

The Observership Program

2027 South West Victorian Region Application Form

Applications open: **Monday 22 June 2026 (9:00am) – Sunday 16 August 2026 (11:59pm)**

WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in The Observership Program. This application form has been designed to help us understand your background, skills and motivations for participating in our program.

Throughout this form, we ask for information about your professional experience, skills and various aspects of your personal identity and background. These questions help us match candidates with host boards according to the preferences our boards have identified. Additionally, your responses will help us fulfil our purpose and measure our progress in creating more diverse boardrooms across Australia. We value your time in providing this information and assure you that all responses are treated confidentially.

NOTE: This application is available for candidates who live in the South West Region of Victoria only. If you do not live in this region, please apply for the general stream.

Before you begin:

- If you are a person who identifies with disabilities, please [review the additional information The Program has prepared](#) prior to commencing your application.
- Review our [Program Handbook](#)
- Watch our [Application Tips Video](#)
- Review the [FAQs](#)
- Read the [Terms and Conditions](#)

Application guidelines:

- **Employer Support:** Please share our Observer Requirements Summary with your employer to ensure they understand your commitment to the Program. [Refer to the Employer Support Document](#)
- **Interview Availability:** Candidates advancing to the matching stage must be available for board interviews between October 16 and December 21, 2026.
- **Board Meeting Schedule:** Throughout the 2027 Program year (January-December), participating boards can meet 4-11 times annually. Meetings may be scheduled during mornings, lunchtimes, or evenings, the majority are face to face and attending these meetings is essential to your successful completion of the Program.
- **Application Time:** This application requires careful consideration. We recommend setting aside up to two hours to craft quality responses that showcase your potential.
- **Save Your Work:** We strongly recommend drafting your responses in a separate Word document before submission. **Once submitted, you cannot view or edit your application.** While you can save progress on our platform before final submission, a separate backup provides additional security.
- **Application Fee:** A \$75 non-refundable processing fee applies to all applications unless you have an exemption or coupon code. This fee covers administrative costs associated with your application. Payment instructions are provided at the end of this form.
- **Complete Application:** Please respond to all questions in the application form. Incomplete applications may rule you out of consideration for the Program.

Application Process Timeline:

Thank you for your application. Please note that our review process takes time and we appreciate your patience. You will receive confirmation of your application receipt by **August 21**, along with any requests for additional information if needed. The full timeline of the application process is detailed below. We look forward to being in touch soon.

- Application period: June 22 - August 16, 2026
- Notification of application receipt: by 21 August 2026
- Application review: August 16 - September 8, 2026
- Notification of application status: September 10, 2026
- Observership Program interviews (if selected): September 10 – October 9, 2026
- Notification of application status: October 16, 2026
- Board interviews (if selected): October 16 – December 21, 2026
- Notification of application status: December 22, 2026

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please note: A well-crafted, board-focused CV significantly enhances your chances of success and is part of the application review.

Please ensure you have the following ready before completing this form:

- Headshot (high resolution, black and white, smart casual attire). [Refer to the Headshot guide here.](#)
- Board-ready CV (maximum 2 pages in PDF format). [Refer to the CV guide here.](#)
- Time to thoughtfully complete the essay questions (approximately 60-90 minutes)
- Confirmation of employer support for your participation. [Refer to the employer summary here.](#)
- Confirmation of your availability for the entire Program year. Please note most board meetings and up to 6 training sessions require in-person attendance. ✈️ Travel from SW Region to Melbourne's CBD for in-person training is a requirement and this is subsidised by your host board. If you require adjustments to travel, please contact vicprogram@observership.com.au

SECTION 1: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Contact Details

Email address: *[This will be used for all program communications]*

Mobile number:

First name:

Last name:

Preferred first name (for name badge):

Current Employment

Job title:

Employer:

Industry Sector: *Please select the industry that best represents your current employment sector*

Main Categories (Single Selection)

- Advertisement, Media and Communications
- Accounting and Finance
- Agriculture/Agribusiness
- Architecture and Design
- Arts and Culture
- Community, Social and Youth Services
- Construction and Engineering
- Digital Transformation and Innovation
- Disability Services
- Education and Training
- Environment and Sustainability
- Fashion and Retail
- Fitness and Sport
- Government, Policy and Public Administration
- Healthcare and Medical
- Hospitality and Tourism
- HR and People Management
- Indigenous Affairs
- Information Technology
- International Development
- Legal and Risk Management
- Mining and Resources
- Not-for-Profit
- Philanthropy and Fundraising
- Professional Services
- Real Estate and Property
- Self Employed
- Social Justice
- Supply Chain and Logistics
- Telecommunications

Location and Program

You are applying for the Victorian Southwest Region Program.

NOTE: You must live in the South West Region of Victoria to be considered for this application. If you live in any other state or territory, please email info@observership.com.au.

Home address:

- Street:
- Suburb:
- State:
- Postcode:

SECTION 2: AVAILABILITY AND COMMITMENT

Please confirm your availability and commitment to engage in all aspects of the Program. Both host boards and the Program invest substantial resources in each participant throughout the selection process and The Observership Program. Candidates must be available for:

- Make yourself available for interview/s during selection process, if you are selected (September - December 2026): Yes or No
- Observership year | January – December 2027: Yes or No
- Board meetings throughout 2027: Yes or No
- Mandatory training sessions (11 sessions in 2027); Yes or No

Commitment Note: We understand that circumstances can change. However, this Program requires consistent participation throughout the year. Please do not apply if you are:

- Currently applying for positions interstate/overseas
- Exploring other development programs with overlapping schedules
- Anticipating significant commitments that would limit your participation (relocating, extensive travel, significant life changes)

SECTION 3: EXPERIENCE AND BACKGROUND

Education

Highest qualification:

Institution:

Year completed:

Other qualifications:

Are you the first in your family to attend university? Yes or No

Professional Experience

Note: Please provide complete information in your CV. This section captures key highlights only.

Previous board experience (if any):

- Organisation:
- Role:
- Duration:

Areas of professional expertise: [Select your top three]

1. Primary expertise:
2. Secondary expertise:
3. Tertiary expertise:

Professional expertise

- Accounting
- Architecture
- Artificial Intelligence and Cyber
- Arts and Culture
- Audience and Community Engagement
- Banking and Financial Services
- Business Development
- Business Operations
- Community Services and Development
- Consulting and Strategy
- Construction and Engineering
- Customer and User Experience
- Data and Analytics
- Digital Transformation and Innovation
- Disability Services and Inclusion
- Education and Training
- ESG and Sustainability
- Fundraising and Philanthropy
- General Management
- Governance and Compliance
- Government Relations
- HR and Recruitment
- Indigenous Affairs and Engagement
- International Development

- Legal
- Marketing and Communications
- Medical and Healthcare
- Mining and Resources
- Not- For-Profit
- Policy and Advocacy
- Product Management
- Project and Program Management
- Real Estate and Property
- Risk Management
- Sales and FMCG
- Science and Technology
- Social Justice
- Stakeholder Engagement and Relations
- Youth Services and Development

Voluntary Experience

Have you had any voluntary involvement in the not-for-profit or community sector outside of your workplace? Yes/No

If yes, please briefly describe: [Max 100 words]

Are you associated with an NFP that might be interested in participating in our Program as a host board? Yes/No

If Yes: provide details:

SECTION 4: ESSAY QUESTIONS

These questions help us understand your motivations, experiences and potential contribution to a board. Please be concise and specific in your responses.

1. Why would you like to participate in The Observership Program? Please describe your specific goals for participating, including whether you aspire to become a board director. (Max 150 words)

2. Drawing on your professional and lived experience, please tell us what you think you can learn from and contribute to a Not-For-Profit or government appointed board. (Max 250 words)

3. Please tell us of an instance either at work or within your community, where you have identified an issue and on your own initiative successfully taken action to either lead or effect change. Please do not include examples that fall within your job description. (Max 250 words)

4. What social change have you actively engaged in and why? (Max 250 words)

5. Please describe the significant personal achievement of which you are most proud and explain why. (Max 200 words)

6: Describe your connection to the region of South-west Victoria and explain your interest in observing a good governance NFP or government appointed board within the SW Region. (Max 200 words)

7: Provide a statement explaining how you will apply your learning from the Program for the benefit of your community and/or the NFP and government board sector. (Max 200 words)

SECTION 5: DIVERSITY INFORMATION

This information helps us in our matching process and enables us to track our impact. All questions are optional and will be handled confidentially.

Gender and Identity

Date of birth:

Citizenship Status:

- Australian Citizen
- Permanent Resident
- Temporary Visa
- Other

Gender:

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary

- Prefer to self-describe: _____
- Prefer not to say

Pronouns:

- She/Her
- He/Him
- They/Them
- Other: _____

Linked In account:

Cultural Background

Do you identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander?

- No
- Yes, Aboriginal
- Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- Yes, both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- Prefer not to say

Do you identify as culturally and linguistically diverse? Yes, No, Prefer not to say

If yes, this includes:

- Born overseas
- Parents born overseas
- Speak a language other than English at home

Cultural heritage: Select all that apply.

- Indigenous Australian or Torres Strait Islander
- Australian
- African
- Asian
- Eastern European
- Indian
- Middle Eastern
- New Zealander
- North American
- Northern European
- South American
- Southern European

- United Kingdom
- Western European
- Prefer not to answer
- Other, please specify

Accessibility and Adjustments

The Observership Program is committed to creating an inclusive experience for all participants. Sharing information about adjustments and access requirement needs helps us design accessible experiences. The sharing of this information is only actioned once permission has been sought from participants.

Many participants benefit from adjustments/access requirements including those they may not traditionally classify as "disability accommodations". Here are some examples: wheelchair access, receiving material in advance, digital participation options, sensory space, support animal and specific communication preferences. [Additional information can be found on the Persons with disabilities webpage.](#)

By understanding everyone's adjustments/access requirements early in the process, we can:

- *Ensure host boards are prepared with accessible meeting spaces and materials*
- *Design training sessions that work for all learning styles and needs*
- *Create a more inclusive and accessible experience for everyone involved*

Any information shared is confidential, implemented only with your input and used solely to enhance your experience and the Program's accessibility.

Do you identify as a person with disability? Yes, No, Prefer not to say

Are you eligible for NDIS? Yes, No, Prefer not to say

Please advise any accessibility adjustments or accommodations that will support your full participation in the Program:

SECTION 6: SECTOR INTERESTS

Which sectors are you most interested in? [Select all that apply]

Please note: *While we ask about sectors of interest, the matching process is driven by board requirements and preferences. The primary focus of the Program is providing governance experience. All participating boards offer valuable learning opportunities regardless of their size or sector. Candidates who are open to diverse board placements increase their chances of a placement. Where board and applicant preferences align, these make for the best matches.*

however flexibility on the part of the applicants are encouraged as board preferences take precedence.

- Agribusiness
- Animal Welfare
- Arts and Culture
- Business, Professional Associations and Unions
- Disability Services
- Education and Youth Development
- Environmental
- Financial Services and Social Enterprise
- Government and Public Sector
- Health and Mental Illness
- Housing and Homelessness
- Indigenous
- Legal and Advocacy
- Media and Broadcasting
- Philanthropic Bodies
- Religion
- Social and Community Services
- Sports and Recreation

If you selected Arts and Culture: Please tell us about your connection to this sector. This could include professional experience, personal interest, volunteer involvement, audience attendance or any engagement with the arts and culture sector. You don't need to be a professional. (Max 150 words)

Are there any sectors you would prefer NOT to be placed with? [Select all that apply]

- Agribusiness
- Animal Welfare
- Arts and Culture
- Business, Professional Associations and Unions
- Disability Services
- Education and Youth Development
- Environmental
- Financial Services and Social Enterprise
- Government and Public Sector
- Health and Mental Illness
- Housing and Homelessness
- Indigenous
- Legal and Advocacy
- Media and Broadcasting
- Philanthropic Bodies

- Religion
- Social and Community Services
- Sports and Recreation

Would you like to be considered for the JCA Stream?

The JCA stream is for Jewish candidates to sit on Jewish based host board. This is only available in Sydney.

Yes or No

Are there any sectors where you may have a conflict of interest?

- Agribusiness
- Animal Welfare
- Arts and Culture
- Business, Professional Associations and Unions
- Disability Services
- Education and Youth Development
- Environmental
- Financial Services and Social Enterprise
- Government and Public Sector
- Health and Mental Illness
- Housing and Homelessness
- Indigenous
- JCA (Sydney Only)
- Legal and Advocacy
- Media and Broadcasting
- Philanthropic Bodies
- Religion
- Social and Community Services
- Sports and Recreation

Are there any organisations or host boards where you may have a conflict of interest?

Are there times or days where you are not available to attend scheduled host board meetings if you are selected.

- Mornings
- Working hours

- Evening
- Specific days : free text for day of the week

SECTION 7: REFERENCE AND DISCLOSURES

Professional Reference

Please provide one professional reference we may contact if you are matched with a board. You will be advised if a reference check is required.

First name:

Last name:

Position:

Relationship to you:

Email:

Phone:

Program Discovery

How did you learn about The Observership Program?

- AICD
- ARIA / PPCA
- JCA
- Asian Leadership Project
- Australian Disability Network (AusDN)
- South West Region network
- Corporate Partner (please specify): _____
- Board Director (please specify): _____
- Previous Participant (please specify): _____
- Social Media
- Word of Mouth (please specify): _____
- Other (please specify): _____

SECTION 8: REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AND BIO

Professional Bio

Please provide a **third-person biography** (maximum 100 words) highlighting your current role, key achievements, not-for-profit involvement and personal interests. If you are selected for the Program, this bio will appear in the 2027 Handbook and related publications. [See bio examples.](#)

Required Uploads

Professional Photo: *Requirements: Black and white headshot in smart casual attire. See [headshot guidelines.](#)*

Board-Ready CV: [Upload] *Requirements: Maximum 2 pages, PDF format. See [CV guidelines.](#)*

SECTION 9: APPLICATION FEE

A non-refundable application processing fee of \$75 applies to all applications unless exempted.

Payment method:

- Credit Card
- Partner Coupon Code: _____

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- I confirm that all information provided is accurate and complete
- I have reviewed and accept the [Terms and Conditions](#)
- I understand that providing false information may disqualify my application

Signature: _____

Date: _____