



2021 Chapter Management Awards Work Plan

IABC Victoria: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Division 1: Large chapters

About IABC Victoria

With 211 financial members (as at 3 February 2021), and a non-member peer network of over 800 communication professionals, IABC Victoria (Australia) is the largest IABC chapter outside of North America and the fifth largest chapter globally – a distinction we value highly and work incredibly hard to preserve.

We're a very eclectic and vibrant group of communication professionals in terms of the range of disciplines our members practice across the communication spectrum, and the range of communication practitioner types and interests our chapter represents and needs to cater to. Many of our members work for multi-national companies, top tier banks, boutique consultancies, creative agencies, infrastructure businesses, not-for-profits and local, state and federal government authorities. The chapter also serves the needs of students at local universities across Victoria.

At IABC Victoria, the vast majority of members are senior and executive communication professionals where 43% of the chapter have been working in the profession between 16-25+ years. This is compared to early- and mid-career communication professionals where only 12% have been in the profession for 0-7 years and 18% for 8-15 years (27% of the chapter's experience level is unknown). The chapter has low to no known representation of people with disability and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders respectively.

This application focuses on one activity being undertaken at IABC Victoria that works to build our member diversity through offering a scholarship program for underrepresented groups—a fully funded grant to individuals who may face cultural or structural barriers to membership and career development.

Goals and objectives

The IABC Victoria Board year runs from late February. We meet for a half-day strategy meeting in early March to focus on what the board wants to accomplish during the upcoming year. The chapter's goals and objectives were set during this meeting. We have **overarching goals** to:

- Advance the profession of communication as a strategic leadership function, demonstrating its impact on business
- Develop strategic communicators, creating engaging opportunities for learning
- Create global and local peer connection, facilitating ways for practitioners to interact and support each other.

To address our underrepresentation of early career professionals, people with disability and Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, a specific program – the Professional Development Grant – was developed to achieve these goals through a diversity, equity and inclusion lens.

Program goal: Create and implement a two-year Professional Development Grant program that **will** support communication professionals – who may face cultural or structural barriers to membership and career development – to develop as a communication leader and contributor to IABC Victoria goals and outcomes.

The **objectives** of the Professional Development Grant program are to:

- Foster greater equality and inclusion within IABC Victoria by supporting access to opportunities provided by IABC to people who face cultural or structural barriers to career development
- Recruit IABC members and culturally appropriate partners to financially support and deliver the program
- Contribute to succession planning for the next IABC Victoria leaders by providing exposure to IABC Victoria Board operations and leadership responsibilities
- Further develop strategic communication professionals and leaders by providing career coaching and access to learning and development opportunities

Implementation

The Professional Development Grant, designed in mid-2019, provided a range of benefits to the recipient that would nurture their professional development and capacity to network; provide opportunities to learn from chapter events; and support their career development through formal coaching. The program was fully funded through financial and in-kind support provided by IABC Victoria members through a formal partnership agreement.

Three Professional Development Grants were funded:

- Hope and Glory professional development grant: open to people with disability.

- Hope and Glory (transition) professional development grant: open to CALD (culturally and linguistically diverse) applicants, early-career professionals (1-3 years experience), people returning to the profession after a career break or transitioning to the communication field.
- This is Creative professional development grant: open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

GRANT STRUCTURE

Recipients of the Professional Development Grant commit to a two-year program that offers the following benefits:

- IABC membership
- Attendance to all IABC Victoria events
- Participation in IABC Victoria mentoring program
- Attachment to IABC Victoria Board (40 hours assistance provided to IABC Victoria Board over two years)
- Formal coaching sessions (2 hours every 6 months)

Eligibility to access the grant program focused on groups who would have limited capacity to become a member of the IABC due to cultural and structural social barriers. See work sample for a copy of the full program structure.

BUDGET AND RECRUITMENT OF FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND SUPPORT

The following table outlines the cost of the Professional Development Grant per annum for one individual.

ITEM	COST	FUNDING SOURCE
IABC membership	\$320 p/a	Partnership (financial support)
Attendance at all IABC Victoria events	\$280 p/a	Partnership (financial support)
Participation in IABC Victoria mentoring program	N/A	In-kind support from Board members
Attachment to IABC Victoria Board	N/A	In-kind support from Board members
Coaching sessions (est. \$800 for 4 hours)	\$800 p/a	Partnership (in-kind support)
PROGRAM VALUE (paid and in-kind support)	\$1400 p/a	

Partnership opportunities were sort to cover associated costs. Two types of partnerships were offered to cover the complete costs of the program.

The interested partners could be a naming partner and/or professional coaching partner.

The *naming partner* provided funding for the IABC membership and attendance at IABC Victoria events.

Benefits for the naming partner:

- Naming rights to the grant program
- Placement of logo and grant name on IABC Victoria website
- Promote grant on partner website
- Yearly update on benefits of program from recipient

In exchange IABC Victoria received:

- \$600 per annum to cover membership and event costs

The *coaching partner* provided coaching services for each grant recipient for the duration of their grant period.

Benefits for the coaching partner:

- Placement of business logo and grant details on IABC Victoria website
- Promotion by IABC Victoria as 'coaching partner of choice for IABC Victoria'
- Promote grant participation on partner website
- Yearly update on benefits of program from recipient

In exchange IABC Victoria received:

- Formal coaching sessions for participants. Sessions totalled two hours in duration every six months

Three partners were secured to form three Professional Development Grants:

- Hope and Glory recruitment agency (naming partner)

- This is Creative, 100% Indigenous-owned creative agency (naming partner)
- Adrian Cropley, CEO of Cropley Communication and the Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence (coaching partner).

Hope and Glory and Adrian Cropley are IABC Victoria members. Through their partnerships they are members giving back to the chapter to foster greater inclusion and diversity. See work sample for an example of a partnership agreements.

PROMOTION

IABC Victoria used email to announce the Professional Development Grants events, as well as the chapter website and social media platforms (LinkedIn and Twitter). We have a large following on social media, which allows us to promote easy-to-consume content where our audiences spend most of their time. We promoted our grant program at least six weeks prior to the submission date, and continued to promote the program on a weekly basis. Board members and program partners were engaged to send information about the grant program to their networks in addition to our formal communication. Visit <https://vic.iabc.com/develop/professional-development-grants/> to see promotional information on the IABC Victoria website.

SELECTION OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

All applicants needed to fill in an application form and provided the following:

- 500-word essay (maximum word count) on their communication career and achievements so far and what their hope to achieve with a professional development grant
- Referee contact details
- Documents that support their application
- Examples of their work and letters of support (optional)
- Signed declaration

Applicants needed to meet eligibility criteria including:

- Must have been living (and continuing to live) in the state of Victoria for at least 12 months
- Be enrolled in a communication course, hold a communication qualification and/or be working in a communication field.
- Meet the specialised criteria for each grant they apply for:
 - Hope and Glory professional development grant is only open to people with disability.
 - Hope and Glory (transition) professional development grant is open to culturally and linguistically diverse applicants, early-career professionals (1-3 years experience), people returning to the profession after a career break or transitioning to the communication field.
 - This is Creative professional development grant is only open to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants.

IABC Victoria wanted to ensure that it ran a fair and equitable selection process. Applications were shortlisted by two members of the board (the Partnerships Chair and Engagement Chair) and were chosen based on merit and meeting the eligibility criteria. Each shortlisted applicant underwent an informal interview process and the IABC Victoria Board approved the recommended applicants for the grant.

The application and selection process was designed to be flexible to support any special needs of the applicants; examples include being able to provide an essay about their communication experience as some applicants may not have the traditional educational experience, we wanted to understand their story and their communication aspirations. An informal meeting with the applicants, this meeting was to allow us to get to know the applicant under conditions that they were comfortable in and give them the opportunity to put their best foot forward. See the work sample for the full selection process.

Results and reflections

RESULTS AND REFLECTIONS ON THE PROGRAM

It is the first time a program of this nature has been undertaken by IABC Victoria. As a result we had some successes and failures – but we have learnt a lot from the experience and it will help us evolve the program.

We received:

- five applications for the Hope and Glory (transition) grant
- one application for the Hope and Glory (person with disability) grant
- no applications for the This is Creative grant

IABC Victoria was satisfied with the number of applications for the Hope and Glory (transition) grant. This grant had the broadest criteria and it is believed that the grant program is highly accessible for people who are culturally and linguistically diverse applicants, early-career professionals (1-3 years experience), people returning to the profession after a career break or transitioning to the communication field.

One applicant for the Hope and Glory (person with disability) grant was enough to award the grant. In future promotion of the grant program, IABC Victoria will need to build deeper connections with disability support organisations, to enable us to promote the grant better to our target audience. We will be working with our award recipient to understand how we can adapt the grant to further suit it to people with disability and develop a better promotional campaign.

The This is Creative grant is targeted toward Australia Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals. IABC Victoria sought applicants for this grant on two separate occasions: October 2019 and September 2020. In the first round of promotion, we advertised across the IABC communication channels and networks. In the second round of promotion we send information to a number of Indigenous agencies and organisations including the Aboriginal Economic Development at the Department of Jobs and Precincts, Reconciliation Australia and CareerTrackers (Australian Aboriginal internship program). Despite these efforts, we could not find applicants. Feedback from our financial partner, This is Creative, was that we may not have the right product that would benefit Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communication professionals. For IABC Victoria, the next step is to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations to redefine the program so that is suitable for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communication professionals.

Restrictions placed on all chapters as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have meant that the grant recipients could not fully embrace the benefits offered to them, e.g. a full schedule of networking and workshops. While this is unavoidable, they have had the opportunity to attend online events across 2020. With the COVID-19 situation in Australia, where restrictions are easing, in 2021 the recipients should have a more fulsome experience and reap more benefits of the grant.

MEASUREMENT AGAINST OBJECTIVES

IABC Victoria is measuring the effectiveness of the program against its objectives:

Objective 1: Foster greater equality and inclusion within IABC Victoria by supporting access to opportunities provided by IABC to people who face cultural or structural barriers to career development

- We have two great recipients of the Hope and Glory Professional Development Grants
- We will need to improve our grant offering to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander individuals

Objective 2: Recruit IABC members and culturally appropriate partners to financially support and deliver the program

- Three partnerships were created to fund three Professional Development Grants – providing financial and in-kind support to the value of \$8400. Two of the partnerships were made with current IABC members and one partner was an Aboriginal owned Creative business that was culturally appropriate for the grant designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- Inquiries have been made by IABC members and supporters to participate in further grants

Objective 3: Contribute to succession planning for the next IABC Victoria leaders by providing exposure to IABC Victoria Board operations and leadership responsibilities

- Grant recipients have been working with board members to assist them with board projects that benefit members.

Objective 4: Further develop strategic communication professionals and leaders by providing career coaching and access to learning and development opportunities

- Grant recipients have been receiving career coaching, which will continue into 2021.