



Description: Community Coalition Victoria Inc. (CCVic) is a membership-based organisation where civil society institutions and individuals can become part of a powerful movement building endeavour, diverse in its leadership and committed to justice and equality.

The organisation carries out campaigns whilst training, developing and mentoring emerging community leaders, equipping them with community organising and advocacy skills which enables them to hold political and private sector leaders to account through grassroots collective efforts. Members will be prepared to take on local, state and/or federal issues to improve and deliver specific social outcomes. Disadvantaged, marginalised and vulnerable communities are included and empowered in this vision.

The organisation's goals will be achieved by:

- Utilising community organising tools in order to coordinate campaigns
- Fostering equitable relationships amongst diverse communities
- Conducting introductory and advanced community organising training for grass-roots community leaders
- Undertaking advocacy and awareness raising initiatives to influence government policy and public attitudes
- Providing a platform for organisations and individuals to mobilise, self-organise and self-advocate

Strategy: *People, Power, Plan*

Our primary approach is to build strong relationships between people, establish our power as an organised group and then plan strategic community campaigns. Coalition members have the opportunity to attend basic and advanced community organising training where they will build new relationships and strengthen existing ones whilst gaining new skills in organising. Relationships amongst members are prioritised as this generates group power and a strong platform on which to organise. After a substantial group of people has undergone the training together, a democratic and informed process will be undertaken in order to choose campaign issues, followed by an inclusive campaign planning phase. This strategy is cyclic in that each time there are new members being trained there will be experienced members leading actions, further adding to the sense of ownership the membership base will hold.

Structure: The general membership will consist of individual members and institutional members. CCVic will be governed by a diverse board whose role is to provide strategic direction to the organisation and provide knowledge resources in the form of contacts and expertise. Board members will be elected from the general membership representing institutions and individuals. Initially the members will be based in metropolitan Melbourne however as the organisation grows, chapters will be formed in regional areas of Victoria. Staff will be hired in order to carry out the aims of the organisation; they will be responsible for mobilising members in campaigns, conducting



community organising training, coordinating events and meetings, and developing leaders. Staff will be accountable to the board and will consist of a Lead Organising Director and 2-3 Community Organisers, depending on funding arrangements. Institutional members' voting rights within the organisation will be weighed against the number of individual members so that voting is fair and balanced across the organisation.

Culture: A culture of trust will be established throughout the organisation through deep relational engagement or 'one-on-ones', a foundation of community organising¹. Central to the organisation is an ethos of empowerment and democracy, with a strong focus on collaboration, creativity, equity and justice. Inclusive and diverse in social-class and ethnicity, the coalition will foster social cohesion amongst its membership. This will foster a network of grassroots community leaders in Victoria that are deeply committed to one another so that if an issue arises that is limited to a single sector, the membership will be willing to take action on the matter as a coalition.

Who: Membership will be open to civil society institutions including community organisations, faith-based organisations, trade unions, non-for-profit organisations, schools, community art organisations, legal centres, social services providers, ethnic based associations and youth organisations. People will also be able to join as individual members.

How: Denisse Sandoval has been leading and organising this initiative for the past 24 months. She has 6 years of community organising experience in Australia and the USA. The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is contributing half a day per week in-kind during this initial phase of building the organisation. Seed funding is being sought to cover travel, administrative costs, website costs and eventually a budget to hire staff. In the near future a sponsoring committee of 5-10 organisations may be formed to contribute funds to hire a lead organising director and one or two community organisers, bringing the total number of staff to 2 or 3. Salaries will range from \$65,000 - \$95,000 (for a full time salary) per year depending on experience. Staff will be responsible for facilitating training, recruiting members, and building relationships with relevant organisations. Once a substantial number of members are confirmed, there will be a founding assembly. The coalition will derive its future funding and remain sustainable from a combination of membership dues, community grants and long term sustainers.

Outcomes:

- Community leaders that are capable of undertaking campaigns by utilising community organising strategies
- Long-term community partnership between non-traditional partners, for example, community legal centres, churches and youth based organisations
- Social cohesion increased in Victoria through deeply engaging training alongside people from diverse backgrounds

¹ One-to-One Relational Meetings, Franciscan Action Network, <https://franciscanaction.org/organizing-tools/one-one-relational-meetings>



- Campaign wins on community issues that affect large numbers of people living in Victoria

Timeline: The following timeline may span over the next 2-4 years

- Phase 1: establishing the structure, recruiting sponsoring members and regular members
- Phase 2: sourcing funding and training people in community organising skills
- Phase 3: democratically choosing an issue to campaign on and implementing it as a coalition

**This proposal and timeline is an initial draft and is subject to change as funding is sourced and members are found.*

Examples of community coalitions:

- Sydney, Australia: unions, faith-based institutions, and community groups
<http://www.sydneyalliance.org.au>
- California, USA: unions, transportation and disability groups
<http://northbayop.org/about/members/>
- Wisconsin, USA: EXPO is an alliance of ex-prisoners' organisations, Mental Health service providers, and people in prison <http://www.rocwisconsin.org/>
- Pennsylvania, USA: PIIN alliance has built relationships with the Sierra Club on the intersectionality between the environment, jobs and economy
<http://www.piin.org/index.shtml> <http://allegHENYsc.org/?p=27051>