

Victoria Police Manual

The Victoria Police Manual is issued under the authority of the Chief Commissioner of Police in s.60, Victoria Police Act 2013. Non-compliance with or a departure from the Victoria Police Manual may be subject to management or disciplinary action. Employees must use VPM Professional and ethical standards to inform the decisions they make to support compliance.

Policy development and advice

Context

Victoria Police makes policy decisions and issues policy documents to:

- define its role and responsibilities on given issues
- articulate how it intends to meet service expectations, implement legislative responsibilities, workplace agreements, organisational priorities objectives and values, and use its resources appropriately, efficiently and effectively
- support and enhance frontline efficiency, decision making and compliance
- clearly define and allocate responsibilities and accountabilities to relevant employees
- promote ethical and professional behaviour, and a safe, flexible and respectful work environment
- mitigate organisational risk, but only to the extent necessary to address the potential likelihood and impact of the risk.

Policy decisions are often reflected through written policy documents. Policy documents can take a number of formats: legislation, policy and procedure documents (such as the Victoria Police Manual (VPM)), forms, memoranda of understanding, industrial agreements, delegations, or standard operating procedures (SOPs). Policy decisions are also implemented through organisational structures and systems, resourcing, procurement, technology and training.

This document outlines the agreed frameworks, processes and responsibilities which support Victoria Police's approach to policy development and advice.

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Principles

When undertaking policy development activities, the following principles should be applied:

- the problem being addressed should be clearly defined and a systemic approach to developing appropriate solutions for the problem should be applied
- policy should support, reflect and benefit corporate and operational plans, objectives and strategies
- policy should support the organisation's industrial, health and safety, human rights, equal opportunity and other legal responsibilities
- policy should be informed by evidence
- policy should only be supported if it can be effectively implemented either with available resources or by obtaining appropriate resources
- relevant stakeholders (including government, partners, the community and employees) must be consulted at a level that reflects of the scope and impact of the policy
- policy documents should be prepared in a consistent and accessible format and style
- policy documents must be approved at an appropriate level
- policy documents must be accessible to employees, and where appropriate, to the public
- the policy position and the system that supports it should be monitored and regularly reviewed.

Responsibilities and procedures

1. Policy Governance Framework

1.1 Purpose and structure

The Policy Governance Framework formally articulates where the accountabilities and responsibilities for policy decisions in Victoria Police lie.

1.2 Structure

Each area of policy or practice in the organisation is allocated the following:

Position	Responsibility
Executive Owner <i>Deputy Commissioner or Deputy Secretary</i>	Overarching governance accountability for a policy subject area.
Policy Owner <i>Assistant Commissioner, Executive Director, Commander or Director</i>	Responsible for undertaking or coordinating the day to day business relating to a policy subject area, including ensuring the provision of policy advice, and reviewing, implementing and monitoring policy.
Policy contacts	Represent the Policy Owner on specific policy subjects at the business/operational level.
Subject matter experts (SMEs)	Individuals or work areas with specific expertise on the policy subject/area of practice.

Portfolio leads <i>Assistant Commissioner, Executive Director, Commander or Director</i>	Support the Policy Owner by providing guidance, influencing policy and operational practice and mitigating risks that relate to nominated subjects that cut across regions, commands and departments.
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1.3 Responsibilities

Further detail on the above roles and their responsibilities is located at Appendix A.

All of the roles support and are supported by Policy and Legislation Division (PLD), Capability Department, which is responsible for:

- establishing standards for and coordinating policy development, approval and publication
- collaborating with Policy Owners to progress policy change, including legislative change
- assisting with the delivery of policy change through the drafting and development of organisational policy documents, including the VPM, Chief Commissioner's Instructions (CCIs), organisational forms and legal instruments.

1.4 Allocation

The allocation of policy subjects is found in the Policy Governance Register which is available on the [Victoria Police intranet](#).

2. Policy Development Process

2.1 Policy development – overview

Victoria Police policy documents must be developed in line with the Policy Development Process; see Appendix B.

The following steps apply to all policy development activities, including the development of new policy or reviewing existing policy. The scale, complexity and source of the proposal will inform the effort and time invested in each stage.

- **Initiation** – identification of the policy issue, problem or need for change.
- **Development** – exploration of the issue and determination of the policy position or solution for the problem.
- **Delivery** – implementation of the policy position or solution for the problem.
- **Review** – monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy.

Further information and templates to support the application of the Policy Development Process is in the **Policy development and implementation Practice Guide**.

2.2 Legislation and law reform

Proposals for legislative change may be initiated by Government or Victoria Police. Legislative Policy, PLD, is responsible for evaluating and advocating changes to the law proposed by Victoria Police and coordinating the Victoria Police response to proposed legislative changes.

Strategic Policy, PLD supports the timely and effective implementation of legislative change within Victoria. For information on the process for implementing legislative change refer to the Implementing legislation Practice Guide.

2.3 *Initiating policy change*

Suggestions for organisational policy change can be initiated by any employee. Employees are encouraged to discuss proposals with PLD informally in the early stages before referring the proposal to the Policy Owner for consideration and assessment.

2.4 *Policy impact assessment*

Victoria Police requires that a Policy Impact Assessment (PIA) is conducted when developing organisational policy positions and policy documents. This ensures:

- a robust and consistent approach to the analysis of policy issues
- policy decisions and documents support the organisation's legislative obligations
- any legal, safety and reputational risks are addressed during the Policy Development Process.

The PIA process requires policy proposals to be assessed in terms of their impact on or interaction with:

- human rights
- occupational health and safety
- gender equality, diversity and inclusion
- Aboriginal self-determination.

A PIA should be completed at the start of and throughout the 'development' stage of the Policy Development Process so that it informs the final policy direction and any policy instruments. See Appendix B for further details.

2.5 *Authorisation*

Executive Owner –

- must authorise new additions or changes to the policy direction for their portfolio
- may also refer the issue for authorisation by another body (such as Executive Command or a governance committee) depending on the scope and scale of the change.

Policy Owners –

- recommend the policy direction for subjects that they own to the Executive Owner
- may authorise 'routine' changes to policies and procedures, that is, an amendment to a procedure or process to improve the understanding and application of the direction or intent of a current policy. It does not include a change in the direction or intent of the policy.

3. **Victoria Police policy and guidance documents – overview**

3.1 *Purpose*

The 'development' stage of the Policy Development Process involves identifying what implementation tools might be required to put the policy direction into effect. In many cases, policy and guidance documents will be some of the tools used to deliver the policy direction. Depending on the issue, more than one type of policy or guidance document may be required.

3.2 Policy document hierarchy

The relationship between Government and Victoria Police strategy and policy documents is represented at Appendix C.

4. Organisational policy documents

4.1 Overview

- Organisational policy documents are those documents that Victoria Police is responsible for producing to document functional and behavioural rules for the organisation. They may be required to address:
 - legislative, compliance, accountability or safety imperatives
 - organisational risks
 - an agreed standard that supports organisational service delivery
 - a relationship or partnership with an external organisation.
- Organisational policy documents are issued pursuant to the powers of the Chief Commissioner of Police under s. 60, *Victoria Police Act 2013* and in the exercise of their office under the *Public Administration Act 2004*.
- PLD sets the standards for the development of policy documents. It administers the policy approval process and publishes organisational policy documents.

4.2 Types of organisational policy documents

For further detail on the documents in the table below refer to the **Policy development and implementation Practice Guide**.

Document	Purpose
VPM	Victoria Police's primary organisational policy document. It is comprised of: • policy statements which succinctly outline the organisation's position on an issue • operational standards, policies and procedures which provide practical direction and instruction to employees on how to perform their roles and responsibilities.
CCIs	Similar to the VPM but used for high risk or temporary arrangements, or to support the progressive rollout of a project/program.
Legal instruments	These include instruments of delegation and authorisation. These 'technical' instruments inform the roles and responsibilities of employees, but do not provide practical direction or instruction to employees in and of themselves. Where required, this direction is reflected in the VPM, organisational forms and/or local instructions.
Organisational forms (VP Forms)	Hard copy, electronic and online forms which support standardised data capture and recording, legal processes and operational/administrative practices.
Formal agreements with external organisations	These include memoranda of understanding or protocols.

4.3 Responsibility and development

The responsibilities for and development standards of organisational policy documents are as follows:

Document	Responsibility
VPM, CCI and VP Forms	PLD sets the standards for and coordinates the development of these documents. They must be developed in line with the Policy Development Process; see Appendix B. Further guidance and templates are available in the Policy development and implementation Practice Guide .
Legal instruments	See section 5.
Formal agreements	Commercial Law Unit, Legal Services Department is responsible for the standards and development of formal agreements. Formal agreements must be developed in line with VPMP and VPMG Formal agreements with external organisations .

4.4 Authorisation

The Chief Commissioner of Police's authority to issue instructions and determinations has been delegated to the following officers (Delegation POL 1):

- **Executive Owner** – must authorise new policy documents or changes to policy documents that are changes in the direction or intent of the policy, within their portfolio. Executive Owners may also refer the document/s for authorisation by another body depending on the scope and scale of the change.
- **Policy Owners** – may authorise 'routine' changes to policy documents, that is, an amendment to a procedure or process to improve the understanding and application of the direction or intent of a current policy. It does not include a change in the direction or intent of the policy.
- **Director, PLD and Assistant Director, Organisational Policy** – may authorise changes to correct inaccuracies or for maintenance, e.g., change of unit or position name.

4.5 Temporary organisational policy documents

New policy documents or temporary variations to existing organisational policy documents may be required to support pilot programs or special projects. The following conditions apply to these policy documents:

- they only apply to specified work areas and employees and for a specified time
- the documents must be developed and approved in line with the Policy Development Process outlined at Appendix B. Further advice is also in the **Policy development and implementation Practice Guide**
- the documents must be communicated and accessible to the employees they affect
- if the instrument is to have its period of application extended the extension must be approved by the Policy Owner.
- if pilot programs (and the associated policy documents) are to be implemented throughout the organisation, consult with the Policy Owner or PLD to arrange formal approval and publication.

4.6 *Exemptions from organisational policy and procedures*

- Areas requiring exemptions from policies and procedures for operational reasons must submit the request through the relevant Policy Owner or PLD, for approval by the appropriate Executive Owner.
- A copy of the approval must be held by the relevant work area and by PLD.
- Approval expires on 31 December following the year of issue, unless cancelled earlier. A new approval must be obtained for the exemption to remain valid.

5. Legal instruments

5.1 *Types of instruments*

- Instruments of delegation, authorisation and appointment may be required where legislation assigns the Chief Commissioner of Police responsibility for an action or the ability to authorise/appoint employees to undertake an action.
- The Chief Commissioner of Police may assign these actions and different levels of responsibility to individual Victoria Police employees or groups of employees. In some cases, the employee that the power may be assigned to is restricted by legislation.

See the **Policy development and implementation Practice Guide** for further information about different types of legal instrument.

5.2 *Responsibility*

Victoria Police's legal instruments fall into three major categories which are managed by different areas in the organisation.

Category	Relevant responsible area
Human resource related delegations/authorisations	Business Partnering and Workplace Relations Division, Human Resource Command (HRC)
Financial delegations/authorisations	Financial Accounting and Compliance Branch, Financial Services Department
All other delegations/authorisations	PLD has overarching coordination responsibility. In some cases, certain instruments may be managed by specialist areas, due to updating frequency or sensitivity of the subject. However, this may only occur if the arrangement is agreed to with PLD.

5.3 *Development and maintenance*

- Where an area requires an instrument to be amended due to legislative change, organisational restructure, change in the functions of a position, etc, a request outlining the change must be submitted to the relevant responsible area identified in section 5.2 of this policy.
- Where an area identifies that a new instrument is required, a request must be submitted to the relevant responsible area.
- The relevant responsible area will ensure the new or revised instrument meets the required standards and that relevant Policy Owners are consulted. The Policy Owner must endorse the proposed delegates/authorised employees.

- Instruments should be regularly subject to legal review and advice, generally by the Victorian Government Solicitor's Office (VGSO), to ensure they are accurate and consistent with current legislative interpretation. New or significantly amended instruments must be reviewed before signature.
- The request for legal advice should be submitted by the relevant responsible area.

6. Local or specialist work area instructions

6.1 *Application*

Local work areas or specialist work functions may require SOPs, instructions and forms to manage and regulate their functions or responsibilities.

Local instructions and forms – may be issued to manage specific work units, divisions or regions/command/departments.

Specialist function instructions and forms – may be issued to manage specific functional responsibilities. They may include instructions that:

- ensure consistency in the conduct of specialist functions that cut across regions/commands/departments, such as personnel and payroll officers, financial officers or property officers
- address specialised or sensitive operational functions and methodology which should not appear in organisational policy documents.

6.2 *Authorisation*

Local instructions and forms – must be authorised by the senior manager of the area that the instruction is going to apply to. For example, work unit instructions must be approved by a work unit manager, regional/command/departments instructions must be approved by a region/command/department head.

Specialist function instructions and forms – must be authorised by the function's Policy Owner (or their representative). For example, personnel and payroll work instructions are to be authorised by the Assistant Commissioner, HRC. They should also be recognised and referenced in an organisational policy document.

6.3 *Conditions*

Local work area or specialist function instructions/forms must:

- only relate to matters that are within the authority of the issuer
- specify which employees the instructions apply to; the instructions are only binding on those employees
- be consistent with and not impose standards or procedures that are more intrusive or restrictive than legislation and organisational policy documents. Local or specific work area instructions that conflict with organisational policy documents are invalid, unless an exemption has been granted in line with section 4.6 of this policy
- be accessible and communicated to relevant employees
- include issue and expiry dates.

6.4 *Recording and maintenance*

The local manager (local instructions and forms) or Policy Owner (specialist function instructions and forms) must ensure that:

- a record is kept of any instructions or forms they have authorised, including the date they were issued, any amendments issued and how they were communicated to relevant employees
- the instructions and forms are regularly reviewed
- for specialist function and high-risk local instructions and forms, PLD is advised when an instruction is issued. PLD will then update any links to the VPM and the Policy Governance Register.

7. Practice guides

7.1 *Purpose*

Practice guides are educational or reference documents that support the understanding and application of legislation and policy documents. They may include compilations or summaries of legislation and/or policy, case studies, flow charts, checklists, etc.

7.2 *Authorisation*

Practice guides must be approved by the relevant Policy Owner.

7.3 *Conditions*

Practice guides:

- are for educational or good practice purposes to enable compliance with the VPM
- should support and reference relevant legislation or sections of the VPM
- may only reference policies and procedures, not create them; any procedures or practices that employees are required to comply with are to be included in the VPM
- should include the date of issue and be regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain accurate and relevant
- should be referenced in the relevant section of the VPM
- must be accessible and communicated to relevant employees.

7.4 *Recording and maintenance*

The Policy Owner must ensure that:

- a record is kept of any practice guides authorised, including any amendments, the date they were issued and how they were communicated to relevant employees
- the practice guides are regularly reviewed and updated as required
- PLD is advised when a guide is issued or decommissioned. PLD will then update any links to the VPM and Policy Governance Register.

8. Policy advice and requests

8.1 *Requests for policy instruments*

Requests for current or archived Victoria Police policy instruments must be referred to:

- organisational policy instruments – PLD
- local or specialist function instructions – the supervisor or manager that approved the policy.

8.2 *Requests for advice or comment*

- Refer external requests for comment or advice on Victoria Police policy positions and or documents as outlined below.
- The relevant employee must arrange for a response to be prepared in consultation with relevant areas and must approve and sign the response. If in doubt, consult the relevant region/command/department head or the Director, PLD.
- Also see **VPMP Information sharing** in relation to maintaining records of information /data release.

If the request for comment/information comes from...	The person who must sign and approve the response is...
• Minister	• Chief Commissioner of Police
• Secretary or Deputy Secretary of a government agency	• The relevant Accountable Officer
• Other staff from a government agency • Any staff from local government • Any staff from a non-government agency • A member from interstate police service • A member of the public	• If published policy content is provided, the recipient of the correspondence or the person the request was referred to • If comment on Victoria Police policy is provided, the recipient or the person the request was referred to must seek the approval of their region/command/department head and the Director, PLD

8.3 *External working parties or committees*

- Requests for Victoria Police employees to be on external working parties or committees must be submitted to the relevant Policy Owner for approval.
- If the working party or committee requires the employee to comment on existing or proposed legislation or Victoria Police policy, contact the Policy Owner or PLD.

8.4 *Submissions to Parliamentary Committees*

For information on submissions to Parliamentary Committees refer to **VPM Commissions and inquiries**.

Related documents

- VPMP and VPMG Formal agreements with external organisations
- VPM Commissions and inquiries
- Policy development and implementation Practice Guide
- Delegation POL 1 – Policy development – Issuing, amending and revoking Chief Commissioner's Instructions and determinations.

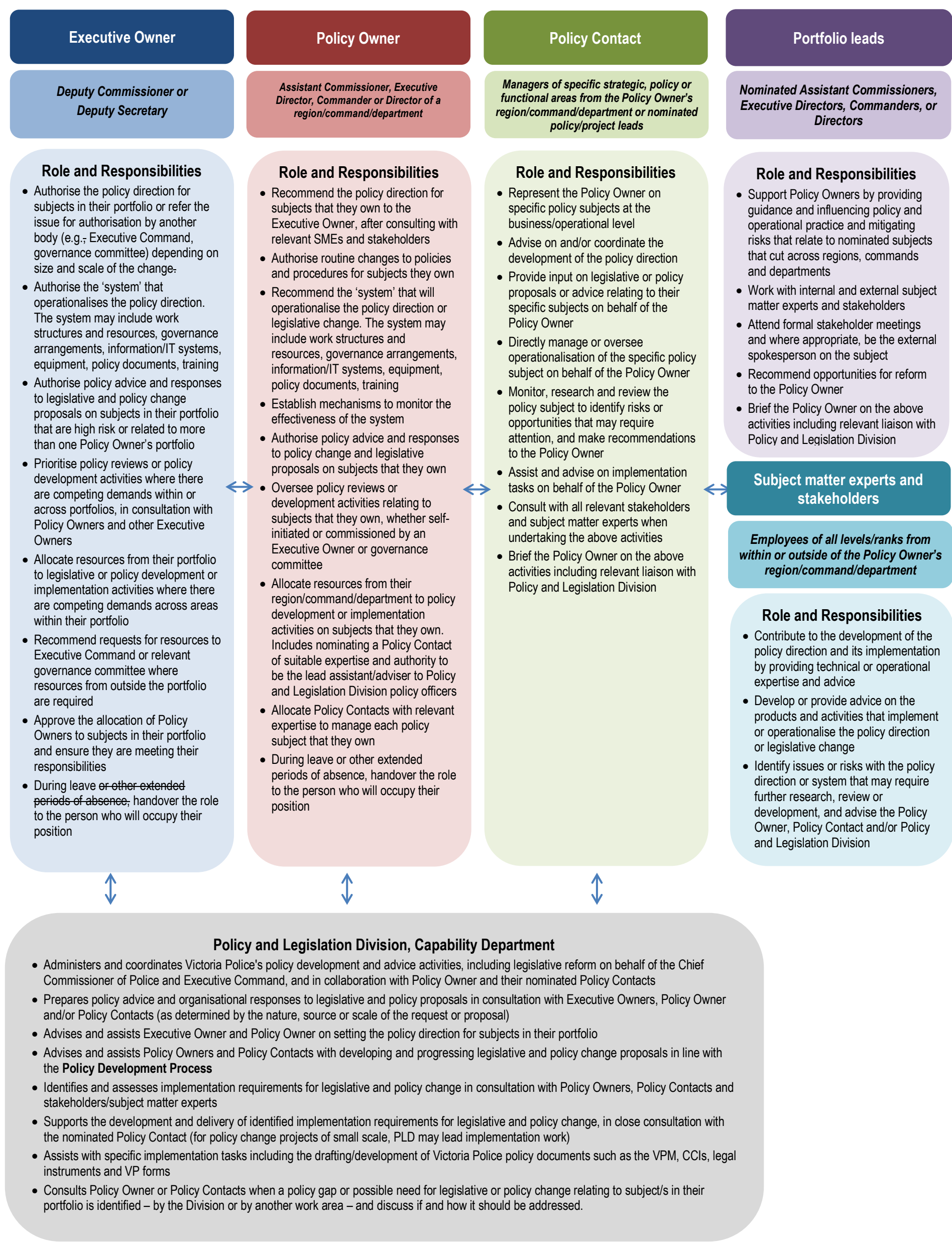
Further advice and information

For further advice and assistance regarding this Policy, contact the Director, PLD or Assistant Director, Organisational Policy.

Update history

DATE UPDATED	SUMMARY OF CHANGE	FORCE FILE NUMBER
27/02/17	Consolidation and review of VPMP Policy development and advice, VPMG Policy development and VPMG Policy instruments . Supported by Policy Development Practice Guide.	FF-100405
05/10/22	Update to reflect introduction of policy impact assessments, the development of Policy development and implementation Practice Guide and Implementing legislation Practice Guide. Overall review of content including organisation name changes	FF-194243
31/03/23	Updates to hyperlinks	N/A

Appendix A - Policy Governance Framework – roles and responsibilities



Appendix B - Policy Development Process

This document outlines the steps in the Policy Development Process. For less complex matters, some of the steps may be completed together. For more complex matters, the steps may not be sequential and some steps may need to be revisited.

Step	Action	Who
Initiation		
1.	Policy concept or problem/need for change identified and 'project' proposal prepared	Policy initiator (internal or external)
2.	Endorsement of proposal; concept or need for change has merit, support for time/resources to be allocated to 'project' to explore the problem and propose solutions; a person or team is assigned by the Executive Owner, Policy Owner or PLD to lead a policy development project (Policy Developer)	Executive Owner, Policy Owner or PLD
Development		
3.	Prepare policy development project plan – determine the scope, objectives and outcomes of the project and outline the resources, tasks and timelines involved; establish project team or working group with relevant stakeholders	Policy Developer PLD must be consulted
4.	Research and analysis of the issue and potential solutions; this step should include undertaking a Policy Impact Assessment (PIA) as outlined below (page 15) and section 2.4 of VPM Policy development and advice	Policy Developer in consultation with PLD
5.	Initial stakeholder/subject matter expert consultation; input may require a return to step 4	Policy Developer in collaboration with PLD
6.	Settling of policy position/solution to policy	Policy Developer in collaboration with PLD
7.	Approval of policy position/solution to policy problem; approval documents should include the Implementation Plan and PIA	Executive Owner, or Governance Committee
Delivery		
8.	Finalise Implementation Plan – identify implementation tasks, areas/persons responsible and timelines	Policy Developer
9.	Development and validation of implementation activities and products. Includes preparing new or amended policy documents and circulating for formal consultation	Area/person allocated implementation task, PLD must be engaged
10.	Approval of implementation activities and products Approval of revised policy documents	Executive Owner or Policy Owner
11.	Release/execution of implementation activities and products Publication of revised policy documents	Area/person allocated implementation task, PLD must be engaged
Review		
12.	Monitor the implementation and application of the policy;	Policy Owner
13.	Evaluate the effectiveness of the policy against the objectives established at step 3 after a set period. Make recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of the policy – return to step 1.	Policy Owner

Policy impact assessment

As outlined at section 2.4 of **VPM Policy development and advice**, Victoria Police is obliged to consider a range of impacts and risks when developing policy positions and instruments.

A PIA should be completed during the 'development' stage of the process so that it informs the final policy direction and any policy instruments. Assessment of these issues should be integral to the design of the recommended policy direction, not simply 'ticked off' after the fact.

The impacts listed below must be considered during the development of Victoria Police policies and the assessment must be documented on the Executive Command briefing template. Where specific assessment templates are required, they must be attached to the file. If an issue is not relevant to the policy, the reasons why must be detailed. The **Policy development and implementation Practice Guide** outlines other impacts that should be considered during the Policy Development Process.

Issue	Considerations	Guidance and advice
Human rights It is unlawful for a public authority to act in a way that is incompatible with a human right or, in making a decision, to fail to give proper consideration to a relevant human right (s.38, <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006</i>).	Does the proposed policy limit, restrict or interfere with any rights contained in the <i>Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities</i> and other Acts? If so, how will any risks be mitigated or managed?	Human Rights Assessment template <i>The Charter of Human Rights - Guidelines for legislation and Policy officers in Victoria</i> Seek advice from the Human Rights Portfolio, Priority and Safer Communities Division, Capability Department.
Occupational Health and Safety Policies are part of a system that provides a working environment that is safe and without risks to health, which employers are obliged to provide under s.21, <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004</i> .	Will the proposed policy impact upon the health and safety of employees, contractors and/or the public? If so, how will the risks be mitigated or managed?	OHS Assessment template Seek advice from Health, Safety and Wellbeing Division, HRC.
Gender equality, diversity and inclusion Victoria Police must undertake gender impact assessments on policies or programs under s.9, <i>Gender Equality Act 2020</i> and has a positive duty to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation under the <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010</i> .	Will the proposed policy directly or indirectly impact upon equity, diversity or inclusion within the organisation or in terms of how we deliver services to the community? If so, how will these impacts be mitigated or managed?	Gender Impact Assessment – - Internal policy – complete the Gender Impact Assessment template - Policies, programs or services that have a direct and significant impact on the public – use the toolkit provided by the Gender Equality Commission Seek further advice from Gender Equality and Inclusion Division (GEID), HRC For internally focussed policies, seek advice from the relevant employee network .
Aboriginal self-determination The Victorian Government is committed to advancing Aboriginal self-determination	Have the Aboriginal self-determination guiding principles in the VAAF been considered when developing the proposed policy?	Seek advice from the Aboriginal Portfolio, Priority and Safer Communities Division. For internally focussed policies, seek advice from the

Issue	Considerations	Guidance and advice
under the Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework (VAAF).	Does the proposed policy engage with issues such as systemic racism? How will any risks be mitigated or managed?	Aboriginal Employee Network Further work is occurring on a self-determination tool in consultation with stakeholders Also seek guidance from the Self-determination Reform Framework .

Appendix C - Policy document hierarchy

