Volunteer

Information and Registration Booklet

15th – 17th February 2027



Australia's largest conference for people with disability

Deakin University | Waterfront Campus | 1 Gheringhap Street, Geelong

Dear Volunteers!



VALID and the Local Reference Committee is pleased to invite you to be part of the 26th annual Having a Say conference. We will be back at Deakin University, Geelong Waterfront Campus from 15th – 17th February 2027.

The HaS is the largest conference for people with disability in Australasia, with an average of 450 people with disabilities participating each year. In 2026, we had over 900 participants attend. Despite NDIS funding changes we hope to in-person conference so we hope to see many regular attendees and many new people. The theme is '**We are Stronger Together:** United to build a fairer future!'.

Most 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 2027 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

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Email: havingasay@valid.org.au
Post: 144-152 Langridge St, Collingwood Vic 3066

www.valid.org.au

VOLUNTEERS



WE NEED YOU

VALID

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.

National Affiliation

Inclusion Australia

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 over 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 jammed packed and has choices for everyone, like Come & Try's and time to hear from peers from around Australia and overseas.

The topics for speakers are based on issues of interest that people with disability have nominated. Many 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 2027 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



HaS Platinum Sponsors

Victorian Disability Worker Commission

VICTORIA State Government

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:

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

The Conference Dinner and Disco Mon. 15th Feb. 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** – venue to be advised



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. **Wednesday** **Feb 3rd. 2027** from 11.30pm - 1.00pm with nibbles provided at the Café Level 1, Deakin Uni, Waterfront Campus, Gheringhap St, Geelong
2. **Tuesday** **3rd Feb. 2027** from 10.30am - 11.30am online via Zoom
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 in morning and afternoon tea, so please make sure that you let us know your dietary needs.



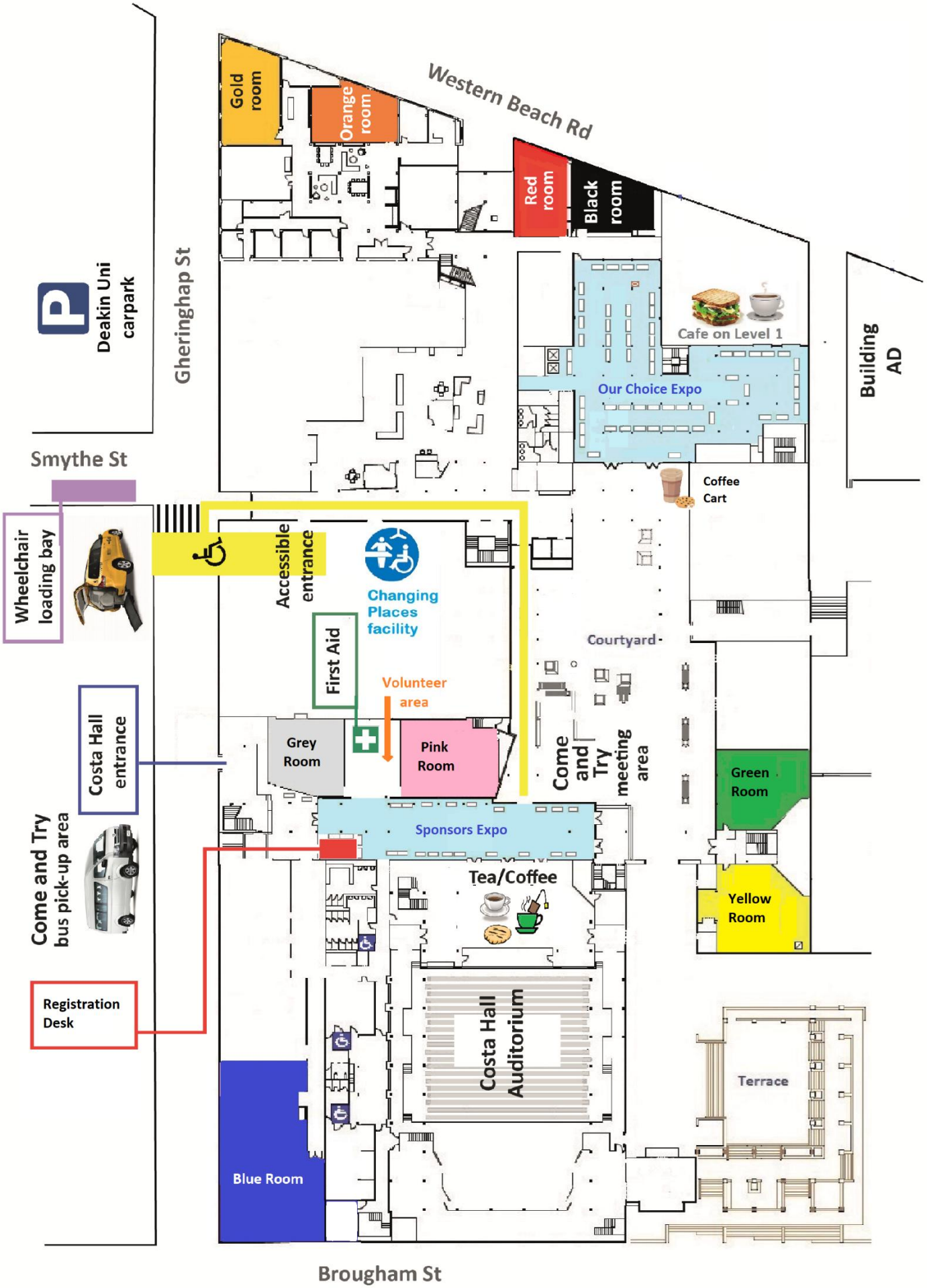
Dinner/Disco

People volunteering for **2 or more 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's registration fee.

Deakin Uni Campus Map





Code of Conduct page 1

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 page 2



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 page 3

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 page 4



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

VALID Child Safe Code of Conduct page 5

All paid and unpaid staff**, including volunteers**, Board members, contractors, interns or trainees of VALID are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of children and young people who engage with VALID. All paid possible and unpaid staff are expected to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct in their physical and online interactions with children and young people under the age of 18 years.

Please read this Child Safe Code of Conduct and sign it at the end

I will:



- Act in accordance with VALID child safety and wellbeing policies and procedures at all times.
- Behave respectfully, courteously and ethically towards children and their families and towards other staff.
- Listen and respond to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they communicate (verbally or non-verbally) that they do not feel safe or well.



- Promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children in VALID.
- Demonstrate appropriate personal and professional boundaries.
- Consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.



Create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

- Involve children in making decisions about activities, policies and processes that concern them wherever.
- Contribute, where appropriate, to VALID policies, discussions, learning and reviews about child safety and wellbeing.



- Identify and mitigate risks to children's safety and wellbeing as required by VALID risk assessment and management policy or process.



- Respond to any concerns or complaints of child harm or abuse promptly and in line with VALID policy and procedure for receiving and responding to complaints.
- Report all suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse as required by relevant legislation and by VALID policy and procedure on internal and external reporting.



- Comply with VALID policy in communicating with children, especially on social media.
- Comply with relevant legislation and VALID policies and procedures on record keeping and information sharing.

I will NOT:



- Engage in any unlawful activity with or in relation to a child.
- Engage in any activity that is likely to physically, sexually or emotionally harm a child.
- Unlawfully discriminate against any child or their family members.
- Be alone with a child without following the appropriate safeguards outlined in VALID's child safety policy.



- Initiate or accept *personal* contact with a child – including as part of online or phone contact – even in official VALID communication
- Not hand out personal phone numbers, social media handles, or private email accounts, nor accept them from a child or young person



- Disclose personal or sensitive information about a child, including images of a child, unless the child and their parent or legal guardian consent or unless I am required to do so by VALID policy and procedure on reporting.
- Use inappropriate language in the presence of children or show or provide children with access to inappropriate images or material.



- Work with children while under the influence of alcohol or prohibited drugs.
- Ignore or disregard any suspected or disclosed child harm or abuse.
- Ignore or disregard any actual or suspected breaches of this Code of Conduct.

If I think this Code of Conduct has been breached by another person in VALID I will:



- Act to prioritise the best interests of children.
- Take actions promptly to ensure that children are safe.
- Promptly report any concerns to my manager, VALID Child Safety Officer, the CEO or another manager or leader in VALID.



- Follow VALID's policies and procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and concerns.
- Comply with requirements of the law on reporting if relevant, and with policy and procedure on internal and external reporting

Staff agreement

Staff should read this Code of Conduct and ask their manager questions if there is anything that are unsure of. Once a staff member reels they understand the Code of Conduct then they should sign it and return it to their manager.

Staff name: ……

Staff signature: …….. **Date:** ……..



Volunteer Expression of Interest

Task choices	What will I need to do?	Interested Yes / No	Day/s Available?		
			Mon	Tue	Wed
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 will be attending				
Zoom session on **Tues. 2nd Feb. 2027**	yes	☐	no	☐
Deakin Uni on **Wed. 3rd Feb. 2027**	yes	☐	no	☐
I prefer a **Zoom online** session at another time	daytime	☐	evening	☐

Volunteer Screening

Do you have a current **Police Check** (dated after 18th February 2027)? i.e. less than 3 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 – please ring us to do this	yes	☐	no	☐
My current **Worker Registration** is: # registration number is	NDIS QSC	☐	VDWC	☐
I have had my two mandatory COVID Vaccinations	yes	☐	no	☐

Agreement

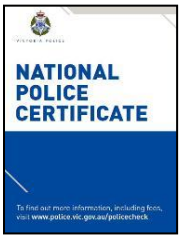
I have read and agree to abide by the Code of Conduct (pages. 8-14) including the Child Conde of Conduct of the Having a Say Conference Volunteer Information Booklet. I will notify VALID if I am charged with or convicted of a crime prior to the conference.

Signed	**Date**

Remember a Volunteer Safety Check is required

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)

NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission

or

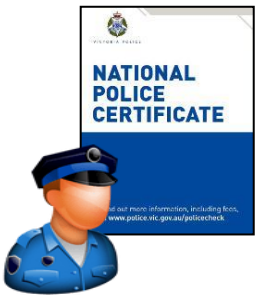
- Worker Registration through the Victorian Disability Workers Commission

VDWC
Victorian Disability Worker 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 at 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 (pages14-16).

Police checks need to be renewed every three years.

1. If you do not have a Police Check Certificate, please **obtain one and send us a photo or scan of it to VALID** E: havingasay@valid.org.au
2. **If you need assistance** with applying for a police check ring **VALID ph: 03 9416 4003** VALID can submit and pay for the Police check if you provide the identification info.