

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY CANBERRA/GOULBURN
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ADVOCACY COMMITTEE
Terms of Reference

Purpose

1. Structure

The Social Justice and Advocacy Committee (Committee) is a committee of the Territory Council of the St Vincent de Paul Society Canberra Goulburn (the Society). This Terms of Reference governs the meetings and proceedings of the Committee.

Nothing in this Terms of Reference limits any of the powers or responsibilities of the Territory Council of the Society or the President. References to the Chair refer to the chair of the Committee unless otherwise stated.

2. General Purpose

The role of the Committee is to assist the Territory Council and the President in exercising its authority in relation to the matters set out in this Terms of Reference . The Committee is accountable to the Territory Council and the President for its performance. The Committee's work is supported by the Chief Executive Officer and his or her nominees, principally the Chief Financial Officer.

3. Purpose of the Committee

The primary responsibilities of the Committee are to provide the Territory Council and the President with advice and guidance on issues affecting social justice and advocacy, including:

- a) development of the Social Justice agenda for the region;
- b) provide advice on social justice and advocacy issues within the region;
- c) be an effective advocate at all levels for the promotion of social justice in the region in accordance with social justice and advocacy priorities as agreed by the Territory Council from time to time;
- d) provide the Society's members, volunteers and employees with the information that assists in the recognition, understanding, and appreciation of social justice issues in the day-to-day work which they undertake;
- e) increase the understanding by members, volunteers and employees of broad social policy issues and the impact they have on the lives of the people in our communities;
- f) encourage members, volunteers and employees to actively critique social justice issues experienced in their work for the Society and their daily activities and to express the consequences of these to the broader community.

4. Functions of the Committee

The members of the Committee are not employees of the Society and are not required to personally conduct studies or reviews. Any such matters shall be undertaken as directed by the Committee in consultation with the President.

The Committee is entitled to rely on employees of the Society or professional advisers, or consultants engaged by the Society where:

- a) There are reasonable grounds to believe that the employee, adviser or consultant is reliable and competent; and
- b) The reliance was made in good faith and after making an independent assessment of the information.

5. Exercise of Powers

- a) The Committee must exercise the powers delegated to it in accordance with any directions, strategies, objectives or policies of the Territory Council or the President; and
- b) Recommendations by the Committee, where the Committee has no delegated power, shall not be binding on the Society unless the recommendations are approved by the Territory Council or the President.

6. Composition of the Committee

- a) The Committee composition will be determined by the Territory Council;
- b) The Chair of the Committee shall be the person holding the position of Territory Council Vice President Social Justice & Advocacy;
- c) The Secretary of the Committee will be the Secretary of the Society or delegate approved by Territory Council; and
- d) The term of office for Committee membership shall be determined by Territory Council but shall not exceed five years maximum.

Powers of the Committee

7. Access to Management

The Committee, in performing its functions, may:

- a) Request any employee of the Society to attend a meeting of the Committee;
- b) To the extent permitted by law, access any document, report, material or information in the possession of the employee or external adviser to the Society;

- c) Have access to senior management of the Society; and
- d) The CEO and/or Secretary shall have direct access to the Committee on an as needs basis.

Meetings

8. Holding of Meetings

- a) The Committee shall meet at least four times a year or more frequently as circumstances dictate;
- b) Meetings shall either be face to face or via telephone as considered appropriate to meet the Committee's needs; and
- c) Any member of the Committee can request a meeting be convened.

9. Quorum

At least fifty percent plus one of the members present in person or by using technology shall constitute a quorum. A quorum must be present for the full duration of the meetings of the Committee.

10. Attendance at Meetings

- a) The CEO and/or Secretary or their delegates may attend all meetings of the Committee, other than those meetings or parts of Committee meetings which are deemed to be closed to management;
- b) Other employees may be asked to attend should the Committee believe it requires such attendance; and
- c) The President of the Society may attend any meetings called by the Committee and participate in its deliberations.

11. Confidentiality

Committee members, and employees of the Society and advisers are required to keep all matters pertaining to deliberations of the Committee confidential.

12. Committee Minutes

The Secretary or their delegate shall prepare minutes of meetings and have them approved by the Committee Chair. Minutes should also be provided to the next meeting of the Territory Council for noting.