

ADVOCACY POLICY

Policy purpose: To guide the Board in making decisions about its involvement in advocacy activities.

Document history: Drafting commenced January 2018 at the request of the Board (Nov 2017); reviewed by Executive committee on 24 January 2018 and the Board on 8 February 2018. Approved by the Board on 22 March 2018. Revised text approved by the Board on 19 November 2020.

Review date: When required

A. Background

The Board acknowledges that:

1. The HCV is the peak body for history in Victoria.
2. The HCV is committed to being a major voice in Victoria for matters relating to history and/or historical interests (whether in Victoria or affecting people in Victoria)
3. As a peak body that includes government departments, agencies and authorities among its members, the HCV does not assume that all members and their representatives will be able to express an opinion on a particular campaign or course of action.
4. Informed by advice from individual members of the Board, the Chair should be able to express relevant views freely, forcefully and publicly, despite the fact that ultimately this may not represent a unanimous Board view on an issue or convey the views of the HCV's member organisations.
5. Most Board members represent organisations as nominees, and the views of their organisations on a particular issue may not align with the views of the History Council as expressed by the Chair.
6. Affiliation with the HCV does not limit the right of individuals to speak on behalf of their organisations or themselves as appropriate.

B. Purposes

This policy aims to assist the Board in:

- determining whether or not to take a position on a current issue

- planning and implementing an advocacy campaign that may include (for example) letters, media releases, submissions, etc.
- approaching political parties, government ministers and their advisors, government departments, councilors and officers of local government authorities
- raising public awareness on history-related issues

C. Core policy

1. The HCV will only advocate on matters affecting the teaching of history and the position of history in the public domain.
 - 1.1 The Chair has the prerogative to speak on these matters. Where time permits, they should first consult with the Board and staff.
 - 1.2 Formal agreement by the Board is required for exceptions to these matters, on a case-by-case basis.
2. The Chair is the official spokesperson for the HCV and for its advocacy in all media. In the absence of the Chair, the Deputy Chair (or a delegate endorsed by the Executive committee or the Board) will serve.
3. The Chair may respond as required to public enquiries within the parameters of HCV policies.
4. The Board will consider preparing submissions to public inquiries where the terms of reference are relevant to this policy.
5. A Board member may approach the HCV to endorse particular advocacy campaigns in support of his or her organisation's position.
6. The HCV may advocate on its own behalf as an organisation.
7. The HCV will prioritise its efforts as follows:
 - High priority:
 - i. Victorian issues with statewide impact
 - ii. National issues that impact Victoria / Victorians
 - Lower priority:
 - iii. Issues relating to a local area or a region that incorporates several local areas
8. Formal public statements and submissions will not be made on behalf of the HCV where there is no clear agreement among the Board.

D. Procedure

1. The HCV will only prepare a submission or participate in a campaign when it has sufficient available resources, including, but not limited to:

- Access to relevant specialist knowledge and expertise
 - Time to assemble information and write submissions or other relevant statements
 - Time to achieve agreement / endorsement by the Board
2. While speedy reaction to unexpected incidents / issues is not always easy or possible, the HCV should consider each major matter brought to its attention as soon as possible.
 3. Matters arising outside the timetable of scheduled Board meetings should be considered first by the Chair (or their delegate) and then (if time permits) by the Executive committee, before being presented to the Board.
 4. The HCV Rules clarify the process for 'written votes'; this enables formal decision-making to be made by email without waiting for a scheduled Board meeting.
 5. Where formal public statements and submissions representing general consensus are made on behalf of the HCV, a caveat may be included that 'this response is supported by a majority of individual Board members but does not necessarily represent the views of all of the institutions they represent'.
 6. HCV communications (e.g. the E-news and social media (including the HCV Twitter account)) should not endorse matters that may be contentious; the Twitter profile states: 'Retweets ≠ endorsement.'

E. Related Documents

- Conflict of interest – code of conduct policy
- Board duties and governance standards policy
- [What to do in a Media Crisis](#)
- [Media Relations Policy](#) (forthcoming)
- [Value of History statement](#)

F. Authorisation

Date of approval by the Board: 19 November 2020

[Signed by the Chair]

History Council of Victoria Inc.