

OOSGG policy - patronages

Overview

Governors-General (and spouses) serve as Patrons of community organisations (patronages). Patronage indicates general support for the work of an organisation and indicates a Governor-General's intention to support and celebrate the organisation's achievements and contributions.

Patronage is accepted only as an honorary position, and does not include any involvement in organisation's operations, endorsement of positions or responsibility for their activity.

This policy provides a framework through which the Office of the Official Secretary to the Governor-General (the Office) makes recommendations to the Governor-General relating to patronages.

It includes:

- the conditions, criteria and other requirements of organisations seeking patronage of the Governor-General¹
- an overview of the types of interaction likely to flow from a patronage arrangement; and
- the ongoing requirements for any organisation of which the Governor-General is patron.

Governance

This policy is informed by past practice and endorsed by Management Committee.

It can be reviewed at the instigation of the Official Secretary or Deputy Official Secretary. Amendments must be reindorsed by Management Committee.

Process

Organisations may request patronage at any stage of the term.

All requests are considered through the Office's Program and Planning Committee. Membership of the Committee may vary but will include the Official and/or Deputy Official Secretary, the Director/s responsible for program and/or communications and representatives from the Strategic Engagement Branch.

The Committee makes recommendations to the Governor-General.

Upon acceptance of patronage, organisations are notified in writing with details of ongoing requirements. This exchange of correspondence represents, to the degree required, the existence of a formal agreement between the Office and the organisation.

¹ In this policy, patronage may refer to that of the Governor-General, the Governor-General's spouse or partner, or joint patronage of the Governor-General and their spouse/partner.

A record of patronages is kept and a list is published to the Governor-General's website.

Conditions

1. A Governor-General may accept a patronage for any period up to the conclusion of their term. Patronage may cease at an earlier point in time should circumstances require (for example, should an organisation be wound-up or if ongoing requirements are not met).
2. The Governor-General will typically accept patronages from not-for-profit organisations and registered charities.
 - a) Consideration may be given to professional bodies or non-incorporated entities (for example, projects, scholarships and memorials) if the Office finds they meet other criteria, pose no reputational risk to the Office or Governor-General and agree to adhere to ongoing requirements set out.
3. The Governor-General will typically accept organisations with a local focus if they are based in the Australian Capital Territory or are deemed to sufficiently meet other criteria.
4. In seeking the Governor-General as Patron, an organisation must demonstrate:
 - a) a clear focus on relevant issues or interests of national significance. This is a subjective, case-by-case assessment, based on a recommendation from the Office, considering:
 - the intent and objective of the organisation (as articulated in corporate governance documents)
 - any activity, even where ancillary to the above, that is inconsistent with the role of the Governor-General; and
 - alignment of the work of the organisation with the Governor-General's operational priorities and strategic objectives
 - b) a significant record of achievement and ethical behaviour. This will typically, but not always, mean a period of operations of five or more years. A record of achievement will be determined by the Office based on review of (but not limited to) annual reports, public commentary and references from independent sources. Consideration could be given to scale, geographic spread, impact on individuals and mission; and
 - c) sound financial management and strong governance arrangements demonstrated by up-to-date ACNC filings and/or registration with ASIC. If an organisation is not a registered charity, independently audited up-to-date financial documents could be provided to be provided.

Where conditions are waived, the Committee will note and record rationale and may (if the recommendation is accepted) vary the aforementioned agreement.

Arrangements for organisations of which the Governor-General is patron

Acceptance of a patronage does not bind the Governor-General or Office to any activity.

The Office reserves, in all instances, the right to review, halt or cease any activity it or the organisation is undertaking in relation to the patronage. This includes, but is not limited to, promoting the Governor-General as Patron, overtly or implicitly implying patronage represents endorsement of a position or action, and the use of the Governor-General's name or image in any publicly available material.

Whilst the Governor-General endeavors to be as active a patron as possible, the nature of their duties may limit opportunities for engagement throughout their term. As far as their Official Program allows, the Governor-General will seek to support patronages through:

- visits to a patronage's office or place of activity, including meeting with staff, volunteers and clients
- consulting with patronages to learn about areas of mutual interest
- hosting events at Government House, Admiralty House or other locations as available during official travel in Australia and abroad; and
- providing messages of support and congratulations (video or written).

Support beyond these areas requires specific consideration and agreement through the Program and Planning Committee and Official and/or Deputy Official Secretary.

Ongoing requirements

Patronages are required to update the Office on any change to Conditions 1-4.

Patronages should provide the Office advance notice of any incidents likely to draw significant adverse attention. Particular care – and additional consultation – is required where a patronage seeks to involve the Governor-General in activity that could be construed as fundraising, advocacy or any activity that could be considered beyond the publicly accepted role of the Governor-General.