

Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll Policy

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to guide the Victorian Government's Victorian Aboriginal Honour Roll (Honour Roll) nomination, selection, panel formation and induction processes.

2. Policy statement

2.1. About the Honour Roll

- 2.1.1. The Honour Roll was established in 2011 to formally and publicly acknowledge the exceptional and notable contributions of First Nations peoples in Victoria to their own communities and/or the wider Victorian community.
- 2.1.2. The Honour Roll is a prestigious honour that recognises the substantial achievements and lasting impact of First Nations peoples.
- 2.1.3. The Honour Roll also provides an opportunity for non-First Nations people to strengthen their understanding of First Nations history and culture in Victoria, fostering greater awareness and respect among all Victorians.
- 2.1.4. Nominees are reviewed and assessed by the Honour Roll advisory panel (panel), which provides its recommendations to the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples (Minister) for endorsement.

2.2. Honour Roll artwork

- 2.2.1. 'The Blues and Greens of Our Country' was created by Uncle Mick Harding for the Honour Roll. Uncle Mick Harding is a Taungurung Elder and respected and revered artist.

Artist description of artwork: "The range of green leaves represent the diversity of Traditional Owners throughout Victoria and the shield that floats inside them represents the resilience of our people over thousands of generations that we have been here. The concentrated line work represents our unique symbolism that we use to explain our connection to country here in Victoria. The wavy blue lines represent the ocean and inland waterways that surround and run through Victoria. The subtle arcs that run through the water bodies represent the importance of water and our relationship and responsibility to it."
- 2.2.2. A licencing agreement between the artist and First Peoples – State Relations (FPSR) in the Department of Premier and Cabinet is reviewed annually.

- 2.2.3. All imagery and digital assets are stored within FPSR's document library in Content Manager and Microsoft Sharepoint.



2.3. Nominee eligibility

- 2.3.1. To be eligible, nominees must:
- be First Nations; and
 - live in Victoria.
- 2.3.2. Nominations of deceased Victorians who meet the eligibility requirements are permitted with the permission from their next of kin.
- 2.3.3. Incomplete nominations will not be considered for the Honour Roll.
- 2.3.4. The Honour Roll inductees are recommended to the Minister by the panel following a rigorous nomination and assessment process based on established selection criteria. The process ensures due diligence, safeguarding the inductee, their family, the Victorian First Nations community and the Victorian Government.
- 2.3.5. To maintain the integrity of the Honour Roll, FPSR reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to disqualify any nominee if the nominee has engaged in any conduct that may harm, damage, or bring the Honour Roll or Victorian Government into disrepute. This includes, but is not limited to, actions that attract public or media attention which are, or could be perceived as, prejudicial or detrimental to the Honour Roll or Victorian Government.

2.4. Who can nominate?

- 2.4.1. Examples of nominators includes family members, friends, employers, representatives from organisations, community groups and schools. Nominators must receive consent in writing from the nominee or their next of kin before submitting a nomination.

2.5. Nomination process

- 2.5.1. The nomination period will be open for a minimum of 40 calendar days.
- 2.5.2. An eligible nomination must include:
- responses to all nomination questions; and
 - a photograph of the nominee.
- 2.5.3. Nominations can be written, audio or video submissions.
- 2.5.4. Nominations can be completed online, by email, or by phone with an FPSR staff member.

2.6. Nominee eligibility assessment

- 2.6.1. FPSR staff will review nominations against the eligibility criteria to determine if the nomination is eligible for consideration by the panel. FPSR will provide eligible nominations to the panel for review and assessment.

- 2.6.2. Nominators will be notified if their nomination was unsuccessful. However, unsuccessful nominees will not be notified directly by FPSR unless otherwise expressly requested by the nominator in their Honour Roll nomination.

2.7. Inductee selection process

- 2.7.1. FPSR will notify panel members of upcoming closing date 14 calendar days before the official nomination closing deadline.
- 2.7.2. FPSR will review all nominations to ensure eligibility criteria is met. Nominations that do not meet the eligibility criteria will be removed.
- 2.7.3. Within 7 calendar days of the nominations closing, panel members will have access to all eligible nominations for review and assessment.
- 2.7.4. The panel will have 21 calendar days to independently assess the nominations using the selection criteria and matrix.
- 2.7.5. Panel members will return their assessments and matrix scores to FPSR, who will share the ranked list of nominations for their consideration.
- 2.7.6. Within 5 business days of receiving the ranked nominations, the panel will meet (in person or online) to discuss each nomination and prepare a shortlist of up to 20 nominees.
- 2.7.7. Panel members will meet (in person or online) within 7 to 14 calendar days after the ranking meeting to reach a consensus on the recommended inductees.

2.8. Endorsement

- 2.8.1. The panel will recommend selected nominees to the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples to be considered for induction into the Honour Roll. Final inductees are at the discretion of the Minister for Treaty and First Peoples.
- 2.8.2. The Minister's endorsements are final and binding. No correspondence or appeals will be considered regarding the merits of the decision-making process.

2.9. Honour Roll Inductions

- 2.9.1. FPSR will notify the successful inductees and their nominators of the nomination outcome.
- 2.9.2. FPSR will engage an independent First Nations consultant to prepare the inductee biographies in consultation with the inductees, their next of kin and/or family members.
- 2.9.3. Inductees (and/or their designated next of kin) will be invited to attend the Honour Roll Induction Ceremony (ceremony) organised by FPSR.
- 2.9.4. Inductees (and/or their designated next of kin) residing in rural and/or remote Victoria will receive transport costs and one nights' accommodation for two people, provided by FPSR to attend the ceremony.
- 2.9.5. Inductee biographies will be published in the commemorative booklet for guests attending the ceremony. Biographies will be published on the FPSR website following the public announcement of the inductees at the ceremony.
- 2.9.6. A copy of the inductee's biographies will also be included in the Honour Roll Parliamentary book located at Victoria's Parliament House.

2.10. Policy considerations

- 2.10.1. The panel's final list of recommended inductees should reflect:
- i. a balanced representation of genders

- ii. diversity across different communities and localities
 - iii. clear alignment with the established selection criteria.
- 2.10.2. All Honour Roll nominations must be handled with strict confidentiality throughout the entire process. Nominees must not be informed or consulted about their nomination until after the Minister has endorsed the inductees.

2.11. Panel formation and role

- 2.11.1. The establishment of the panel acknowledges the important knowledge and skills of First Nations people in Victoria. It supports self-determination by recognising the right of First Nations peoples to make decisions on matters that affect their lives and communities.
- 2.11.2. The panel must consist of a minimum of four and a maximum of eight First Nations individuals. Panel members must include past Honour Roll inductees, past Ricci Marks Award recipients, and community members.
- 2.11.3. All panel members must be First Nations and reside in Victoria.
- 2.11.4. A quorum for the panel will be a minimum of three members.
- 2.11.5. Panel members will be appointed for a three-year term.
- 2.11.6. The identities of the panel members will remain confidential to the wider community. They will not be disclosed to anyone outside FPSR.
- 2.11.7. Prospective panel members must submit an expression of interest, detailing their capacity to represent First Nations communities and their relevant knowledge, skills and experience.
- 2.11.8. FPSR will assess these expressions of interest and recommend eligible candidates to the Executive Director, Community Relations and Heritage, FPSR for appointment.
- 2.11.9. The Executive Director, Community Relations and Heritage, FPSR reserves the right to dissolve the panel if necessary. Should this occur, all members will be notified in writing, after which expressions of interest for a new panel will be sought from the First Nations community in Victoria.
- 2.11.10. The panel will be governed by a Terms of Reference agreed by all members.
- 2.11.11. Eligible panel members may be remunerated based on the Victorian Government's [Appointment and Remuneration Guidelines](#), plus reimbursement for travel expenses approved by FPSR.
- 2.11.12. Panel members employed in the Victorian Public Service will not be eligible for remuneration.
- 2.11.13. Panel members must declare and submit any Communities of Interest (see [3](#)) regarding the nominees in a register supplied by FPSR. FPSR will discuss these Communities with the panel and determine whether it is suitable for the concerned panel member to assess the associated nomination. For any declaration, panel members will be supported by FPSR to maintain the integrity of the Honour Roll.
- 2.11.14. Panel members must:
 - i. take the policy considerations (see [2.10](#)) into account when making their recommendations
 - ii. consider Communities of Interest during the assessment and recommendation process
 - iii. raise any concerns with FPSR regarding any nominees who may have engaged in any conduct that may harm, damage, or bring the Honour Roll or the Victorian Government into disrepute

- iv. maintain open communication with FPSR throughout the Honour Roll selection process.

3. Communities of Interest

- 3.1. First Nations Victorians are part of diverse communities, often with multiple connections, roles and interests. In recognition of these connections, FPSR has chosen to implement a Communities of Interest register, rather than a Conflict of Interest register.
- 3.2. All panel members are required to declare any connections in the Communities of Interest register and notify FPSR of any relevant additions or amendments during their panel membership.
- 3.3. When completing the Communities of Interest register, panel members are required to consider all the communities they are part of across Victoria. These include family, cultural, personal, political or professional connections.
- 3.4. A Communities of Interest register for each panel member will be maintained by FPSR. The registers will be stored confidentially within FPSR's document management systems. Registers are not final documents and can be updated in recognition of the evolving nature of communities.

4. FPSR governance and responsibilities

4.1. FPSR authority, duties and discretion

- 4.1.1. FPSR holds the authority and responsibility to uphold the integrity and reputation of the Honour Roll. As part of this commitment, FPSR reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to disqualify any nominee or revoke any inductee from the Honour Roll if the nominee or inductee may harm, damage, or bring the Honour Roll or Victorian Government into disrepute. This includes, but is not limited to, actions that attract, or have the potential to attract, public or media attention which could be perceived as prejudicial or detrimental to the Honour Roll or Victorian Government. Should such an event occur, FPSR will brief the Minister accordingly.
- 4.1.2. FPSR reserves the right to control all communications regarding the Honour Roll. This includes managing media and public communications to ensure the integrity and reputation of the Honour Roll is always maintained. FPSR will act as the primary source of information and messaging related to the Honour Roll and will determine the appropriate channels and content for any external communications.
- 4.1.3. FPSR is responsible for publishing and disseminating all official Honour Roll materials and communications. This ensures that messaging remains consistent across all platforms, upholding the professional standards and requirements of the Victorian Government and the reputation of the Honour Roll.
- 4.1.4. FPSR is responsible for briefing the Minister on the panel's recommendations.
- 4.1.5. FPSR oversees the entire nomination and associated endorsement processes, ensuring that it aligns with established Victorian Government policies and procedures.
- 4.1.6. The Executive Director, Community Relations and Heritage, FPSR holds the responsibility of appointing the panel in accordance with this policy and its requirements.
- 4.1.7. FPSR will ensure that the panel is provided with all eligible nominations for consideration. This responsibility includes verifying eligibility and organising the necessary information to facilitate informed decision-making.

- 4.1.8. FPSR will establish and maintain Communities of Interest registers and support panel members in adhering to the Communities of Interest protocol (see [3](#)) to ensure integrity and impartiality of the assessment process.
- 4.1.9. FPSR will facilitate panel meetings, provide secretariat support and supply all necessary templates, documents and access to systems where required.
- 4.1.10. If the panel is unable to reach a consensus on selected nominees, FPSR will support a voting process within the deliberation meeting. Each panel member will be asked to score tying nominees out of 5, the highest scoring nominee will progress in the selection process.
- 4.1.11. FPSR is responsible for planning, coordinating and delivering the ceremony for inductees, recipients, and their guests.
- 4.1.12. FPSR will organise and cover the travel and accommodation costs for inductees and their guest(s), where applicable, in accordance with FPSR's Major Aboriginal Cultural Events and Awards Travel Support Policy. This ensures equitable participation for those in rural or remote locations.

4.2. Exclusions from FPSR Responsibilities

- 4.2.1. FPSR will not determine or recommend who is inducted or not inducted into the Honour Roll. This responsibility lies solely with the panel and the Minister, ensuring an impartial and transparent decision-making process.
- 4.2.2. FPSR will not research or draft the inductee biographies, or make substantive changes to the final and published versions, without prior consultation with the inductee or their next of kin. However, FPSR reserves the right to make minor factual updates, such as adding a date of death or adjusting the biography to reflect past tense, without consultation when necessary.
- 4.2.3. FPSR is not responsible for mediating or settling disputes that may arise between family or community members.

5. Finality of decisions

- 5.1. All decisions made by FPSR and the panel regarding the Honour Roll, including nominations, disqualifications and recipient selections are final and binding. No appeals, grievances or requests for reassessment will be considered.
- 5.2. FPSR acknowledges that individuals may wish to express concerns or dissatisfaction with the Honour Roll process. While all decisions regarding the Honour Roll are final and binding, individuals may lodge a formal grievance for record and continuous improvement purposes. However, grievances will be reviewed for informational purposes only and will not lead to an appeal, reconsideration, or alteration of any decisions made.
- 5.3. A formal grievance can be submitted to fpsr.events@dpc.vic.gov.au.

6. Scope of Policy

- 6.1. This policy applies to all Honour Roll nominees, inductees, and panel members involved in the Honour Roll process. FPSR reserves the right to amend, modify or update this policy at its sole discretion. Any revisions made to this policy will be promptly published and communicated to all relevant parties through appropriate channels. All individuals covered by this policy are expected to comply with the most current version.

7. Definitions

- 7.1. A First Nations person is defined in this policy document as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent; identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander; and/or being

accepted as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander by an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

- 7.2. A nominee is defined in this policy as a person/s who has been nominated as an inductee of Honour Roll in the current period.
- 7.3. A nominator is defined in this policy as the person who nominates the nominee.
- 7.4. Next of kin is defined in this policy as a person's closest living relative or a person identified as such by the nominee/inductee.
- 7.5. An inductee is defined in this policy as a person/s who has been inducted into the Honour Roll.
- 7.6. 'Communities of Interest' is a strengths-based approach to identify and address actual or perceived conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity of the assessment process. This approach aligns with Program values by recognising and acknowledging the interconnected relationships of First Peoples. It supports assessors to list their communities of interest and discuss with program staff when it is appropriate or inappropriate for an assessor to review an application.
- 7.7. There may be instances where an assessor's Communities of Interest could impact their decision-making and their ability to make an impartial assessment. In some cases, the impact on decision-making may not be certain but could still be possible. Additionally, there may be public perception that an assessor's community connections could influence their decisions, regardless of whether this is the case.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay our respect to them, their culture, and their Elders past and present.

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