

Sponsorship Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to outline our approach to providing sponsorships through the Victorian Legal Services Board and Commissioner (VLSB+C) Sponsorship Program.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to the Victorian Legal Services Commissioner and VLSB+C staff, including all contractors, consultants and employees on secondment.

This Policy supersedes previous iterations of the Sponsorship Policy.

This policy establishes consistent standards for approving sponsorship requests with external organisations and events, in accordance with the Victorian Government Sponsorship Policy principles.

3. Description

Sponsoring activities and programs provides VLSB+C with an opportunity to demonstrate and promote its values and objectives, which are central to working with other agencies or community organisations as the regulator of the legal profession in Victoria.

Sponsorship is generally defined as an investment in either cash or kind, which results in benefits for both the sponsoring and the sponsored parties.

By entering into a sponsorship agreement, VLSB+C seeks a return on investment, whether that is through media coverage, development of opportunities to build relationships with stakeholders and the community, or implementation of our strategic objectives, in particular, our commitment to increasing access to justice.

3.1 Purpose of VLSB+C Sponsorships

VLSB+C does not seek sponsorship from external sponsors – VLSB+C only engages in outgoing sponsorships, where we provide funding or in-kind support to an external organisation's activity or program.

VLSB+C will only provide sponsorship for an activity where funding would not be more appropriately provided via a procurement or grant.

For clarity:

- **sponsorship** means the purchase of naming rights or benefits for:
 - an event,
 - an activity,
 - an award, or
 - a scholarship program;

- **procurement** means the process of soliciting and acquiring goods or services for VLSB+C);
- **grant** means a funding program in the public interest.

VLSB+C will only provide sponsorship for an activity where the activity could not provide better results for desired policy outcomes if implemented by another government agency or independent third party.

Sponsorships must contribute to at least one of the following VLSB+C strategic objectives:

- Improve access to justice
- Improve legal practice and ethics
- Protect and empower consumers.

Our sponsorship program will prioritise activities for sponsorship that seek to help increase Victorians' access to justice.

In general, sponsorships must help us to:

- Contribute to the advancement of VLSB+C strategic priorities
- Support our goals and objectives
- Communicate key messages to target audiences
- Engage or build relationships with key stakeholders.

3.2 Eligibility

Sponsorships will only be provided for organisations and activities where the risk of damage to the reputation of VLSB+C, the Department of Justice and Community Safety and/or the Victorian Government is low.

To be eligible for sponsorship, the applicant must:

- be a not-for-profit organisation
- be incorporated
- be able to demonstrate alignment between their activity and VLSB+C's strategic objectives
- not owe any reports or money to VLSB+C from previous funding.

VLSB+C will not provide sponsorship support to:

- Activities or sponsorship partners whose values, products, purposes or objectives are inconsistent with VLSB+C's policies, values, priorities or objectives
- Activities that are not relevant or applicable to Victorians
- Individuals or political parties
- Fundraising activities
- Core organisational operating costs
- School-based educational programs
- Capital works (e.g. building and maintenance costs or purchase of major equipment)
- Any activity or organisation that requires VLSB+C to endorse its products or services

- Any activity deemed by VLSB+C to be a commercial or for-profit venture
- Any activity in breach of the Code of Conduct for the Victorian Public Sector.

The Sponsored Party should note the following terms in our agreement:

- our ability to terminate the agreement if the Party cannot proceed with the sponsorship activity as planned;
- our ability to terminate the agreement if an emerging reputational risk to VLSB+C is identified;
- our ability to recover or withhold financial benefits where there is an inadequate delivery of agreed benefits by the other Party, particularly if the recipient becomes subject to the agency's regulatory purview;
- acknowledgement the sponsorship does not denote a general endorsement of the organisation or its products;
- the sponsorship has no bearing on our ability to exercise our regulatory functions.

Successful applicants must agree to adhere to all State and Commonwealth regulations, statutes and policies regarding equal opportunity, employment laws, standards of conduct, health and safety requirements, privacy and freedom of information. VLSB+C in any one year may or may not elect to provide sponsorship monies.

Successful applicants must also agree provide public acknowledgement of VLSB+C's support.

VLSB+C will undertake financial viability checks on all potential sponsors to ensure potential financial risks are identified prior to entering into any sponsorship agreement.

3.3 Submitting a Sponsorship Proposal

Prospective applicants should contact VLSB+C via email with a short overview of their sponsorship proposal – please email Sponsorship@lsbc.vic.gov.au. Your email should confirm that your organisation is eligible according to the criteria in 3.2 – Eligibility.

Eligible applicants will then be invited to formally apply to the Sponsorship program via our online Sponsorship Application Form, where you must address each of the following points in our Sponsorship Checklist:

- Name of organisation that will manage the funds
- Key contact details
- Target audience for activity
- Clear timeframe for activity
- Detailed description of what you are seeking to do and achieve
- Detailed description of the significance and benefits of this sponsorship activity to the legal sector/or community
- Funding amount sought
- Detailed sponsorship benefits available to VLSB+C (scalable based on dollar or in-kind support). At a minimum this must include in what forms the sponsored organisation will publicly acknowledge VLSB+C's support.

- Nomination of evaluation measures (successful applicants will report on these measures at acquittal)
- List of other confirmed sponsors
- Any future commitments or contingent liabilities that may impact your organisation's ability to deliver on your proposal
- Any existing or potential conflicts of interest
- Links to your organisation's financial statements for the previous two years
- Endorsement from CEO/Head of Department/Director confirming importance of this sponsorship to your organisation.

Sponsorships proposals must address all required key criteria and provide all additional information requested in our Sponsorship Checklist. When putting forward a proposal for sponsorship, applicants must supply the following details:

- as much information as possible about the proposed activity, event or initiative
- the amount of financial contribution requested, and/or in-kind support required
- if the sponsorship is monetary, include any details to demonstrate financial management, including an ABN and indication whether the organisation is registered for GST
- if applicable, details of the target audience, date and location of your event, activity or initiative
- information about any marketing or media activity anticipated or planned around the event, activity or initiative
- what is expected from VLSB+C
- whether the event, activity or initiative will include or involve any other organisations, agencies or departments
- benefits to VLSB+C, and in turn lawyers, legal clients or the wider community
- how the event, activity or initiative will be evaluated
- opportunities to engage with the legal profession or wider community.

3.4 Entering a Sponsorship Agreement

The VLSB+C template sponsorship agreement will be used for all sponsorships, including our Agreed Terms for the provision of sponsorship.

3.5 Ethical Behaviour and Fair Dealing

Sponsorship activities and relationships must not influence our decisions and behaviour in conducting our regulatory obligations and/or other financial matters, such as purchasing and funding decisions. All our dealings must comply with the **Code of Conduct for the Victorian Public Sector** and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*.

VLSB+C staff members responsible for sponsorship management or decision-making must maintain high levels of integrity in all official dealings including:

- disclosure and resolution of conflicts of interest

- disclosure and consideration of gifts, invitations to events (other than those included in a sponsorship agreement) or functions in accordance with our Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality framework
- receiving approaches from organisations that might be interpreted as attempts to obtain influence or advantage
- maintenance of confidentiality in response to commercial in confidence, intellectual property issues, matters under negotiation and any other confidential information
- maintenance of high standards of accountability.

Requests for sponsorship enquiries or proposals directed to any VLSB+C Board member, the CEO/Commissioner or member of staff, particularly those who are directly involved in regulatory or investigatory duties should be immediately referred to the Executive Director, Policy and Outreach to be assessed in accordance with these guidelines.

Breaches of ethical standards can lead to disciplinary action or dismissal.

4. Definitions and Acronyms

Term/Acronym	Definition
Sponsorship	<p>As stated in the Victorian Government Sponsorship Policy, 'sponsorship' is defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purchase of rights or benefits, including naming rights, delivered through association with the sponsored organisation's name, products, services or activities. The rights or benefits typically relate to the sponsor's reputation management or communication objectives. <p>Sponsorship includes partnership arrangements, except where the arrangement is governed by the Partnerships Victoria Policy or otherwise involves the development or management of infrastructure.</p> <p>Sponsorship does not include grants, which are money, goods or other benefits provided to the recipient for a specified purpose, but with no expectations of attaining rights or benefits of the kind outlined above.</p> <p>Sponsorship does not include bequests which impose no obligations on the recipient and offer little or no rights or benefits to the provider.</p> <p>Sponsorship does not include the sale of advertising space, editorial comment or advertorials.</p>