



Volunteer

Information and Registration Booklet

27th - 29th January 2026



Australia's largest conference for people with disability

Deakin University | Waterfront Campus | 1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong



VALID

Dear Volunteers!



VALID and the Local Reference Committee is pleased to invite you to be part of the 25th celebrations of the annual Having a Say. We will be back at Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus from 27th to 29th January 2025.

The HaS is the largest conference for people with disability in Australasia, with an average of 450 people with disabilities participating each year. In 2025, we had over 850 participants attend. 2026 is our 25th in-person conference so we hope to see many regular attendees and many new people. The theme is '25 years: Strengthening our Voices for a better Future!'

The majority of the Program is dedicated to providing opportunities for people with disabilities to present, tell their stories, celebrate their achievements, perform, volunteer and gain information on their choices, rights and responsibilities.

Having a Say is more than a, it is an 'experience' for all involved.

Having a Say supports people to find their voice, speak up, be heard and be respected.

The event is not a profit-making exercise, and we aim to run it at a low cost to participants. To do this, we rely on the support of volunteers and local organisations. VALID are looking for volunteers who are:

- available for a few hours, a day- or the whole event!
- able to attend a short orientation session prior to the event
- committed to the inclusion of people with disabilities in the community

Information on the 2026 event is included in this booklet. If you are interested in being part of the conference as a volunteer, **please fill out and return the Registration Form** in the middle of this booklet as soon as possible. Email your form to HavingaSay@valid.org.au

Regards

Christine Scott

Telephone: 0475 698 884

Email: havingasay@valid.org.au

Post: 144-152 Langridge St, Collingwood Vic 3066

www.valid.org.au

VALID

VOLUNTEERS



WE NEED YOU

Who runs the conference?



About VALID

The Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability (VALID) is a not-for-profit organisation that supports people with intellectual disability and their families

Vision



A world in which people with disabilities are empowered to exercise their human rights in accordance with the UN Declaration on Human Rights and other human rights standards

Purposes



- To strengthen and promote the human rights of people with intellectual disability, including in relation to inclusion, access, employment, health, education and housing
- To provide support to the family and carer networks of people with intellectual disability in these pursuits



VALID Advocacy Service

VALID is funded by the Victorian State Government as a peak body providing advocacy support for adults with intellectual disability and their families/carers across Victoria.

VALID's advocacy helps people resolve difficulties they are facing such as finding appropriate information or assistance to resolve complaints up to more complex support.



**Inclusion
Australia**

National Affiliation

VALID is the Victorian member of Inclusion Australia- NCID which:

- Is the recognised national peak body with a single focus on intellectual disability.
- Concentrates on affecting change at a national level on issues that affect the lives of people with intellectual disability and their allies, such as employment, accommodation and education.
- Has a mission to work to make the Australian community one in which people with intellectual disability are involved and accepted as equal participating members.



About the Having a Say Conference

What is it?



The Having a Say conference is a national conference held each year in Geelong, Victoria. It aims to give people with disabilities the opportunity to not only attend a conference, but also be involved in planning and running a conference.



For the past 25 years the Having a Say Conference has been supporting people to find their voice. *To speak up, be heard and be respected.*

This is the conference where people listen to each other, not just to the speakers on stage. This is the conference where people respect each other's views and opinions and celebrate their common cause.

What Happens at the Conference?



The program is usually very busy, but it has choices for everyone and lots of time to meet people from around Australia and overseas.

The topics for speakers are based on issues of interest that people with disability have nominated. Most sessions break into small group discussions so that everyone can have a say. If people need support to participate volunteers assist them to write or draw their comments.



There are other activities that participants can choose which are fun things that give people a chance to socialise and try something new. In 2025 we will have Come and Try activities favourites, such as karaoke, gentle tango and badge making. They are a great way to break up the day in between workshops.

Who runs the Conference?



VALID is the organiser of the conference and runs it on a break-even basis (i.e. not for profit).

A Local Reference Committee (LRC) is set up to support the planning and running of the conference. This Group comprises people with disabilities, VALID representatives, local services, and other interested people.



The Conference aims to provide people with a disability:

- The opportunity to 'have a say' about issues that affect their lives
- Opportunities to celebrate ability and achievement
- To be heard by politicians, government and service providers
- The opportunity to participate
- Support to be part of developing strategies to address issues and recommendations made at the conference



General Information



Please Note that not all volunteer expressions of interest will be accepted. Volunteers need to pass both a Police Check and if available Worker Registration from either NDIS Commission or VDWC (see page 9).

Volunteers will be assigned to tasks and activities at the organiser's discretion.



Times

Volunteers are needed to assist with the conference sessions:

- Tuesday 10.30am to 4.00pm
- Wednesday 9.30am to 4.00pm
- Thursday 9.30am to 1.15pm

The Conference Dinner and Disco Tues. 28th Jan. from 6.30pm to 10pm

Participants in the Conference



Apart from delegates who are workers and family members, most of the self-advocacy conference participants:

- Come from areas across Victoria, some from interstate and overseas
- Will have a support person (either staff from a service they attend or a family member) who has accompanied them to the conference
- Will be people with a different types of disabilities (intellectual, acquired brain injury, physical and sensory)



Venues

1. **Conference** main venue is located at Costa Hall, Deakin University, Waterfront Campus, Gheringhap Street, Geelong.
2. **Disco and Dinner** is at Croatia Community Centre, Cox Rd, Corio

Program

The Conference Program consists of three main types of activities:

- Presentations, Info Sessions and Workshops
- Performances
- Come and Try activities



Volunteer Perks and Quirks

Volunteer Uniform



To make sure that volunteers are easily identifiable, all volunteers will be offered a t-shirt to wear while they are volunteering at Having a Say. The t-shirts are a light blue in colour and are available in a range of sizes. You will be allocated one when you report for your first day at the Conference.

We will need to use these t-shirts again next year so you will need to **return** them at the end of the conference. However, we will give people who volunteer for one day or more, a free conference T-shirt (colour is your choice).

Having a Say Volunteer Hats



Some volunteers will be supporting conference participants in outdoor Come and Try Activities. Hats are available for volunteers to wear to protect them from the sun.

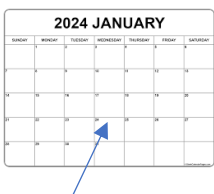
Orientation & Training



Volunteers are required to attend an Orientation session. Several options are outlined below. The orientation will provide you with more details, maps of the conference venue, a volunteer handbook and a chance to ask questions.

Orientation Sessions

Volunteers are required to attend one of the orientation sessions that will be conducted:



1. **Monday 19th Jan. 2026** from 10.30am to 12.00pm online via Zoom
2. **Tuesday 20th Jan. 2026** from 1pm- 2.30pm with nibbles provided at the Café Level 1, Deakin Uni, Waterfront Campus, Gheringhap St, Geelong
3. **For groups** - please let us know if you have a group of volunteers and it would be better to have an 'in-house' orientation and we will contact you to discuss options for a separate orientation for your group



Meals - All volunteers will receive lunch, morning and afternoon tea, so please make sure that you let us know your dietary needs.

Dinner/Disco

People volunteering for **both days**, may be offered a subsidised place at the conference dinner disco on the Tuesday night, if it is not full.

Note: *The dinner/disco usually books out, volunteers will **only be offered free** places if they are available.*

Volunteers who are attending for one day or less may book into the conference dinner disco for the cost price i.e. 'support staff' registration fee.





Volunteer Expression of Interest

Task choices	What will I need to do?	Interested Yes / No	Day/s Available?	
			Mon	Tue
Come & Try Activities	General supervision during activities. Assisting people with participation in activities such as art, dancing, jewelry making and some online activities.	☐	☐	☐
General Support	A couple of people will be rostered at all times to provide support with general tasks as they crop up, e.g. show speakers to the rooms, support self-advocate presentations if required and directing delegates to sessions and Come & Try activities.	☐	☐	☐
Hospitality	Tea & coffee is usually self-serve, but some delegates may require support with this. Overall, we require assistance to ensure that supplies are maintained and tidied after each break.	☐	☐	☐
Please note: There are limited volunteer placements in each of the tasks. The volunteer coordinator will contact you prior to the conference to confirm your role at the conference.				
List any specific skills or qualifications that you think are relevant to the roles you are interested in:				
Click or tap here to enter text.				



Your Details

First name	Click or tap here to enter text.		Last Name	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Organisation (if coming as part of an org)	Click or tap here to enter text.				
Address	Click or tap here to enter text.				
Suburb	Click or tap here to enter text.			Postcode	click
Phone	Click or tap here to enter text.		Mobile	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Email	Click or tap here to enter text.				

Special Dietary requirements e.g. allergies (not just preferences)

Click or tap here to enter text.

Other special needs e.g. mobility

Click or tap here to enter text.

Volunteer Orientation – attending a session is a requirement

<i>I will be attending</i>				
Zoom session on Mon. 19th Jan. 2026	yes	☐	no	☐
Deakin Uni on Tues. 20th Jan. 2026	yes	☐	no	☐
I prefer a Zoom online session at another time	daytime	☐	evening	☐

Volunteer Screening

Do you have a current Police Check (dated after 31 st January 2021)? i.e. less than 5 yrs old	yes	☐	no	☐
I have attached a copy of my Police Check	yes	☐	no	☐
Police Check submitted to VALID for previous HaS	yes	☐	no	☐
I would like VALID to submit and pay for my volunteer Police Check	yes	☐	no	☐
I have attached my Worker Registration & my registration number is	NDIS QSC	☐	VDWC	☐
I have attached my COVID Vaccination certificate	yes	☐	no	☐

Agreement

I have read and agree to abide by the [Code of Conduct \(pg. 12–14\)](#) and [safety rules](#) (pg. 15) of the Having a Say Conference (summary of these in the Volunteer Information Booklet). I will notify VALID if I am charged with or convicted of a crime prior to the conference.

Signed	Click or tap here to enter text.	Date	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Volunteer Screening

VALID is required to 'screen' all volunteers.

So this means we need the following for every volunteer

- A Police Check

or

- Worker Registration through NDIS Quality & Safeguards Commission (QSC)

or

- Worker Registration through the Victorian Disability Workers Commission



COVID-19 Vaccination

As per Victorian Government Regulation, all volunteers are required to be double vaccinated for COVID-19 and provide proof of vaccination to the organisation they are volunteering for.

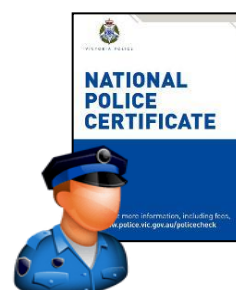
If you **do not** have a Worker Registration then you will need a Police Check

All volunteers of the Having a Say Conference are required to have a current National Police Check or proof of Worker Registration

If you have a Police Check Certificate already you need to **send a copy with** your volunteer registration application.

Police checks need to be renewed every three years.

1. If you do not have a Police Check Certificate, please **fill out the forms** on the next two pages (pg. 10 & 11).
2. Then **send the forms** to VALID (address on page 2 if posting) or email: havingasay@valid.org.au **VALID will then submit and pay for the Police check.**



If you don't have a current Police Check please fill this in.



Identity document requirements for Volunteer Police Checks

It is a requirement of VALID's policies that an employee or volunteer must have a current (within 5 years) Police Check. You can request VALID to apply online for a Police Check on your behalf using Fit2work. The police check will be a National Police History check, however if you have lived overseas for more than 6 months in the last 5 years you need to let us know as in this case an international police check is required.

If you would like VALID to carry out a police check for you please complete the questions below and email or send back to VALID along with your required proof of identify documents, including your written authorisation for us to perform the check on your behalf.

As well as ID there are some other details we need to know which are all detailed below for example country of birth and suburb of birth, if there has been a change of address in the past 5 years and if so, what was the previous address and the dates of residency at that address.

Change of Name

If the name you use to apply for a Fit2work check is different to your name on your identity documents, you must show proof of a name change when lodging your application.

Documents accepted as proof of a change of name include:

- Original marriage certificate or extract (issued by the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages)
- Certificate of marriage (issued by the church or celebrant performing the marriage)
- Certificate of registration of name change
- Decree Nisi as proof of a return to maiden name after a divorce

These documents must be originals and do not count as part of identification documents.

Please complete information required below and pass on to VALID (either Chris or Melanie) once completed along with copies of your documents of identity.

NOTE: If you are filling this in as a Word document, just click in the shaded areas.

Name	Click or tap here to enter text.			
Country of birth	Click or tap here to enter text.	Suburb of Birth	Click or tap here to enter text.	
Have you had a change of address in the last 5 years?	☐	Yes	☐	No
Previous address	Click or tap here to enter text.			
What dates were you a resident at the above address?	Click or tap here to enter text.			
Have you lived overseas for more than 6 months in the last 5 years?	☐	Yes	☐	No

Documents needed for proof of Identity



When applying for a Police Check you are required to provide proof of your identity; this **requires 4 types of ID**. Across the four documents they need to:

- show evidence of your full name and date of birth
- at least 1 document must include a photo
- be certified copies (by GP, chemist, police officer etc) OR the originals if you bring to VALID office

Examples of documents are listed below and you must provide at least

If you are unsure about ID or do not have any documents that are listed and would like to talk about what is needed please give Chris (0475 698 884) or Melanie (03 9416 4003) a call to discuss.

Primary Documents	Choose (0-1)	X
	Australian birth certificate (not an extract) or birth card	☐
	Australian citizenship certificate	☐
	Australian passport (current)	☐
	International Passport (current)	☐
Secondary Documents	Choose (0-3)	X
	Australian Driver License or Learners Permit (current)	☐
	Australian Firearms License (with photo)	☐
	State or federal government employee identity	☐
	Centrelink or social security card (current)	☐
	Department of Veterans Affairs card	☐
	Tertiary education institution photo identity	☐
	Proof of Age card	☐
	Medicare Card	☐
	Property lease / rental agreement	☐
	Council rate notice	☐
	Property insurance papers	☐
	A utility bill	☐
	Motor vehicle registration / insurance	☐
	Professional or trade association card	☐
	A financial institution debit / credit card	☐
	A financial institution passbook / statement	☐

Please fill in your name and sign to authorise VALID to do a National Police Check on your behalf.

I, <u>Click or tap here to enter text.</u> , request and authorise VALID Incorporated to carry out a National Police Check through Fit2Work on my behalf.			
Signature	<u>Click or tap here to enter text.</u>	Date	<u>Click or tap here to enter text.</u>



Code of Conduct

At Having a Say everyone needs to behave in a good way to each other.

The 'Code of Conduct' is provided to guide people as to what is okay and what is not okay. It is consistent with VALID's values (pg. 3), human rights and Australian laws.

Who is covered?

The following **rules** apply to EVERYONE who is involved with the Having a Say Conference including:

- Participants, families, workers, support staff and carers
- Volunteers
- VALID staff
- Guests
- Exhibitors and presenters



Unacceptable Behaviour

While the good (acceptable) behaviour is listed on the next page, to make it clear what is not okay (acceptable), the following examples are given.

Behaviour that is NOT acceptable from any person involved with VALID includes:

- Harassing or bullying any individual, including members of the public
- Any act of violence or crime toward another person or to property
- Any act that discriminates against another person
- Inappropriate touching of any other person
- Stealing and/or touching other people's belongings
- Suggestive remarks or actions of a sexual nature
- Physically or verbally abusing others e.g. yelling at or saying things to others that make them feel bad
- Swearing at others in an aggressive or offensive manner
- Any crime, e.g. stealing, vandalism



Reporting Misconduct

If you see someone behaving in a bad way, volunteers are required to report this misconduct to one of the following:

- Volunteer Coordinator
- Registration Desk or
- Any VALID staff member





Code of Conduct

Your Responsibilities

VALID expects **everyone** to behave and treat others with respect and in a way that reflects positively on VALID, including:

- Respecting the rights of others, including privacy, confidentiality, dignity and diversity
- Acting ethically, that is doing the right thing and being honest
- Contributing to a happy, safe and successful event
- Taking individual responsibility to contribute actively to their role or to an activity
- Being reliable (e.g. turn up on time)
- Respecting cultural, ethnic, gender and religious differences
- Being courteous, sensitive, and fair in how we communicate (e.g. talk or write) and act
- Caring about the interests, rights, safety and welfare of others - such as smoking only in smoking areas
- Making decisions fairly and not using your position to gain advantage for yourself or for any other person
- Supporting the personal and professional development of others
- Working together with others to achieve common goals and to get along in a happy, harmonious manner
- Listening to and seeking to understand different points of view (this does not mean you have to agree with what the other person says, just be respectful)
- Following all the Covid safety rules that the event is required by government to use at the time of the conference



A full copy of VALID's Code of Conduct Policy or other policies can be obtained by request from email: havingasay@valid.org.au

Breaking the Code of Conduct



If someone breaks this Code of Conduct- that is, they break the rules around behaviour- then VALID needs to take action, which may include:

1. The relevant VALID Coordinator will talk to the individual about their behaviour and discuss what is acceptable and what is not okay.
2. If a person has support staff or a carer with them, they would be involved in this discussion.
3. It is hoped that an agreement could be found about how the individual could continue to participate in the activity.
4. If agreement cannot be found or if the individual continues to break the code of conduct (rules) the VALID CEO would be asked to become involved (if not already).
5. An individual who continues to break these rules, especially where their actions are upsetting or putting others at risk, may be asked to leave an event or activity.
6. Where an individual has committed a crime and broken the law, VALID will need to report this to police.
7. VALID understands that some individuals' behaviour may be due to their impairment or disability. This will be considered as part of making decisions about whether they are able to continue to be part of VALID activities.



At any time, an individual or their advocate can choose to make a complaint about the process. This will then be dealt with through the VALID Complaints Policy available on the VALID website.

VALID Response to Misconduct

Where an incident (abuse, neglect, bullying etc.) occurs during a VALID event or activity to an individual in the care of staff from another service, VALID management should ensure that the agency involved takes appropriate action, including reporting and responding to any incidents or allegations according to government regulations.

Where misconduct results in an incident, VALID will follow its incident reporting process and any other relevant regulations, e.g. Government incident reporting.



Being Safe at the Conference



We want everyone to be safe at the conference.

So, we ask that all volunteers, organisers, and staff be aware and ensure that they follow basic OHS (Occupational Health & Safety) rules.



General Rules for all volunteers

- If you are involved in or see an accident report it to the registration desk or a VALID staff member / organiser immediately. You may be asked to provide information for an incident report
- Report any injuries to First Aid staff
- First Aid is located near the Registration Desk
- Report any hazards that you see, including spills
- All volunteers have a duty of care to ensure that they work in a way that is not harmful to their own health and safety and is not harmful to the health and safety of others
- If you see someone being bullied or abused, please report this immediately to a VALID staff member or the registration desk
- Volunteers are not expected to lift heavy items or anything that they feel uncomfortable moving
- Volunteers are not expected to provide personal care to delegates. There are paid Attendant Carers available to support delegates.
- All volunteers will be advised of the relevant **COVID safety rules** and requirements at the time of the conference. Note: protective equipment will be provided to volunteers by VALID if needed.



Catering Volunteers

- Always wash hands using soap and running water before any contact with food
- Use the food handling gloves provided when preparing or handling food
- Tasks are allocated by the Catering Coordinator & volunteers should not undertake tasks that they have not been approved for e.g. cutting up fruit
- Any injuries (e.g. finger cut) or concerns should be reported to the Catering Coordinator



Deakin Uni Campus Map

