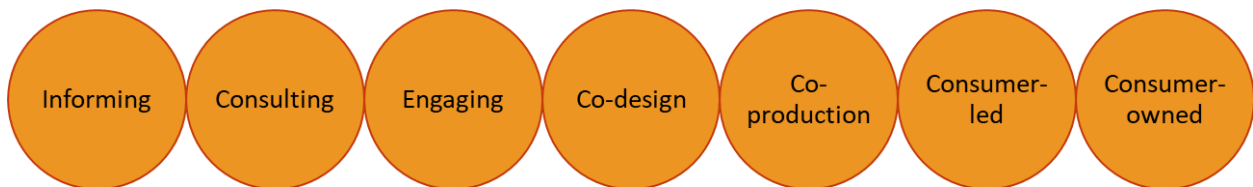
- Opportunities for consumers to sit on recruitment panels, clinical governance, input on submissions to government through working groups via the Consumer Register 🙌

Policies and submissions

VMIAC staff write policies about how VMIAC does things. They also prepare submissions to external bodies, including the government. At the moment:

- VMIAC **informs** members through email newsletters and its website about these policies and submissions.
- Sometimes, VMIAC **consults** with members about policies and submissions too - these sessions are an example.
- Developing the VMIAC Reconciliation Action Plan is an example of **co-design** as it brings together First Nations and settler-colonial people with a lived experience of mental distress. If both groups are part of the implementation and evaluation of the Reconciliation Action Plan, it will be an example of **co-production**.
- The VMIAC [Navigating My Way](#) NDIS project is **consumer-led**.

We asked members where they would like to go on this participation ladder, which could also be thought of as a pyramid of involvement:



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Members expressed enthusiasm for becoming more involved in creating VMIAC's policies and writing submissions, recognising that different members and different projects might require different kinds of involvement:

- The appropriate level of engagement should not be a blanket approach. It depends on the nature of the issue and its importance for First Nations members.
- Not a passive community, consumers in the foreground, leading and guiding
- Agree on being more than the current level. We need to move upwards on the ladder.
- Has to be higher up the ladder than consulting
- I would like to contribute. I would like to be heard. I would like to participate. I would like to know the organisation is in alignment with our commitment to each other. The current Communications are much less than in previous years, not sure why. If VMIAC is indeed a member-based organisation, it needs to engage with its members.
- Unclear what sub-committees the Committee of Management has or what working parties the VMIAC staff have set up. So much expertise among the membership that is untapped!
- It should be dynamic and organic and fluid!
- Working groups are a good idea for particular topics or opportunities with debriefing. Also important to engage new consumers and consumers with different backgrounds, as well as more seasoned experience. Would be great for consumers to be directly involved in all processes
- Recognise the need for the Committee of Management to have final authority with such a large membership. Need to be careful of majority of members drowning out individuals
- Need a range of people at different stages of their journey with different capabilities who can work at different points - up to the person.
- Give members the full range of contributing
- I wouldn't want other sectors to have any say or control over VMIAC's internal policies.
- Have seen more lived and living experience influence recently generally. Not sure to what extent this is happening at VMIAC currently. Would want to see consumers involved in everything to improve power sharing
- I'd like to know what I have an opportunity to contribute to and the chance to opt out.



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Other members specified what kind of involvement they would like to have in these areas of VMAC's work:

- **I'm comfortable with engagement** as co-design may not be practical (time constraints or decision-making authority)
- I know it's tricky... Have had involvement with co-design processes. Not easy but **my preference would be co-design**. Issue with consulting is that organisation didn't close the loop before launching - offensive
- **Co-design level**; it's a happy medium - gives me an opportunity and lets the experts polish it. For example, so that the experts such as lawyers can run with the legal policy as I don't have that expertise.
- If **co-design and co-production** was only referring to people with lived & living experience / VMAC members, those two should and could be included.
- **Consumer-led & consumer-owned is always great**, so long as the relevant expertise is present. Co-design has more structure & learning opportunity - capability building. Consider **co-design** between consumers and consumer workers
- I like to be involved with everything. I have the capacity to be involved at the other end of the ladder. I've been advocating for a long time & have considerable experience behind me. I reckon I could actually do the stuff at the **consumer-led and consumer-owned**.
- There needs to be a process so that all voices are heard, not just the loudest. **Consumer owned** is a really big thing ♡

The Annual General Meeting (AGM)



Hands up if you've ever been to a VMAC Annual General Meeting.

- A third of the members who attended consultation sessions had attended a VMAC AGM
- A few members weren't sure if they had attended a VMAC AGM
- Several members had not attended a VMAC AGM, but would like to



What is the value of attending a VMIAC AGM?

I attend the AGMs of all organisations that I'm a member of - can't whinge & complain that they're not doing something without turning up to their AGM, just the sort of person I am

- It is a demonstration of holding office-bearers to account; foundation of good governance; opportunity for participation, to have a say & a vote; the executive explaining to the membership the year's activities. Financials must be presented well in advance of the AGM so that members can consider
- Never really appreciated until this time how important it is
- AGM is a big chance to have changes ratified
- Being a voice, having lived & living experience, sharing personal experience, making changes, if only small ones
- Have been to a Special General Meeting [unclear if this was a VMIAC one]. Have a vote, how the finances are going, to get a sense of how the Committee of Management is investing in, plan my engagements for the year ahead, interested in educational opportunities, meet the Committee of Management



What would make attending the VMIAC AGM more appealing to you?

For members living in regional Victoria and/or with physical disabilities, an online or hybrid format was appealing:

- Being able to attend online is critical as in the Mallee. Tech has to be better - greater clarity about how voting for online attendees occurred. Confusion led to hostility for some members. Not deliberately excluded, just not managed as well as it could have been. Get the remote stuff sorted.
- The last couple of AGMs have been hybrid which makes sense for a statewide organisation
- Hybrid? Maybe offer face to face and online? I'm physically disabled so getting around is difficult - online is important for me. Reliable and transparent voting mechanism
- Hybrid would be fantastic for me. Online participants to have an equal say as in-person members. Can be held within 5 months of the end of the financial year - aim for earlier; forward plan produced for activities in the coming year; on a practical level, enable meaningful online participation in real time, hear and be heard

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Negotiating expectations about acceptable behaviour was important to some members:

- Feedback on last year's AGM and how this was impacted by a member in a heightened space - discussion about registering to attend, appropriate conduct and what to do if a member steps off into behaviour that isn't within parameters
- Really important that there were a set of rules of engagement at the AGM
- Clear agenda communicated before the meeting, including how much time would be spent on each agenda item and how questions will be managed so that the meeting can proceed in an orderly manner and to keep things on track. This may mean taking questions offline for follow up outside the meeting

The relational aspect of coming together was important for some members:

- A welcoming circle
- Opportunity to engage through a short focus group
- Sharing of food and wellness goody bags
- A deep listening exercise
- Networking opportunities
- Sense from the leadership that they embrace the membership's role in shaping the direction of the organisation
- Ask members of suitable dates to increase attendance, perhaps bundle with other sector events?

Members want to understand the process and receive support to do so if needed:

- Buddy system to sit with newbie to explain process and support active participation - briefing beforehand
- Be able to ask questions
- Make AGM accessible and less intimidating
- Explain how it works and avoid jargon, explain procedures
- Educate, empower and engage the membership! 🙌
- Advance circulation of AGM papers & financials
- Ensure that members appreciate the importance of an AGM and make it attractive for them to attend

Other members suggested having a facilitator and/or a guest speaker at the AGM:

- Guest speakers
- Bring on a good (co-)facilitator for the AGM
- Have been to lots of AGMS in the local area. Most organisations get it over & done with while others have a keynote and make it more attractive to attend

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- Well known, high profile, relevant keynote speaker on a topic people care about

Quorum at the Annual General Meeting

VMIAC must legally hold an AGM each year. There are currently 1800 members of VMIAC. For an AGM to go ahead, at least 30 members must attend. This is called the quorum.

How can VMIAC ensure enough members attend each AGM (in person or online) to meet the quorum?

Members supported **an online or hybrid format** to the AGM, so long as those attending remotely were equally able to participate:

- Conduct the AGM in multiple modes e.g. online and in-person
- Improve access for those who are attending remotely
- Hybrid or fully online enables members who can't attend in person (statewide) to attend and vote.
- Logistics and resourcing involved in having it hybrid
- Fully online would sit well with most people
- Members can be counted as present whether they are in person or online

Members emphasised the importance of **engaging the membership in the lead up to the AGM**. This included educating and informing the membership about the purpose and process of the AGM:

- Go the hard yards to increase engagement and AGM attendance
- Sending out weekly emails which each contain a highlight of interest for the coming AGM
- Have short snippet videos of different parts of the previous AGM online so that members can get an appreciation for what and how it happens to help gain participation
- Notice, preparing membership
- a higher quorum would motivate VMIAC to engage in the preparatory work to engage the membership
- Ensure informed members attend who can vote purposefully
- I'm a member of VMIAC and therefore anything I learn about the organisation helps me to participate more and make a difference
- Can't have input unless I understand

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- Preparatory reading a fair time before enabling people to prepare an explanation of the voting process.
- Ensure minutes are taken and available
- Simple and clear explanation of the voting process to reduce overwhelm 🙌
- Ensure a mix of newer members and older members 🙌 Ensure that members attending the AGM are representative of the wider membership 🙌 Active engagement with newer members to encourage them to participate in the AGM

Some members highlighted **equity of participation at the AGM**, both in terms of people with disability and ensuring that staff didn't dominate proceedings:

- Important to consider the ratio of staff members and non-staff members - Declare this 🙌 Ensure that the loudest people in the room don't take over, and staff might get preference. Want to make sure that's equal. 🙌 Ensure that members attending the AGM are representative of the wider membership 🙌 Active engagement with newer members to encourage them to participate in the AGM
- Accessibility and different ways of participating to allow for people who are inpatients, unwell or have a disability to attend. Query whether VMIAC has a Disability Access Plan to allow for those who are inpatients or unwell to take part
- Clear rules of engagement, including processes to take questions offline for follow up outside the meeting if they are not relevant or necessary for the AGM itself

Other members were curious about **how up to date the membership register is**:

- How often does VMIAC review its membership to check currency?
- How do members find out about the AGM?
 - *Members choose whether to receive these notices via post or email*
- Have some members moved on or otherwise inactive?

Members also made suggestions about **scheduling the AGM differently**:

- Throw the AGM in with a guest speaking event
- Commitment to the organisation by the membership - if have a lot of things on, prioritising attending the AGM
- Is it possible to conduct the voting part of the AGM as an online process rather than based at a singular event?
- Maybe making the AGM on a weekend? 💖

Some members expressed hope that this consultation process would **shed some light on why members might not be engaging** with VMIAC:

- Disappointed that it's been hard to engage such a low number, hopefully this process will make it clearer as to why and how to address
- We need to address why members are not attending the AGM

Alternatively, should VMIAC reduce the quorum, and if so, to how many?

Overall, members attending the consultation sessions **did not support a reduction in the AGM quorum.**

For some members the quorum needed to be **representative** of the membership:

- There needs to be a representation of a number of intersections in that quorum. Having a small quorum could undermine diversity and result in unconscious bias.
- It is not unreasonable to expect 30 given 1800 members on the books.
- Need to have a representative number of people. Reducing quorum to 10 doesn't speak well to VMIAC, given the number of members. Quorum needs to be representative of the membership - doesn't speak well of VMIAC if quorum is too low to make a reasonable decision
- Thirty is not a lot to ask out of that many members. perhaps surveying members to identify a suitable day & time. Difficulty attracting members to attend the AGM is likely reflective of another problem. To reduce the legal risk of not being able to hold the AGM, perhaps reduce the quorum to 20
- 30 is too low, 10% better i.e. 180 👍

A few members expressed concern that **the quorum could be made up entirely of the staff:**

- 30 is pretty much the staff, which is not helpful or healthy for VMIAC
- I'm appalled that the VMIAC leadership even considers reducing the quorum - this is disgraceful! VMIAC employees could meet the quorum and exclude the membership!

Harvesting

We asked members to what extent they support these proposed changes.

Increasing the participation of members in VMIAC's policies and submissions

All but one member **strongly agreed** with VMIAC inviting members to contribute to their policies and submissions.

Reducing the quorum required for AGMs to go ahead

All but one member who attended the consultation sessions **strongly disagreed** with VMIAC reducing the quorum required for Annual General Meetings to go ahead.

Next steps

Session 2 - Proposed changes to VMIAC's Committee of Management

Members were all encouraged to attend the second governance consultation, which was focused on the Committee of Management. All but two attendees of the first session also attended the second one.



Session 2

Overview

We gathered on Zoom for four sessions. One of the sessions was a dedicated First Nations session with two First Nations participants.

In this session we looked at what skills and experience the Committee of Management needs to work well, First Nations' cultural governance, payment of Committee members and Committee composition.

A skilled and experienced Committee of Management

What **skills** does the Committee of Management need to function effectively?

Members were asked to identify the skills they consider important and identified the following areas as relevant for the Committee:

- I think you need to have at least a basic knowledge of governance otherwise you're joining something you have no idea about

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- Legal expertise, e.g. writing the constitution & hiring staff.
- Business and financial acumen, accounting for the finances & receiving donations knowledge of budgeting, funding and financial reporting. Resource management, including people, time and money.
- Clinical and First Nations healing expertise. Pharmaceutical/prescription acumen.
- Lived and living experience, commitment to recovery-oriented practice, promoting recovery, empowerment and self-determination.
- Self care awareness. A recognition of the importance of self-care, both for themselves and for the group members, to prevent burnout.
- Understanding of service and the mental health system.
- Media expertise to address misinformation, ensure that messages are consistent and aligned. This will ensure that VMIAAC is an authoritative and legitimate space. This has potential to have a broader impact through the Committee's influence on the broader organisation.
- Understanding of cyber security and information management and how they impact the kind of work VMIAAC does and the kind of information VMIAAC holds
- Understanding of artificial intelligence and implications for VMIAAC and it's work, including data sovereignty requirements
- Meeting privacy requirements and appropriate governance of research. These elements support the Committee to protect the integrity of VMIAAC
- Clear direction and purpose that is understood and shared by the Committee and clear to those outside so they understand VMIAAC's role and whether they want to get involved. The ability to set and achieve clear goals.
- Deep listening - Listen deeply to what people are saying and not saying rather than trying to quickly categorise
- Some experience in participating in committees, collaboration.
- Intersectionality
- Being able to engage with the membership of the organisation
- Good decision makers, critical thinkers, good communicators
- Being able to empower marginalised people
- Collaboration skills, the ability to work together without throwing things, to work and function as a team.
- The ability to set and achieve goals - people who are able to take action and inspire, who have a historical context and awareness of what's happening now
- Knowing where the hot spots are - what actually matters to people's ability to recover - consumer themselves, consumer workforce and systems

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- De-escalation vs handling the complexity of madness - conflict can be handled, doesn't have to be muted or conformist - ok to be uncomfortable - nice and calm isn't always helpful or needed. Manage without stifling!

What **experience** does the Committee of Management need to function effectively?

Members were then asked about the experience they consider Committee members require. It was notable that a number of members were not aware that it is already a requirement under the rules for Committee members to have experienced mental and/or emotional distress (consumers).

Members identified:

- The importance of reflecting the diversity of people with a lived experience of mental distress.
- The need to have Committee members who are not lived and living experience workers
- Custodianship - both direct experience of being under custodianship and also someone who has responsibility for someone under custodianship.
- Experience in being good at engagement between organisations
- Lived and living experience of hate related to who they are, being on the receiving end of racism and vilification
- Understanding of policy and procedures
- Administration experience
- Lived experience in mental health and a passion for wanting to create change
- Willingness to want to learn about governance
- Working in a team, understanding that different people have different perspectives and being able to bounce off each other without dominating
- Needs to reflect the diversity of its members - cultural, age etc so that it is representative of the membership
- Experience from newer people and folks who've experienced the system in decade(s) past. Some consumers have experience of the system across multiple decades
- Age diversity, experience of youth-specific services

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- People on the Committee who can speak to the experience of injured workers and veterans and associated mental health issues, including impacts of workplace bullying
- Experience in institutional mental health, in hospital would be very valuable for someone on the committee to have

A number of people expressed concern about the possibility that requiring governance skills and/or experience may exclude people who have real value to add to the Committee:

- It's important not to miss out on someone who is creative and brings new ideas - the rawness of new members who may not have prior governance experience but bring different perspective
- Concern that requiring governance skills and experience in the rules could prevent good people joining the committee
- Making a change to require skills will exclude members who may be well suited to leading the organisation
- A lot of people have valuable knowledge & experiences to share and it would be a shame if they miss out if these skills and experiences are required before joining the CoM
- A lot of consumers don't have access to the pieces of paper but have important perspectives to share
- You can't really exclude somebody, it's about seeing if they're a good fit. Can't assess this through a form - need a conversation. Being realistic about the need for the CoM to function effectively
- Important that the COM is not professionalised so far away from people with a lived experience of mental distress - it must remain representative of the movement

The importance of VMIAC supporting members to build governance skills and experience and take up roles was emphasised by many participants

- It would be a great idea if VMIAC can build governance capacity because so many consumers don't have those skills and experience.
- Will VMIAC support members to obtain the needed skills and experience? This is important for members whose education and employment may have been interrupted e.g. by mental distress
- E.g. have been on many boards and been a treasurer and have a health professional background but no specific governance qualifications - how to get?

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- To what extent does the COM recruit and retain people with lived experience who don't have formal qualifications in mental health peer work or governance but do have relevant experience?
- They need to be in a certain position in their journey where they can look at things. Bring their experience but rise above that in order to consider other things.
- Do no harm is the first thing, important that VMIAC doesn't cause harm to people getting involved

First Nations cultural governance

VMAC is developing a Reconciliation Action Plan. One aspect of this is cultural governance of the Committee of Management. They are proposing that two positions on the Committee are reserved for First Nations people with lived experience, using the [Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Centre for Lived Experience](#) definition.



Feedback from First Nations members about this proposal was:

- Designated positions would address power imbalance and give opportunity for First Nations' ways of knowing, being and doing to influence and truth-tell at VMIAC.
- Bring First Nations ideas of healing and combine with other experiences to see what is common and can be learned from one another, e.g. through communication boards that highlight/record these experiences.
- We are over-represented in incarceration rates and being locked up in psych wards. Our cultural beliefs and practices are misinterpreted by the Western biomedical model as 'psychosis' or 'schizophrenia'. Important for us to be there to challenge

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racism and unconscious bias. As a people, we have shorter life expectancy and are more likely to end our lives

- If there were only 5 Committee of Management members, 2 designated roles would be too much and not reflective of the proportion of First Nations' members. If the Committee of Management has 8-10 members, then it is more viable.
- Issues with having a single First Nations position - this means a person has a huge load of being responsible to hold and represent the diversity of experience
- Culturally unsafe, tokenism & burnout if only one First Nations designated position, made harder when mob have multiple intersecting identities. If only one person, would need cultural support for them. Two members would enable each to provide support to each other
- Need to consider what these positions mean for Aboriginal people on the Committee of Management e.g. concepts of time, reflective approaches, slow vs fast work, divvying up the work. The way that we see the world is so different to Western people.
- Allow time to consider & deliberate and seek insights from community, whilst maintaining required confidentiality and privacy.
- First Nations members could be encouraged to join the Committee of Management by talking about why it matters and seeing Aboriginal involvement.
- Need to recognise the responsibility that First Nations folks would hold, being watched closely by their community.
- Value in education for other committee members, so that they understand why those positions are designated and about Aboriginal ways of being, knowing and doing so this is understood in how the work is done, ie the need for 1:1 conversations with mob, have a yarn, do a bit of digging, sit with it for while, come back to them, it's a big commitment. Avoid pressure.

Non-First Nations members shared the following thoughts:

- Perfect opportunity to educate members, Aboriginal deep listening is powerful. Could share their experiences which would be different from my own experience. Have positive experience of Aboriginal services/supports from elders for a family member. Strength of that community would be a great experience to bring to the committee.
- Everything the committee does should be respectful to the community, so having that experience on the committee would assist with that

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- Idea of a sub-committee that is constituted by First Nations people, to have greater influence and support their role on the Committee.
- It may be difficult to find the right people to fill the roles from the existing membership base. Possible downside of other Aboriginal people not getting involved because two dedicated members are already there through this being imposed.
- It may be difficult for two people to represent the diversity of First Nations experience and different approaches to governance. This idea might be seen as an attempt at 'rulership'.
- Some members expressed concern that having two dedicated roles in a committee of VMIAC's size might create a power imbalance. The challenges of representation of others, such as refugees, LGBTIQ+ in a small committee was noted.
- There was generally openness to two positions once cultural safety considerations were explained. It was noted that this context will be important in explaining the proposal to members
- Decolonisation is personal and a bigger process than this one step. Important not to repeat past mistakes
- First Nations roles are about power to, not power over, agree on that basis.
- This is about cultural governance. Don't want these people to become tokens. Need to understand what this means for people.
- There are potential issues with accepting governance as a mad person. The governance needs to meet the needs of all members

Payment of Committee members



Currently, VMIAC **reimburses** Committee of Management members for their out-of-pocket expenses, such as public transport fares, mileage and meals.

The pros and cons of remuneration were presented in this graphic.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the pool of skilled and experienced people available for the Committee of Management • Recruit and retain committee members with specialist skills and expertise • Recognition that volunteering rates have declined while people work longer hours and retired later • In 2021, 7% of associations like VMIAC paid their committee members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of pocket expenses are inequitably borne by committee members e.g. those with children or living in regional Victoria • Up to 15 hours per month of each Committee member’s time spent on VMIAC duties is unpaid • Public perception that committee members be volunteers e.g. in 2021, 40% of associations like VMIAC were opposed to paying committee members

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Most members supported the payment of Committee members, highlighting:

- It's such a massive commitment of time and brain power, I totally support the Board being paid
- I am in full support of remuneration
- The Committee of Management must be paid for their time, skills and knowledge
- Payment makes it clear that the work needs to be respected and responsibility taken
- It's incongruent that consumers on the Register and staff are being paid but the Committee of Management isn't. VMIAC pays consumers who they employ and whom they engage via the Consumer Register. Valuing lived experience and volunteering as consumers doesn't seem to match.
- At the very minimum, the Committee of Management should be paid half and full days just as members are for engagements. There would have to be a responsibility that goes with the right if remunerated.
- Context of mental health consumers being underemployed and discriminated against on the basis of sanism.
- Remuneration needs to recognise the work out of session, such as reading papers. Enormous expense to pay for every hour the person puts in, but important to pay CoM in some way
- Recognition that some organisations do and others don't pay their CoM or directors.
- It makes sense to learn from what others have done

One member disagreed:

- VMIAC is a grassroots, not-for-profit organisation. We don't need remuneration to entice members to join the CoM. VMIAC hasn't utilised the expertise of the membership.
- Remuneration is going to attract more people who want to be remunerated rather than those who want to voluntarily represent the membership E.g. career directors
- Many if not all current members of the CoM are employed in the LLEW, work as consultants or are keynote speakers

The following additional comments were made:

- Payment in cash can also impact on people who are on statutory benefits like Centrelink
- People on social security may be limited in their engagement with the COM if roles are remunerated

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- It would need to be flexible enough to meet the needs of people on social security and ideally provide a foot up into more substantial roles
- The issues for folks on Centrelink are not insurmountable, just need to report every fortnight
- Payment isn't important to some people. I'd be doing the same thing whether I'm paid or not. Depends on the scale of the commitment - if it took up a lot of time or involved a lot of travel
- The amount of money wouldn't sustain members of the CoM. They get the skills, experience and opportunity through being involved - this is their reward
- Honorarium seems like a good option - not a wage, recognition of value. Different feeling about it to a wage
- Encourage participation on a voluntary basis, including by members who are on Centrelink benefits
- Could use skills & experiences gained through volunteering in future employment
- Some people may have retired and not want more
- Possibility of an opt out approach - where payment is assumed and members can choose not to be paid

Committee composition

The following proposals were discussed:

	Current	Proposed
Size	4 minimum with no maximum	7 (minimum) - 9 (maximum)
Tenure	2 years, with scope for re-election	2 years and a maximum of 10 years
Leadership	Chair and Deputy Chair	Chair or Co-Chairs
Executive	Elected individually by members	Elected within Committee

Members shared the following thoughts about these proposals:

Committee size

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- If there are two designated Indigenous roles, need to also consider other designated roles e.g. LGBTIQ+, culturally & linguistically diverse, people who grew up in care (including Forgotten Australians) which will impact the size of the Committee
- The need for the Committee to include the skills and acumen noted above will also impact on Committee size
- A committee of 7-9 was supported because people may be unwell and unable to attend meetings, with uneven numbers viewed as better for voting.
- One member was surprised that there was not already a maximum committee size in the rules as the previous AGM appeared to be operating as if the CoM needed to have 8 members, 4 of whom would step down each year.
- A mentoring sub-committee, observerships and building resilience and structures of care to support capacity building and a pipeline for new Committee members and executives was supported, recognising the importance of developing and supporting young people in particular.
- A committee of four is too low given the size of the membership. Seven as a minimum is great, especially if designating one or two positions for First Nations people
- Maximum of 12 rather than nine. Suggest only one First Nations designated member if less than nine

Committee tenure

- Maximum terms were generally viewed positively, as bringing growth and fresh ideas, modelling to the organisation based on strengths. Rejuvenate, refresh, replenish
- If positions are held for too long this can create positional power that can drag the organisation down
- A maximum term of 10 years on the Committee was considered to be too long by some members, particularly if it was consecutive. One suggestion was a maximum of a total of ten years but consecutive terms of a maximum of three to five years at a time.
- Another suggestion was no more than two consecutive two year terms without having a break
- Continuity required for positions of trust
- Is there any reason why the terms are for 2 years? 3 year terms might be better given that it often takes a year to hit the ground running. So maybe 2 years + 1 year?

Co-chairs

- What is about the proposed co-chairs that is in practice different to a chair & deputy chair? What would be the difference in responsibilities? The Deputy Chair would usually only step in if the chair wasn't available?
- Openness to the idea of co-chairs if there is a clear rationale, other than sharing the workload.
- A co-chair model has potential to bring different skills and experience to the role, such as having a person without lived experience to provide a different perspective, or gender and age diversity
- Co-Chairs could have different portfolios e.g. one consumer from the Lived & Living Experience Workforce and one consumer who doesn't
- Members of the CoM, as people with lived experience of mental distress, sometimes need to take time away if they become unwell
- Or need to participate in different ways at different times. Can each take on different tasks
- Co-chairing allows for mentoring other members of the Committee of Management and the membership more broadly, sharing the work and power and supporting learning
- Co-Chairs make sense - burden sharing, back up and debrief. Inclusion is the whole point.
- Co-chairs would mean additional remuneration costs if committee executive is remunerated differently from ordinary members

Committee to elect office bearers

- The Committee of Management electing the executive 'makes sense', stressful for this to be left with the membership
- One suggestion was for a survey to go to the membership which presents what the Committee of Management thinks in terms of the executive but keeping it with the membership to decide if they agree - yes or no - and if not, why. This is respecting the membership enough to ask us. Keeps the executive humble. The Executive are beholden to the members from the get to, from the beginning, anchored to the purpose
- A floating Committee of Management member? to meet quorum and make decisions, e.g. VMIAC member for more than a year

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- VMIAC should follow the current Rules and allow the members to elect office-bearers
- It's been a rolling joke for the past year with expressions of interest being called for rather than returning to the membership
- Concerns re process to appoint people to the Committee of Management executive over the last year, have not gone to members for vote. Committee of Management members often not up to date on the website
- I agree with the proposal. When voting only see the bio/resume of each member standing. Committee know who's best suited for each role
- I agree with this proposal, Committee members know who's best

Other thoughts

The members shared these additional suggestions:

- It's really wise that VMIAC is doing this and doing this now before the organisation gets any bigger
- One member shared experience of an Aboriginal statewide peak body not seeing VMIAC as a representative of mental health consumers or the 'go to' on mental health issues
- There are opportunities to improve organisational profile and reputation through telling a story in the media or posting on LinkedIn about work such as Reconciliation Action Plan development or this governance consultation with mob, make it a very open experience, making the people visible to enable community to have a yarn with people, sharing workforce's experiences, interviewing workers and members about positive experiences. This could also influence other organisations to do similar positive work.
- It would be positive to create greater visibility of Committee of Management members and strengthening their connection with members, remembering the importance of human connection
- Taking a strengths-based approach is important and should be in the Rules
- I'm not one of the ones with the issues, but I see that VMIAC's had great demands on it the last few years but people with lived experience are at in their journeys and may need more support than I do. The issue of peer support - being able to phone in. Confusion about what was & was not available. I have my own supports but have heard from others about this. Recovery is being able to live a purposeful life with a mental illness. Don't know when going to be triggered/activated. Navigating support in difficult times - having support within VMIAC for people to reach out as needed. Might be consumer perspective supervision.

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- There's a lot of bad vibes going on with members - disenchanted, not connected, not heard. VMIAC needs to work at ground level... evidenced by low turnout at these sessions? Why's that happening? Consumer register meetings aren't well attended either - only a handful of members are attending. AGM attendance and low attendance at meetings is a symptom of members' disenchantment. Change as many Rules as you like but need to address that? VMIAC does great work but members just aren't engaged at the moment. Generally comes up when members are not informed about things. I don't know what the disconnection is. That's the only way things can change.
- VMIAC to consider engaging a Volunteer admin pool 5-10 ppl: web updating activities, compiling notices/community updates, collating requests and info, gathering relevant news from sector etc.
- I'm interested in having a greater role and I'd love to be on the Committee of Management!

Harvesting

We asked members to what extent they support these proposed changes:

Requiring Committee members to have governance skills and/or experience

Five of the six members who participated in the sessions were supportive of Committee members having relevant governance skills (three **agreed** and two **strongly agreed** to this). One participant strongly disagreed due to his concerns about the requirement for governance skills and experience not addressing the governance concerns and potentially shutting out strong candidates.

Three members **disagreed** or **strongly disagreed** that Committee members should have governance experience while two **agreed** that they should. One member was neutral on this.

Introducing designated First Nations roles to the Committee

Five of the six members who participated in the sessions - including the two First Nations members - **strongly agreed** that two positions on the Committee of Management be designated for First Nations people. One member's support was on the basis that the Committee has a minimum of seven and a maximum of twelve members and that the First Nations roles are 'about power to, not power over.' One member did not support this, expressing support for 'the principle of First Nations representation, [but] wondering about this way of achieving it.'

Allowing Committee members to be paid

Five of the six members who participated in the sessions **strongly agreed** that Committee members should be paid for their time. One **strongly disagreed**.

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Committee to have no more than ten members

Three people **agreed** and two people **strongly agreed** that the Committee should have no more than ten members. One **disagreed**, supporting a maximum of 12.

Committee members to serve no more than ten years

One person **agreed** and three people **strongly agreed** that Committee members should serve no more than ten years. One **strongly disagreed** on the basis that ten years is too long and one **disagreed**.

Committee may be led by a Chair or Co-Chairs

All members **agreed** or **strongly agreed** with this proposal.

Committee to elect Chair, Treasurer and Secretary

Four members **strongly agreed** with this proposal. One **strongly disagreed** and one **disagreed**.

Next steps

Sam and Sonia explained that we will bring the de-identified views of members who attended the 10 consultation sessions plus those who completed the online survey together into a report. We will complete this by **Thursday 3rd October**. We will share them with the Committee of Management and the VMIAC Chief Executive Officer, Vrinda Edan, who will circulate it to the whole VMIAC membership.

Special General Meeting

Members will receive a postal or email notice in **mid-October** of the proposed changes to the Rules ahead. You can vote on these at the Special General Meeting on **6th November**.

Annual General Meeting

VMAC will hold its AGM in **early December**. Members will receive postal or email notice 21 days' beforehand.

- One member asked if an AGM in early December meets the legal requirements to have it within 5 months of the end of the financial year?

Feedback

Members had the opportunity to provide feedback via MS Forms after each session.

4 members who attended Session 1 completed a feedback form, while 5 who attended Session 2 did so.

When asked **what they liked about the session**, members said:

- Sam and Sonia facilitated the session well and kept to the topic and time
- It was a small group. Facilitators were authentic and well skilled. I think Sam and Sonia get it and are trustworthy recorders, and presenters of the experiences, concerns and ambitions I have for the organisation to improve its management practices (and culture) considerably - and demonstrate it constantly - to be worthy of all MH (especially non LLEW) consumers trust, respect and value of it
- Time to share complete perspectives and context
- Opportunity to engage and be heard, to give opinion on issues
- How we were able to engage in the session and being able to be involved in the discussion and decision making process
- I was fortunate to be the only person who attended the session - however, I missed any opportunity to learn of the perspective of other people contributing). Only 1 other participant in the 1st session I attended. It concerns me that only a small number of members will have participated - and I suspect many (more) members have well and truly checked out of VMIAC, disillusioned and due to the 'void' of the last 12 months, since what was another farcical AGM in 2023, and the unrepresentative and undemocratic parachuting in of Lived Experience Workers (it seems) as hand-picked vacancy fillers ... and the pretty ordinary years of Committee of Management poor performance beforehand. Anyone who has not been elected by member vote, or has been Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary or Committee Member by vote up to and including should step down (or not hold a position for the next 2 years at least) and make way for a clean restart
- Very well facilitated, responsive to questions, excellent explanations of proposed changes, meeting other VMIAC members
- Being involved and the learning about the changes being made at VMIAC

Suggestions for **how to improve the session** included:

- I just wished more people would attend but nothing the facilitators could have done about it
- As long as nothing was compromised in what was presented to attendees for comment on, it was successful and beneficial
- It was great! No need to improve.
- Nothing, it was great!
- I felt the session went well and was not needing improvement

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- Not at all, was brilliant
- More context or explanation should be provided in session of why or what is behind VMIAC making the proposals it was. Pre-reading 2 or so weeks ago should not be relied on or be revisited as a prerequisite / primary source of background (if it even provided sufficient). I could have made it my responsibility to recheck it, but my first impression when I first got it was that it was insufficient / inadequate. Some of us benefit most from in the moment (and audial) explanations and information
- All good
- There is no need for improvement

Additional matters which **members wanted the facilitators and VMIAC to know:**

- You did a great job both, it can be so hard sometimes when you are challenged with grievances for unrelated yet important matters by members
- Be careful how this is handled and who has carriage of it in VMIAC - there has been many inadequate (insufficiently experienced and skilled) Team Leaders, Managers and seconded people under-producing and destroying past attempts to 'strategically plan' and apply genuine 'good governance or achieve practical and productive outcomes' in being an honest / genuine, inclusive, reflective, diligent member facing (based) organisation
- Just that I am grateful for the time and preparations you made.
- No, not today thank you.
- Thankyou for taking your time out to answer questions and the support during the session
- No
- I found many questions too limiting and response options not sufficient to allow me to explain my reason for choice. In making the choice I had to on several Qs (Mentimeter) my tabled response could be interpreted contrary to my reason for having to use the scale as I did. Only 1 other participant in the 1st session I attended. It concerns me that only a small number of members will have participated - and I suspect many (more) members have well and truly checked out on VMIAC, disillusioned and due to the 'void' of the last 12 months, since what was another farcical AGM in 2023, and the unrepresentative and undemocratic parachuting in of Lived Experience Workers (it seems) as hand-picked vacancy fillers ... and the pretty ordinary years of Committee of Management poor performance beforehand. Anyone who has not been elected by member vote, or has been Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary or Committee Member by vote up to and including last year should step down (Those who have held a position up to and including 2023 AGM vote should not hold a position for the next 2 years at least) and make way for a clean restart and a contested ballot of people untarnished by the past underperformance and failure to oversee a democratic, transparent, open, constantly member engaging and informing high performing organisation.
- No
- Thank you very much for welcoming me to join this session

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Members told us **what they learned in the sessions:**

- I learnt the rules of quorum for the AGM that I did not know before.
- The organisation still has such a long way to go to be true to its vision - and it still needs to get rid of most who have had their go with their fingerprints on the Committee of Management or 'the patronage and influence over agendas and business' (probably during as well as) at least since the Mental Health Royal Commission. Such a wasted opportunity and an abject failure given this is what it is after 40 or whatever years since its inception
- How the committee functions, the importance of cultural safety IN committee not just to our org.
- How different COM processes impact the membership and vice versa.
- The membership process the AGM meetings and the changes being made at VMIAC
- How dynamic young mob really are leaving us old blackfellas for dust!
- I appreciated some context from Sam and Sonia about experience or understanding they may have had to try and explain examples or reasons behind the questions or propositions posed when I asked for it
- More about VMIAC, the process re proposed changes
- How the Committee of Management is structured and the changes proposed

When asked, on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 5 (a great deal) **to what extent they could have their say in the session**, all members gave a rating of 5.



Additional **reflections** from members:

- Really impressive - even though I'm not great at technology, think you used it really well
- This should also be in picture form for folks with cognitive disability or low literacy in English. Speak to the lowest denominator which means you need to explain the position example and then the purpose.

Governance Consultation Survey with VMIAC members

9th - 25th September 2024

The survey contained questions on the following areas of the Rules:

1. How VMIAC's activities are described in the rules
2. Introducing a mechanism for members to contribute to policies and submissions
3. Legally required changes
4. Reduction of quorum number for the AGM
5. New requirements for Committee of Management skills and experience
6. Allowing Committee of Management members to be paid for their time
7. Introducing a minimum and maximum Committee of Management size
8. Allowing the Committee of Management to have co-chairs
9. Allowing Committee office holders to be appointed by the Committee rather than the members
10. Introducing a limit for the number of years a person can be on the Committee of Management
11. Introducing designated First Nations roles on the Committee of Management
12. Changes to make the rules clearer and easier to understand

Survey Results

Forty-four survey responses were received. There were issues with survey design, making it difficult for respondents to provide a response that was accurate or reliable for some questions. These are explained in the summary of the survey results below. The full survey results are attached as a separate document.

1. VMIAC's activities

This question was intended to seek views on whether or not VMIAC's current activities are considered important by members and what other activities should be included in the rules. The list of activities in the question were taken from VMIAC's website and are described differently from the activities in the rules.

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Unfortunately, there was a problem with this question as it appeared in the final survey, so that respondents were only able to select one of the activities listed, rather than say whether or not the activity was important.

VMIAC's Vision is for all mental health consumers to stand proud, live a life with choices honoured, rights upheld and these principles are embedded in all aspects of society. VMIAC's vision was developed in partnership with our community of consumers/survivors across Victoria. It's our shared dream for the future, and it drives everything we do. VMIAC undertakes various activities to achieve its vision. The Committee would like to know what activities and objectives you think VMIAC should focus on so we can include these in the Rules. Are these activities important to you?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Providing advocacy for mental health consumers	57.14%	24
Delivering information and training to the community	4.76%	2
Advancing mental health consumer workforce and leadership	9.52%	4
Enabling consumer-driven education and research	7.14%	3
Developing strategic partnerships	2.38%	1
Influencing government policy, law and funding decisions	19.05%	8
Total		42

The question was followed by a general comments field in a free text box, rather than specifically asking what, if any, other activities should be included in the Rules. Some comments made suggestions for additions. Given the length of the comments, they are reproduced in full in the attached survey results, rather than here. A number of comments included reference to current activities and the fact that the person was unable to select more than one option.

2. Member input on policies and submissions

The Committee is considering introducing a mechanism into the Rules for members to provide comments on public policies for consideration by VMIAC and submission to government bodies. Would you support this?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	86.05%	37
No	2.33%	1
Not sure	11.63%	5
Total		43

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The question was followed by a general comments field in a free text box. Twenty-two comments were provided, 17 of which spoke to the rationale for supporting the idea, such as 'as a right, give a voice, informed by wisdom, utilise members knowledge and skills and, hear from the grass roots, diverse experience, strengthen advocacy, less hierarchical and more communitarian, way of engaging and keeping members updated.'

A couple of comments were supportive, provided it was 'workable' and a good use of resources. Given the length of the comments, they are reproduced in full in the attached survey results, rather than here.

3. Legally required changes

The Committee has been given legal advice that some changes need to be made to the rules to meet changes to legal requirements. These are: a. Changes to the procedures that need to be followed if a member is suspended or expelled and appeals this decision. In general, the changes give a person more time to appeal and require an independent appeal subcommittee to be set up to consider the appeal and make decisions. b. Removing the need for VMIAC to keep proxy forms from meetings as the law no longer requires this. Would you support these changes?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	61.90%	26
No	2.38%	1
Not sure	35.71%	15
<i>Total</i>		42

4. AGM quorum

VMIAC is required by law to hold an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year. The AGM is an important meeting where all members are invited to attend for: The presentation of VMIAC's financial statement for the last year; and Electing the Committee of Management. VMIAC can also hold Special General Meetings (SGM) if a decision needs to be voted on by members or if 10% of members request it. Under VMIAC's rules, a minimum of 30 members must be present for the AGM or an SGM to start. The members can be present in person or online. At the last two AGMs, less than 30 people have been present, making it difficult for VMIAC to meet legal requirements to hold the meeting. For this reason, the Committee is considering changing the minimum number of attendees from 30 to 10 to make

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sure that legal requirements can be met. Would you support a change in minimum attendance at Annual General Meetings and Special General Meetings?

Answer choices	Responses	
Keep it at 30	28.57%	12
25	4.76%	2
20	45.24%	19
less	21.43%	9
<i>Total</i>		42

5. Committee of Management skills and experience

The next few questions are about VMAC's Committee of Management. The Committee is responsible for VMAC's governance and strategy. The Committee is elected by members and only VMAC members can join the Committee. Committee members need to understand and comply with their legal obligations to protect themselves and VMAC from legal risk. For this reason, the Committee is considering changing the rules to require a person to have skills or experience in governance to be on the Committee and for VMAC to support people in developing skills and experience if needed. Do you think that VMAC's rules should be changed so people need to have skills or experience in governance to be on the Committee of Management, and for VMAC to be required to support people to gain these skills and/or experience?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	69.05%	29
No	19.05%	8
Not sure	11.90%	5
<i>Total</i>		42

6. Committee of Management remuneration

Committee of Management members are not paid. Being on the Committee is a significant commitment, both in time and regarding the important responsibilities that Committee members hold. VMIAC's policy is that people with lived experience of mental health challenges should be paid fairly for their time when they share their expertise by participating in research and other kinds of work. The Committee is considering introducing payment for Committee members, to recognise their contribution. The amount of payment would be based on State government guidelines for committees of similar size and workload. Do you think that VMIAC's rules should be changed to allow for Committee of Management members to be paid for their time?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	62.79%	27
No	20.93%	9
Not sure	16.28%	7
<i>Total</i>		43

7. Committee of Management size

VMAC's rules don't say how many people should be on the Committee of Management. A very large committee creates work for VMIAC staff and increases the costs of supporting the Committee. The Committee is considering introducing a minimum of 7 members and maximum of 9 members for the committee to manage the cost and resources needed to support the Committee. Do you think that VMIAC's rules should set a minimum and maximum number of members for the Committee of Management?

Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	69.77%	30
No	11.63%	5
Not sure	18.60%	8
<i>Total</i>		43

8. Committee of Management Co-Chairs

Unfortunately, there was an error in how this question appeared in the survey, as 'Why?' was included as an answer option, rather than as a free comment field additional to the answer options. Only two respondents selected why as their response, so this had limited impact on the response.

The Committee of Management has a chair who coordinates the committee's work and chairs its meetings. To support this important and often time-consuming role, the Committee of Management is considering creating the option of having people share the chair role as co-chairs. Do you think VMIAC's rules should allow the Committee to have two co-chairs?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	65.12%	28
No	13.95%	6
Not sure	16.28%	7
Why	4.65%	2
<i>Total</i>		43

9. Selection of Committee of Management Chair

Unfortunately, there was an error in how this question appeared in the survey, as 'Why?' was included as an answer option, rather than as a free comment field additional to the answer options. 35% of respondents selected why as their response, impacting the reliability of the answer data. No free text response box was included, so it's difficult to know whether those who chose 'why' as their response would support this proposed change.

Under VMIAC's current rules, the Chair of the Committee is elected by the members at the AGM. The Committee is considering making a change so that the chair is elected by the Committee members. This would make it easier for the Committee to decide how best to allocate work between Committee members. Would you support a change so that the Committee chair is elected by the Committee of Management rather than by VMIAC members?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes	40.48%	17
No	19.05%	8
Not sure	4.76%	2

Why	35.71%	15
<i>Total</i>		42

10. Committee of Management term limits

<p>VMIAC’s rules don’t have any limit on how many years a person can remain on the committee. Many organisations have a maximum number to get the benefit of new people and ideas over time. Do you think the Rules should be changed to limit the total number of years a person can be on the Committee to 10 years?</p>		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	65.12%	28
No	25.58%	11
Not sure	9.30%	4
<i>Total</i>		43

11. Designated First Nations positions on Committee of Management

Unfortunately, there was an error in how this question appeared in the survey, as ‘Why?’ was included as an answer option, rather than as a free comment field additional to the answer options. 35% of respondents selected why as their response, impacting the reliability of the answer data.

<p>As part of VMIAC’s commitment to decolonisation and self-determination for First Nations people, the Committee of Management is considering changing the rules to provide for the Committee of Management to have a position reserved for a First Nations person. We will be consulting directly with First Nations members about this idea. Would you support a change to the Rules to provide a reserved place for a First Nations member on the Committee of Management?</p>		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	61.36%	27
No	6.82%	3
Not sure	2.27%	1
Why	29.55%	13
<i>Total</i>		44

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A free text response box was also included. A variety of comments were made, some supportive of the change, some disagreeing with it. There were also comments providing support contingent on it being supported by First Nations members and supporting a minimum of two positions. All the comments are included in the full survey results provided.

12. Improving accessibility and clarity of the Rules

There was an error in how this question appeared in the survey, as the proposed change was included as an answer option. This may not be important, as no respondents answered no. Also, this question was duplicated at question 13, again with zero 'no' responses.

VMIAAC's lawyers have also suggested some changes to make the rules clearer and easier to understand. These changes wouldn't change the meaning or the way VMIAAC's staff or Committee of Management do their work. Would you support these changes?		
Answer choices	Responses	
Changing the term 'petty cash management' to 'cash management' (section 67).	21.43%	9
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	66.67%	28
No	0%	0
Not sure	11.90%	5
<i>Total</i>		42

13. Improving accessibility and clarity of the Rules

VMIAAC's lawyers have also suggested some changes to make the rules clearer and easier to understand. These changes wouldn't change the meaning or the way VMIAAC's staff or Committee of Management do their work. Would you support these changes? Changing the term 'petty cash management' to 'cash management' (section 67).		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	92.86%	39
No	0%	0
Not sure	7.14%	3
<i>Total</i>		42

14. Online meetings

Making it clearer how meetings can be held online (section 60).		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	93.02%	40
No	0%	0
Not sure	6.98%	3
<i>Total</i>		43

15. Committee of Management access to financial accounts and records

Changing section 49 to be clear that the Treasurer of the Committee must give all other Committee members access to financial accounts and records – which they already do.		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	93.02%	40
No	0%	0
Not sure	6.98%	3
<i>Total</i>		43

16. Committee of management register of conflicts of interest

Introducing a requirement (section 63) for the Committee to keep a register of any conflicts of interests – which they already do.		
Answer choices	Responses	
Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	95.35%	41
No	0%	0
Not sure	4.65%	2
<i>Total</i>		43

17. Why?

It was intended that the changes described in questions 12 to 16 would be included as a single question, with respondents saying whether or not they would support each one, with an opportunity to provide comments on the proposed changes or reasons for their answers in a free text box at the end of the question. In the version of the survey that was sent out, each of the proposed changes appeared in a separate question, with a free text box in this separate question. This was confusing to some of the survey respondents.

Eleven comments were provided. Six comments were supportive of the changes or aspects of them in some way. All the comments are included in the full survey results provided.

Proposed Rule Changes - Level of Support and Likelihood of Acceptance by VMIAC Members

Rule changes generally supported by members in consultations

- ✓ **Increase the participation of members in organisational policies and submissions.**
- ✓ **Designate two roles on the Committee of Management for First Nations members**
- ✓ **Introduce a requirement for people to have relevant governance skills to be on the Committee of Management, and for VMIAC to be required to support people to gain relevant skills and/or experience**
- ✓ **Allow Committee of Management members to be paid for their work**
- ✓ **Introduce a minimum (suggest 7) and a maximum (suggest 10) number of members on the Committee of Management**
- ✓ **Introduce a maximum of 10 years membership of the Committee of Management**
- ✓ **Enable the Committee of Management to be led by a single Chair or two Co-Chairs**
- ✓ **Amend the Rules so that they align with legal requirements and to make them clearer and easier to understand**
- ✓ **Committee executive election process.** A majority of members at the consultation sessions supported this. Views expressed in the survey about the Chair being elected by the Committee of Management rather than the membership were mixed. It's hard to know if this proposed change would be supported by three quarters of members attending the upcoming Special General Meeting.



Rule changes that are supported at this time

unlikely to be

❌ **While the need for the Committee to include governance skills was generally supported, the suggestion of members being required to have governance experience in order to be on the Committee was not.** An alternative approach would be to undertake a process of assessing what skills the Committee of Management needs and currently has as a collective. Skill gaps could be identified and addressed through training and development of current Committee members and VMIAC members more broadly.

❌ **Reducing the quorum for the Annual General Meeting (AGM) was generally not supported** in the consultation sessions. 45% of survey respondents (19) supported a reduction from a quorum of 30 to 20. It's hard to know if a proposal to reduce the quorum would be successful at a Special General Meeting. Members at consultation sessions shared negative experiences of past AGMs, including issues with remote attendance. An alternative could be to explore strategies to boost attendance - including those shared by members at the consultations - and consider quorum reduction in the future if needed.

❌ **Activities** - Members provided lots of suggestions about activities that VMIAC should focus on. These generally fit within the broad categories of activities in the current rules. These broad categories enable VMIAC to focus as it considers appropriate from year to year without having to change the rules. For this reason, unless changes are needed for legal reasons, it may be simpler to stick with the broad activities described in the current rules and use strategic and corporate planning processes to set clear focus. The suggestions provided by members in the consultation process could be drawn on for future planning processes.

Appendix 1: Table of suggested changes to VMIAC Rules

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
2	<p>1. Purposes</p> <p>The purposes of the association are:</p> <p>(a) The Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council Incorporated (VMIAC) is the peak Victorian non-government organisation for mental health consumers. Consumers are defined as people who have experienced mental illness and/or emotional difficulties.</p> <p>(b) VMIAC engages in a number of activities which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) information provision; (ii) support; (iii) education and training (consumers, clinical, non-clinical staff and the general community) from the consumer perspective; (iv) individual, group and systemic advocacy; and (v) research. 	<p>This section needs revising and is for consultation</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
5b	<p>2. Powers of Association</p> <p>(a) Subject to the Act, the Association has power to do all things incidental or conducive to achieve its purposes.</p> <p>(b) Without limiting sub rule 2(a), the Association may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) acquire, hold and dispose of real or personal property; (ii) open and operate accounts with financial institutions; (iii) invest its money in any security in which trust monies may lawfully be invested; (iv) raise and borrow money on any terms and in any manner as it thinks fit; (v) secure the repayment of money raised or borrowed, or the payment of a debt or liability; (vi) remunerate committee members; (vii) appoint agents to transact business on its behalf; or (viii) enter into any other contract it considers necessary or desirable. <p>(c) The Association may only exercise its powers and use its income and assets (including any surplus) for its purposes.</p>	<p>This and the changes to section 6b allow the Committee of Management to be paid for their work</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
6b	<p>Not for profit organisation</p> <p>(d) The Association must not distribute any surplus, income or assets directly or indirectly to its members.</p> <p>(e) Subrule 2(d) does not prevent the Association from paying a member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) an amount for their services as a committee member; (ii) reimbursement for expenses properly incurred by the member; or (iii) for goods or services provided by the member: <p>if this is done in good faith on terms no more favourable than if the member was not a member.</p>	<p>This allows Committee members to be paid.</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
19	<p>New clause</p> <p>(a) The Association acknowledges that Any member may, under the Act, at a reasonable time and free of charge, inspect the register of members.</p> <p>(b) Given the nature of the Association and that its purpose is to support Consumers, the Association relies on section 59 of the Act to restrict access to the personal information of any person recorded in the register of members.</p> <p>(c) If a member wishes to inspect the register of members, they must submit an application to the Secretary setting out the information sought and reason for inspecting the register of members. The Secretary may, in their absolute discretion, accept (in full or with conditions) or reject an application to inspect the register of members.</p>	<p>This is intended to protect the privacy of members whilst allowing reasonable transparency</p>
31	<p>Annual general meetings</p> <p>to confirm the minutes of the previous annual general meeting and of any special general meeting or general meeting held since then; [Note from legal advisers: The updated model rules suggest this change, however, it is not clear to us what type of general meeting there would be if not an AGM or SGM.]</p>	<p>This change may not be needed as there are no other meetings that fit into this category for VMIAAC. It will be checked with the legal advisers</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
37	<p>Quorum at general meetings</p> <p>(d) No business may be conducted at a general meeting unless a quorum of members is present.</p> <p>(e) The quorum for a general meeting is the presence (physically, by proxy or as allowed under rule 34) of 30 members entitled to vote. [Note from legal advisers: The Model Rules suggest a quorum of 10% of members entitled to vote.]</p> <p>(f) If a quorum is not present within 30 minutes after the time to which a general meeting has been adjourned under subrule 38(c)(ii), the members present at the meeting (if not fewer than ?) may proceed with the business of the meeting as if a quorum were present.</p>	<p>The Committee of Management is considering whether to reduce the number required for a quorum.</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
41	<p>3. Determining whether resolution carried</p> <p>(a) Subject to subsection sub rule 3(b), the Chairperson of a general meeting may, on the basis of a show of hands, declare that a resolution has been:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) carried; or (ii) carried unanimously; or (iii) carried by a particular majority; or (iv) lost, <p>and an entry to that effect in the minutes of the meeting is conclusive proof of that fact.</p> <p>(b) If a poll (where votes are cast in writing) count is demanded by three or more members on any question: [Note from legal advisers: These changes to refer to a 'count' are provided for in the new model rules. VMIAC to consider if this is appropriate in the context of its usual general meeting procedures]</p>	

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
	<p>Division 1 — Powers of Committee</p> <p>4. Role and powers</p> <p>(a) The business of the Association must be managed by or under the direction of a Committee.</p> <p>(b) The Committee may exercise all the powers of the Association except those powers that these Rules or the Act require to be exercised by general meetings of the members of the Association.</p> <p>(c) The Committee may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) appoint and remove staff; (ii) establish subcommittees consisting of members with terms of reference it considers appropriate; and. (iii) establish a mechanism through which members can provide comments on public policies for the Association's consideration and submission to relevant government bodies. 	<p>New clause at end to increase input from members into policies and submissions</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
45	<p>5. Composition of Committee</p> <p>(a) Subject to subrule (b), the Committee will comprise of:</p> <p>(i) a minimum of seven members; and</p> <p>(ii) a maximum of nine members.</p> <p>(b) The Association may, by resolution passed at a general meeting, increase or decrease the minimum or maximum number of members appointed to the Committee.</p> <p>(c) The Committee consists of:</p> <p>(i) a Chair (or if rule (e) applies, two Co-Chairs); and</p> <p>(ii) a Deputy-Chair (or if rule (e) applies, there may be one or no Deputy-Chair); and</p>	<p>This would limit the number of Committee members</p>
47	<p>Chair and Deputy-Chair</p> <p>(d) Subject to subrule (f)48(b), the Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the Deputy-Chair is the Chairperson for any general meetings and for any committee meetings.</p> <p>(e) The Association may, by resolution passed at a general meeting, approve the appointment of two Chairs, who must work together as Co-Chairs.</p> <p>(f) If the Chair and the Deputy-Chair or the two Co-Chairs and Deputy-Chair (as the case may be) are both all absent, or are unable to preside, the Chairperson of the meeting must be:</p>	<p>Allow for co-chairs</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
50	<p>Who is eligible to be a Committee member</p> <p>A member is eligible to be elected or appointed as a committee member if the member:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (g) is 18 years or over; and (h) is entitled to vote at a general meeting; and (i) [has an appropriate range of skills, experience and knowledge, including demonstrable prior governance experience or experience in a similar advisory role.] (j) 	<p>This would mean a person would need to have governance skills or experience to be on the Committee of Management.</p> <p>A requirement for VMAC to support people to gain skills and experience could also be introduced.</p>
56	<p>6. Term of office</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Subject to sub rule 57(c) and rule Error! Reference source not found.55, a committee member holds office for a period of two years. (b) A committee member may be re-elected. 	<p>The Committee is considering introducing a limit on the total number of years a person can be on the Committee.</p>

C	Text or issue	Explanation and comments
69	<p>7. Remuneration of committee members</p> <p>(a) Subject to subrule (b), the committee members may be paid or provided remuneration for their services.</p> <p>(b) The remuneration of a committee member must be:</p> <p>(i) determined by a majority of the Committee (excluding the affected committee member); and</p> <p>(ii) a reasonable amount taking into account the Association's financial position; and</p> <p>(iii) agreed to be paid in furtherance of the Association's charitable purpose (refer rule 1).</p>	<p>This is to explain how payment for Committee members would work.</p>