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Dear Expert Council,

We express our sincere gratitude to the Expert Council for the opportunity to provide a submission.

Victoria University supports the [Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities](#) (the Code) and wishes to highlight that one area in which universities across the nation are actively working to strengthen is the composition of their Councils.

## **Rigorous, Transparent, and Systematic Selection Process for All Appointed Positions**

As acknowledged by all stakeholders, a merit-based selection process is vital to ensuring the appointment of individuals best suited to each role.

To ensure a systematic, [transparent](#), rigorous, and appropriate process, we propose that 'Ministerial Appointments' and 'Government Appointments':

1. Adhere to [State Government guidelines](#), with Councils kept informed of the progress of appointments;
2. Align with the specific short and mid-term skill requirements of the Council; and
3. Facilitate collaboration with Councils, providing a shortlist for consideration.

This ensures that the best possible talent and expertise is secured and complements those appointments made by the institution itself.

## **Synergised Skill Set**

The selection process should prioritise identifying individuals with a diverse range of specialised skills, particularly in areas of strategic importance to the Council. This approach is critical, as it enables the Council to draw on a wide range of expertise, thus enhancing its ability to tackle complex challenges. Ultimately, it contributes to achieving long-term goals and ensuring organisational resilience. This method could be integrated into the Code.

## **Diversity Selection Matrix**

Councils are committed to enhancing diversity on their boards by actively seeking individuals from varied backgrounds and experiences. This includes implementing strategies to ensure that boards better reflect the communities they serve, fostering inclusivity and productivity. This is particularly important for an institution like Victoria University which is culturally

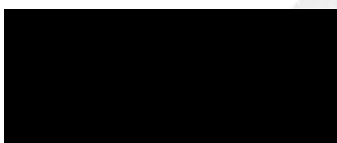
diverse culturally and linguistically. These initiatives form part of a broader commitment to building more equitable and effective decision-making bodies within universities.

We respectfully propose that the **Code** and **State Government Guidelines** consider the inclusion of a "name-blind selection" process. This would allow for a focus on an applicant's skills, experience, and qualifications, ensuring that the selection process remains free from unconscious bias. By emphasising merit over personal characteristics and reputation, this approach promotes fairness, transparency, and diversity, fostering a more inclusive environment.

## Student Representation

While universities utilise various channels to capture student feedback, in our view, it is essential that a number of students are represented on the board to ensure that diverse perspectives are meaningfully integrated into the decision-making process. We support the Code's position that there should be one or more student representatives on the governing body, representing both graduate and post-graduate levels. Furthermore, consideration should be given to including a VET student representative on the boards of dual-sector universities. This will ensure the representation of diverse student voices and promote enhanced collaboration and understanding.

Kind regards



**Professor Adam Shoemaker (He/Him)**

Vice-Chancellor