



**AGORA  
THINKTANK**

# The Agora charter

September 2006



**Melbourne City Mission**  
Building Inclusive Communities

Supported by  
the Victorian  
Government



**Victoria**  
The Place To Be

Facilitated by



**nous**  
THE NOUS GROUP

[www.agorathinktank.org](http://www.agorathinktank.org)

## The Agora charter

<b>Vision</b>	<p>Agora Think Tank is a collaboration between the not-for-profit, business and government sectors working together in partnership to address issues of disadvantage in new and different ways. To give a focus to Agora's work, the initial lens will be to increase 'economic participation of socially-disadvantaged young people and their families through workforce engagement'.</p> <p>Agora is not about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• replicating traditional models of partnerships</li> <li>• volunteering</li> <li>• philanthropy</li> </ul>												
<b>Purpose</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To capture and share the learnings to date about new ways of working that can further inform future developments</li> <li>2. To highlight emerging innovations</li> <li>3. To outline how a more preventative approach to social issues can be instituted</li> <li>4. To provide answers on how successful approaches can be scaled up</li> <li>5. To identify preconditions for constructive government, businesses and community working together</li> </ol>												
<b>Timing</b>	<p>The first 12 months of activity will focus on meeting the following milestones:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr style="background-color: #f4a460;"> <th style="text-align: center;">Date</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Milestone</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Dec 2005</td> <td>Reconfirm Agora direction, reorganise working parties and agree activities</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Feb 2006</td> <td>Prepare action plans for agreed activities</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">May 2006</td> <td>Research cross-sector partnerships</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Aug 2006</td> <td>Prepare for forums</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Sept 2006</td> <td>Share knowledge learnt from work performed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><u>Note:</u> Activities include both capturing lessons and implementing projects.</p>	Date	Milestone	Dec 2005	Reconfirm Agora direction, reorganise working parties and agree activities	Feb 2006	Prepare action plans for agreed activities	May 2006	Research cross-sector partnerships	Aug 2006	Prepare for forums	Sept 2006	Share knowledge learnt from work performed
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<b>Requirements for success</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commitment and availability of Agora members</li> <li>2. Action and implementation by working parties</li> <li>3. Activities that meet specific social needs</li> <li>4. Clear definition of milestones</li> <li>5. Optimal composition of working parties</li> <li>6. Ability to capture interests and motivations of each sector</li> <li>7. Continued leadership from funders and supporters</li> </ol>												

## Working group charters

<b>Purpose</b>	<p>The purpose of the working groups is to deliver the Agora charter. Each working group will address the theme:</p> <p><i>‘economic participation of socially-disadvantaged young people and their families through workforce engagement’</i></p>
<b>Membership</b>	<p>Membership for each working party should comprise at least one member from each of the following sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NFP</li> <li>• Private</li> <li>• Government</li> </ul> <p>Each working party will be chaired by one of its members and facilitated by a Nous consultant.</p>
<b>Defining success</b>	<p>Successful Agora activities will have committed working parties whose own success is tied in with the success of the activity</p>
<b>Time commitment</b>	<p>Each working party member should anticipate to spend no more than one hour a week</p>
<b>Topics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and promote preventative projects focusing on crime and substance misuse</li> <li>• Understand and promote asset based approach to economic participation</li> <li>• Understand and promote education and training programs for disadvantaged young people</li> <li>• Understand and promote community facilities</li> <li>• Understand and promote common themes across all partnership programs</li> </ul>

## Roles and responsibilities

### Agora Secretariat

The Agora Secretariat is responsible for the overall success of Agora. It ensures that the direction of Agora is in line with its charter. The secretariat will allocate appropriate resources to Agora activities, agree key milestone dates and hold accountable each working party.

### Working parties

Working parties are responsible for delivery of Agora's vision.

Working parties must ensure that Agora activities are developed within the milestones dates set by the leadership group. Most of the effort will come from delivering the activity.

The working parties are chaired by a nominated working party member and report directly to the leadership group.

### Working party members

Working party members are responsible for task completion within a working party and have the collective responsibility for a working party's success. Tasks include:

- pursuing tasks and parties that can contribute to developing the activity
- Facilitate the ongoing development of the activity by using their organisation's resources or the resources of their professional network

Most of the effort will come from creating and driving activity

### Melbourne Citymission

Melbourne Citymission was the catalyst of the Agora. It is neither the owner nor the leader of the Agora. Agora is led by the Leadership group.

It is one of the four resource supporters of the Agora, along with the Victorian Government, Ernst and Young and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust.

It has committed to providing Secretariat support to the Leadership Group.

MCM is also a member of the Agora like other organisations and individuals.

MCM is the fund holder and is responsible for reporting progress to the other funding partners

### Agora membership

The Agora membership is the active support base for Agora. Where there is an appropriate skills match, members will be invited to participate in working groups. Members will also be invited to Agora forums to better understand the working parties and to provide working parties with relevant input.

## The Nous Group

The role of Nous is as much catalyst as facilitator. That is the role is to catalyse action as well as to facilitate discussion. The role requires Nous to:

1. To work with the Agora leadership group in clearly defining the scope of the Agora, and formulating the agenda and work plan
2. Facilitate, design and document the Agora working parties and 2006 conference
3. Help to promote and connect the idea of the Agora to attract a broader set of members
4. Provide support for the working groups
5. Assist working group to drive forward their activities.

## Appendix - Membership composition of working groups

### Secretariat Participants

Ivan Deveson (Chair)	Centre for Economic Development Australia
George Pappas	Committee for Melbourne
Stuart Painter	Ernst & Young
Charles Lane	Department for Victorian Communities
Liz Gilles	Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Anne Turley	Melbourne Citymission
Ashley Dickinson	Victoria Police
Steven Meredith	Talent Intelligence
Zana Smith	IPAA
David Adams	Department for Victorian Communities
Tim Orton (Facilitator)	The Nous Group
Zac Ashkanasy	The Nous Group

### Working Group Participants

Common Themes	
Charles Lane (Chair)	Department for Victorian Communities
Liz Gilles	Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Anne Turley	Melbourne Citymission
Stephen Gianni	Leadership Plus
Richard Bluck	Leadership Victoria
Cath Smith	VCOSS
Juli Dugdale	Melbourne Citymission
Justin Kennedy	Department for Victorian Communities
Trish Toohey	Consultant, ex-ANZ
Graeme Wise	Bodyshop
Tim Orton	The Nous Group
Zac Ashkanasy	The Nous Group

<b>Community Infrastructure</b>	
David Adams (Chair)	Department for Victorian Communities
John Wiseman	University of Melbourne
Claire Ridding	Hornery Institute
Sally James	Melbourne Citymission
Zac Ashkanasy (facilitator)	The Nous Group
<b>Education</b>	
Zana Smith (Chair)	IPAA
Anne Turley	Melbourne Citymission
Juli Dugdale	Melbourne Citymission
George Modrich	Frankston City Council
Josie Rizza	Melbourne Cares
Hector Bugeja	Department of Education
Zac Ashkanasy (facilitator)	The Nous Group
Zara Lasater (researcher)	University of Melbourne
<b>Asset Building</b>	
Steven Meredith (Chair)	Talent Intelligence
Tony Nicholson	Brotherhood of St Laurence
Jeff Rich	Dept for Victorian Communities
Mark Boyd-Graham	Bendigo Bank
Zac Ashkanasy (facilitator)	The Nous Group

<b>Crime Prevention</b>	
Ashley Dickinson (Chair)	Victoria Police
Liz Gillies	Helen Macpherson Smith Trust
Colleen Claire	Centre for Excellence in Child & Family
Jocelyn Bignold	Melbourne Citymission
Mark Boyd-Graham	Bendigo Bank
Collin Brady	Bendigo Bank
Scott Elkington	Bendigo Bank
Mark Watt	White Lion
Murray Wilson	White Lion
Chris DeAraugo	Lead On
Ruth Oakden	Toll Holdings
Louise Glanville	Neighbourhood Justice Centre
Jan Noblett	Department of Justice
Lill Healy	Department for Victorian Communities
Regina Hill (Researcher)	Independent consultant
Zac Ashkanasy (Facilitator)	The Nous Group