

## Candidate Briefing Pack



# Non-Executive Director

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State Schools Relief · Melbourne, Victoria

July 2026

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Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of State Schools Relief. This pack sets out who we are, where we are heading, what the role involves, and the capabilities we are seeking, so that you can decide whether this is the right contribution for you at this point in your governance journey.

State Schools Relief has appointed Searchlight Group to manage this search. We would be glad to speak with you confidentially before you decide whether to apply.

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## ABOUT STATE SCHOOLS RELIEF

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State Schools Relief began in 1930, during the Great Depression. Anton Vroland, a head teacher at Elsternwick State School, brought together educators concerned about children living in extreme hardship. From that meeting the organisation was formed, built on a simple idea: schools know which children need help most, and communities can work together to support them. In 2030 the organisation reaches its centenary.

Today, State Schools Relief removes barriers to education for Victorian government school students facing financial hardship, providing uniforms, shoes, glasses, learning resources and technology. Schools apply on behalf of students and items are dispatched and delivered within three business days and delivered in plain packaging, without stigma.

The organisation operates a deliberately hybrid model. It is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, funded primarily by the Victorian Department of Education. Donations to SSR go directly to students, alongside a genuinely commercial social-enterprise uniform business, Equal Threads, which generates surplus for reinvestment into SSR's purpose.

This duality is central to the appointment. State Schools Relief is not a conventional grant-dependent charity, and it does not govern like one.

## OUR PURPOSE, VISION AND VALUES

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**Purpose.** To remove barriers to education by providing essential support with dignity.

**Vision.** Every student has equal access to education with a sense of belonging and dignity.

**Values.**

- **Dignity** — every child feels seen, supported and included, never defined by circumstance.
- **Impact** — we focus on results that matter: students engaged, families supported, futures enabled.
- **Empathy** — we put people at the heart of every decision.
- **Trust** — we protect people's confidence in us through fairness, transparency and quality.

**More about State Schools Relief**

<https://stateschoolsrelief.org.au/>

<https://www.acnc.gov.au/charity/charities/f31c6b0b-2caf-e811-a962-000d3ad24a0d/profile>



## OUR IMPACT

In 2025, State Schools Relief received more than 96,000 requests for support, supported over 68,000 students across more than 1,340 Victorian government schools, and delivered \$7.9 million in direct savings to families. Since 2016 the organisation has responded to more than 600,000 requests, distributed over 2.1 million essential items, and delivered more than \$61 million in cumulative family savings.

### Scale and complexity

Demand continues to rise. The organisation is investing significantly in systems, data and technology to deal with it while running a commercial business and protecting a charitable purpose.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION

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State Schools Relief is guided by its 2023–28 Strategic Plan (SP28), which commits the organisation to scaling its impact, diversifying income, strengthening its authorising environment, and running a genuinely commercial uniform business while protecting a charitable purpose.

### SP28 goals

- **Scale** — triple the organisation's annual impact.
- **Systems** — services shaped by lived experience.
- **Leverage** — partnerships across government, community, research and the private sector.

### Priorities for the period ahead

SP28 is in its scaling horizon, oriented toward the 2030 centenary and the next strategic plan. The Board is steering a number of significant near-term priorities:

- Renewing core government funding.
- Turning the commercial uniform business, Equal Threads, to sustainable surplus delivery.
- Building the organisational, systems and data infrastructure required for growth including substantial investment in technology over the next few years.
- Meeting rising demand without compromising the speed, dignity and quality of the service.

For an incoming director, this is a genuine opportunity to help shape the organisation's next chapter as it approaches its centenary.



## ABOUT THE BOARD

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State Schools Relief is governed by a Board of Non-Executive Directors. The Constitution provides for up to nine directors, including a Chair and a Deputy Chair, supported by a committee structure. The Board is currently chaired by Susan Mann, and its membership brings depth across education, parent and community advocacy, strategy, finance and risk, and commercial and brand expertise.

The Board is undergoing a planned leadership transition. A new Chair will step up from within the existing Board at the 2026 Annual General Meeting in October, and this recruitment fills the Non-Executive Director vacancy created by that transition.

The Board is deliberately renewing and professionalising itself as the organisation scales, adopting a formal skills matrix, contemporary board processes and a board portal. It is an evolving Board that actively values diversity of perspective and style, and it is served by a strong and well-regarded Chief Executive and executive team.

## THE ROLE OF NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Within the Board's collective responsibility, each director contributes to the governance of the organisation by:

- Contributing actively to the Board's discharge of its responsibilities under the Constitution, the Board Charter and the Corporations Act, as a company limited by guarantee.
- Attending and actively participating in Board and committee meetings, and testing, not merely endorsing strategy, performance and risk.
- Maintaining the distinction between the role of the Board and the role of management, and supporting a constructive relationship with the Chief Executive.
- Contributing to a respectful, ethical and inclusive Board culture in which different perspectives are genuinely heard.
- Contributing to at least one Board committee.
- Participating in the recruitment of new directors and in Board and committee evaluation.



## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

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This is deliberately not a school-based appointment. The Constitution and Board Charter already secure the organisation's connection to Victorian government schools through occupied positions, and the Board is well represented in education and the not-for-profit sector. The purpose of this appointment is to bring governance and commercial-strategic capabilities that complements, rather than duplicates the existing membership.

**We are agnostic about sector background. We are interested in values, judgement and skills.**

### Essential capabilities

- **Governance.** An experienced, formally qualified contemporary director, GAICD or equivalent expected with a deep, practical understanding of board process, delegation, conflicts, and the role of a board versus management in a company limited by guarantee.
- **Commercial judgement and appetite for growth.** Demonstrated commercial acumen, and the ambition and confidence to help the organisation grow while running a genuinely commercial business inside a charitable purpose.
- **Risk.** Practical experience overseeing enterprise risk, controls and compliance in a growing, multi-stream organisation.
- **Strategy.** The ability to test and shape organisational strategy at board level scaling, income diversification, partnerships and growth.

### Highly desirable

- **Scaling and technology investment.** Experience of significant business systems or technology investment, and of building infrastructure for organisational growth.
- **Purchasing, inventory and logistics.** Depth in purchasing, inventory and logistics would be particularly valuable. These are central to the operating model and are a current knowledge gap on the Board.

### Values and personal attributes

- A leader or an emerging board leader with the capacity to grow into greater board responsibility over time.
- Integrity, sound judgement, and a collaborative and inclusive style.
- The ability to contribute to robust, respectful debate while supporting a unified Board position.
- A strategic rather than operational mindset.
- A genuine commitment to educational equity and to the dignity of Victorian government school students.



## TIME COMMITMENT

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- At least six Board meetings per year, plus an annual strategy session. Papers are circulated one week ahead. Board meetings are ordinarily held from 6pm to 8pm on a Monday and rotate between in person meetings in the Melbourne CBD and online.
- Contribution to at least one Board committee. Committee meetings are held online ordinarily in the late afternoon.
- Directors are appointed for a term as provided under the Constitution.
- These are currently voluntary appointments. SSR is introducing a notional director fee of \$6,000 per annum, expected to be adopted at the 2026 AGM.

## SCREENING

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State Schools Relief conducts screening for all Board members. Screening must be satisfactorily completed before an appointment is confirmed, and is expected to include:

- Structured reference checks.
- A National Police Check.
- A Working with Children Check.
- A National Personal Insolvency Check and confirmation of eligibility to act as a director.
- Verification of qualifications and professional memberships.

## HOW TO APPLY

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Searchlight Group is managing this appointment on behalf of State Schools Relief. To express your interest, please submit a current CV together with a brief cover letter outlining what you would bring to the Board against the capabilities set out above.

Applications should be submitted via: <https://searchlightgroup.com.au/jobs/non-executive-director-2/>

If you would like a confidential conversation about the role before applying, we would welcome it.

### Contact

**Michael Holdway** · Managing Director, Searchlight Group

Mobile: 0400 006 513

Email: [michael@searchlightgroup.com.au](mailto:michael@searchlightgroup.com.au)

**Applications close: midnight on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2026**

**Conflicts of interest:** please let us know of any potential conflicts of interest at the time of application.

*State Schools Relief is committed to inclusion and diversity, and warmly encourages applications from people of all backgrounds, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disability, and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.*

