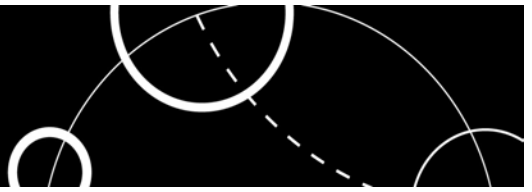


Connecting Communities:
the second wave



MY CONNECTED COMMUNITY

FUNDING GUIDELINES

MY CONNECTED COMMUNITY

FUNDING GUIDELINES

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SECTION A: PROGRAM OVERVIEW

1. Invitation to apply for My Connected Community program funding

The Victorian Government invites groups and organisations across Victoria to apply for My Connected Community program funding to establish online groups.

2. Overview of the My Connected Community program

The Victorian Government’s *Connecting Communities: the second wave* policy seeks to reduce the barriers to Internet uptake in the Victorian community by targeting groups with persistently low levels of Internet take-up and encouraging the development of more relevant and useful content. An initiative of the policy is the My Connected Community program which aims to stimulate the development of online groups of interest within Victoria.

Through My Connected Community, assistance is provided to eligible community-based organisations such as statewide agencies, peak bodies and other organisations able to meet the selection criteria to provide support to groups wanting to move online. The Victorian Government support focuses on groups who have no other means to get online.

Working closely with leaders of community groups including cultural and sporting clubs, associations, special interest and social groups, the program will provide these groups with the support and tools needed to build an online group. My Connected Community program targets those people who have not been able to gain access and skills to use the Internet to date. For example, senior Victorians, unemployed Victorians and those outside the education system or workforce and people with a disability.

To date, the My Connected Community program has supported the development of more than 3,000 online groups with a total of more than 42,000 members. For further information, please visit the My Connected Community website at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>.

2.1 Aim

The key objective of My Connected Community is to stimulate the development of online groups of interest within Victoria to ensure that the benefits of online technology are shared across the entire Victorian community.

2.2 Definitions

Table 1: Definitions

Online group	An active online group is one consisting of four or more members who participate at least weekly in the online group’s activities using two or more of the program’s features such as chat, online forum, training, promotion and planning.
Group owner/moderator	A member who is the leader of an online group responsible for establishing and administrating group communications.
Project Partner	A Project Partner is an organisation funded to recruit, establish and support a specific number of online groups.

2.3 Program description

Through My Connected Community, community groups will be able to establish their own online groups. Training and technical support is provided to members to enable them to do this. By participating in the My Connected Community program, community groups and their individual members will be able to:

- interact with others with similar interests;
- create their own homepage;
- use an online “Virtual Office” to help the group organise meetings and events more efficiently;
- access services and online tools to enable more effective communication;
- participate in forum discussions with other members;
- contribute to a chat session;
- check out the diary of community events;
- make their mark in the guestbook;
- join other online groups of choice; and
- visit recommended sites on favourite topics.

2.4 Program target groups

My Connected Community is for those Victorians who have not been able and are unable to gain Internet skills and access. In particular:

- senior Victorians (including seniors from non-English speaking backgrounds);
- recent migrants;
- unemployed Victorians and those outside the education system and workforce (including disadvantaged youth); and/or
- people with a disability.

Priority will be given to those groups that:

- currently do not have an online presence;
- are unable to create an online group elsewhere; and
- lack the financial capacity or skills base to establish an online group.

2.5 Program funding and assistance

2.5.1 Funding levels and targets

Table 3 outlines the levels of Victorian Government assistance available under the program and associated targets. Please note: the number of online groups that Project Partners will be contracted to establish will be negotiated subject to the needs of community members.

Table 3: Funding levels

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Grant amount	N/A	\$10,000	\$30,000
Number of online groups to be established (minimum – maximum)	1	5 - 10	15 - 30
Duration of funding period	N/A	2 years	2 years

2.5.2 Level 1 online groups

Level 1 groups are those community based groups such as sporting clubs, hobby groups and other special interest groups who wish to move online and require little or no assistance to do so. Eligible organisations include not-for-profit organisations, charities, local government entities, state government agencies and peak bodies. Level 1 groups should be able to demonstrate community links and a relevance to program target groups (refer Section 2.4).

Under My Connected Community, these groups will be invited to use:

- the My Connected Community website;
- call centre support;
- web page hosting;
- My Connected Community training; and
- My Connected Community training materials.

Level 1 groups will not receive any funding to participate in the program and are *not* required to complete this application process. Prospective community based organisations who would like to develop an online group of interest amongst their members should go to the website located at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au> and complete the online registration form, then follow the steps to create an online group.

2.5.3 Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners

Eligible organisations are invited to apply for Level 2 or Level 3 Project Partner funding depending on the number of online groups they are seeking to create and the level of training and/or support to be provided. Table 3 above outlines the minimum and maximum number of groups to be established by Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners, however applications for below the minimum number of online groups will be considered in special circumstances (please contact the My Connected Community Secretariat to discuss). Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis to eligible organisations that undertake to meet the objectives of the program.

Project Partners will have access to all the tools and support provided by the program to assist them to establish online groups amongst their members, or residents. More information about the support and assistance provided to Project Partners is outlined in Section B, Part 4 of these Guidelines.

In this funding round, both Level 2 and Level 3 grants are available. Organisations wishing to apply for either Level 2 or Level 3 grants must complete the Application Form attached to these Guidelines.

2.6 Applicant eligibility

Community-based organisations that meet the selection criteria are eligible to apply for a My Connected Community grant. Eligible organisations include not-for-profit organisations, charities, local government entities, state government agencies and peak bodies. All applicants must demonstrate strong community links.

Priority will be given to new online groups. Recipients of funding must be an incorporated body and be able to provide an ABN before entering into a Funding Agreement.

Funding will not be provided to:

- online groups which have previously received funding through the My Connected Community program;
- commercial organisations or bodies established for for-profit purposes;
- organisations seeking funding to supplement the ongoing cost of an existing online group; and
- duplicate online groups already operating elsewhere, eg Yahoo.

2.7 Further information

My Connected Community is funded by the Victorian Government. The program is administered by Multimedia Victoria, a division of the Department of Infrastructure and is coordinated by VICNET, a division of the State Library of Victoria.

Please contact the My Connected Community Secretariat for further information:

Telephone: 03 8664 7001
Free call: 1800 629 835
Email: mc2@vicnet.net.au
Website: <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>

SECTION B: MY CONNECTED COMMUNITY PROJECT PARTNERS

1. Contractual arrangements

All successful Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners will be required to enter into a My Connected Community Funding Agreement with the Library Board of Victoria (LBV). The Funding Agreement includes project targets and dates. These targets will include the establishment of a specific number of online groups and the delivery of a specific number of training hours to group members. The Funding Agreement also outlines reporting requirements and the due dates for reports. All Level 2 and 3 My Connected Community Funding Agreements will be for 2 years. After the 2 year funding period, no ongoing funding will be provided. Funds will not be paid unless an agreement has been formally executed and signed by the applicant and the Library Board of Victoria.

2. Obligations under the My Connected Community Funding Agreement

2.1 Reporting requirements

Written progress reports will be required every six months. Progress reports must detail:

- the current status of online groups (including the number of active online groups and members);
- any deviations from the Project Plan;
- income and expenditure; and
- any issues that require attention.

Reports should also highlight major successes and include information on publicity events and stories related to the online groups.

My Connected Community Project Partners may be subject to a program audit during the life of, or at the completion of, the My Connected Community Funding Agreement. The purpose of this audit is to verify that grant monies have been expended in accordance with the My Connected Community Funding Agreement. During the course of this audit, Income and Expenditure statements, training records and reports may be reviewed.

2.2 Payment of funding

Project Partner grants are paid in three instalments. The first upon signing the My Connected Community Funding Agreement and submission of an approved detailed Project Plan and Budget. The second instalment will be paid once 40% of the online target groups are created and active and the third instalment will be paid once 100% of the online target groups are created and active and the final report including the sustainability plan is accepted.

2.3 Communication with My Connected Community Secretariat

Project Partners are required to maintain regular communication with the My Connected Community Secretariat throughout the period of the Funding Agreement. My Connected Community Project Partners must notify the Secretariat of any changes to their information such as key contact person, email address, phone numbers, address, and number of online groups.

2.4 Marketing and promotion

Promotion of My Connected Community within the local community is essential to ensure interest and recruitment. The My Connected Community Secretariat will provide promotional

material such as brochures and other program awareness material to Project Partners. The My Connected Community Secretariat is also available to provide advice and support regarding marketing material and events.

Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners are required to use their own local knowledge and networks to recruit groups and group members to participate in the program. The My Connected Community Secretariat will work with Project Partners, as they identify suitable group owners and moderators.

2.5 Training

It is the responsibility of Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners to provide training to at least two group owners/moderators per online group to ensure that community groups have the skills necessary to bring their members online.

It is also the responsibility of the Project Partner to provide a minimum of 10 training hours per online group established. The My Connected Community Secretariat will be responsible for providing ‘Train the Trainer’ training as detailed in 4.3 below.

2.6 Launches and events

Each Project Partner is responsible for launching their project. Launches and other events are to be recorded on the relevant group’s online events calendar and Project Partners must notify the My Connected Community Secretariat of the event.

The Project Partner shall invite the Minister for Information and Communication Technology to launch the My Connected Community project.

2.7 Ongoing Promotion

Project Partners are required to retain a record of human interest stories which develop over time within the online groups. These stories are a valuable resource for raising awareness and to share and demonstrate success. Project Partners are expected to post at least five stories throughout the Funding Agreement period to the My Connected Community Stories page. These success stories can relate to individual users or group activities.

2.8 Participation in My Connected Community Activities

My Connected Community Project Partner forums are designed to provide an opportunity for Group Owner/Moderators to meet each other face to face, exchange information and ideas about their projects and to meet the My Connected Community Secretariat staff. A total of three forums will be held throughout the Funding Agreement period. At least two representatives from each Project Partner are required to attend at least one forum per year.

3. Expending My Connected Community funding

The organisation may spend grant funds for the purpose of assisting their online groups. Grant monies may be spent on items such as the following to assist online groups operate efficiently and effectively:

- telecommunication costs;
- hardware and software;
- training;
- community consultation costs;
- promotion costs; and

- wages and overheads associated with the administration of the program.

4. Project assistance and support

The program coordinator, VICNET provides the following support to the My Connected Community program.

4.1 My Connected Community Secretariat

The My Connected Community Secretariat is responsible for providing assistance, advice and support to My Connected Community Project Partners and is first point of contact for Project Partners.

The My Connected Community Secretariat is responsible for:

- coordinating any assistance and training Project Partners may require;
- addressing any issues that require attention relating to implementation of the My Connected Community program;
- monitoring Project Partner Agreements and ensuring that milestones are met and payment are made;
- ensuring that record keeping and reporting requirements are met;
- visiting Project Partners to maintain contact and to see how things are going;
- providing advice and support about promoting My Connected Community in the community; and
- providing assistance in forming links with local libraries, local community organisations, local business, local schools and local councils.

4.2 Call Centre assistance

Telephone helpdesk support is available from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday through VICNET. A message service will also be available outside of these hours. Projects may call on (03) 8664 7001(metro) or 1800 629 835 (country) to receive free project related support over the phone.

4.3 Training

As part of the program, the My Connected Community Secretariat will provide ‘Train the Trainer’ training to a maximum of 2 people per Project Partner. Table 4 outlines the training Project Partners can access under the program.

Table 4: My Connected Community training

	Training Content
Group owner/moderator training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced use and navigation of the web site • Establishing and managing the online group • Using the communication facilities eg forums, guestbook, mailing lists and chat rooms • Netiquette and ground rules for an online group • Legal considerations for an online group • Help and support • Bringing a community group online: leading the group, promotion and growth
User training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and navigation of the web site

4.4 Training materials

The My Connected Community Secretariat through VICNET a Registered Training Organisation, will provide training materials to support the program.

The following training materials for the use of Level 1 groups, Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners are available online free of charge via the website at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>:

- My Connected Community owner/moderator manuals; and
- My Connected Community user manuals.

For a small fee, the My Connected Community Secretariat can provide printed copies of these manuals. The manuals can be easily duplicated by trainers however copyright must be acknowledged on all materials used.

4.5 Online support community

An online group will also be maintained to support My Connected Community Project Partners, enabling Project Partners to network and exchange information. This online group will allow the My Connected Community Secretariat to post information relevant to all Project Partners and will also invite opinion on My Connected Community issues. Project Partners will be called on to articulate the thoughts of their members.

4.6 Support materials and information

Free support materials and information will be regularly posted on the program website by the My Connected Community Secretariat.

5. Code of conduct

All use of the free online interactive services offered by this program is conditional upon acceptance and observance of the program's Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct comprises policies related to netiquette, email usage and illegal activities as well as a Privacy Policy, Disclaimer, Terms & Conditions and Acceptable Use Policy. It is the responsibility of the organisation to be aware of the latest changes to these documents. These policies can be viewed online at <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/help/code.html>

Responsibility for the content of each online group at My Connected Community lies with group owners/moderators, who have administrative rights to edit and delete the contents of their own online group if deemed inappropriate. The My Connected Community Secretariat and owners/moderators reserve the right to remove any content deemed inappropriate and any user in breach of the Code of Conduct. The My Connected Community Secretariat cannot monitor or review live chat sessions and therefore it is the responsibility of the owner/moderator of each online group to do this.

The owner of any groups established on the My Connected Community website must be an adult (18+years). The My Connected Community Secretariat may in their absolute discretion remove, without notice, any group behaving irresponsibly or owned by a minor. Children who use My Connected Community must be supervised at all times.

The My Connected Community Secretariat accepts no responsibility for the behaviour of individuals who access any of the interactive features of the My Connected Community website, including any chat room. This includes any liability in respect of their actions, comments and/or opinions, which are solely their own and not those of the program.

While every attempt is made to link to appropriate sites, the My Connected Community Secretariat cannot guarantee the safety or suitability of any external site, the content of which is outside of VICNET's control, and subject to change.

SECTION C: LODGING YOUR APPLICATION

1. Lodgement instructions

1.1 Lodging your application

The original and 3 copies of your application must be received at the address below no later than 4.00 pm, Thursday 22 September 2005. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered. No emailed or faxed applications will be accepted. Please do not send original references or legal documents with your application.

1.2 Closing date for applications: 4.00 pm, Thursday 22 September 2005.

1.3 Applications are to be sent to:

My Connected Community
c/-VICNET
Entry 5, Latrobe Street
328 Swanston Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

1.4 Hand deliveries should be made to:

My Connected Community
c/-VICNET
Entry 5/State Library of Victoria
Latrobe Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000

2. Completing the Application Form

Applicants must complete the attached Application Form. All sections must be completed in full. If you do not have a copy of the Application Form or you would like an electronic copy, please contact the My Connected Community Secretariat or visit the website:

Telephone: 03 8664 7001
Free call: 1800 629 835
Email: mc2@vicnet.net.au
Website: <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au>

Part A: Applicant details

In Part A, you are required to enter your organisation's details including primary contact person. This should be the person who will be responsible for managing the program if your organisation's application is successful.

Part B: Project plan

In Part B, each question is to be addressed separately and answered to the best of your knowledge. Please note that you are required to answer each question even if you believe you are being repetitive. On the following pages, advice is provided for each question to help you in answering all criteria.

PART B: PROJECT PLAN

1. Are you applying for Level 2 or Level 3 funding?

Please tick the appropriate box.

Level 2

Level 3

BACKGROUND

2. Detail what your organisation's core business activities are. How will the My Connected Community program work within it?

Please detail the core business of the organisation and the communities you work with. If you decide to include material like an Annual Report, please summarise relevant information here. Include details of management and governance, for example key staff and Committee of Management Members.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

3. Outline the key purpose and objective of your project.

Outline the purpose and objective of the My Connected Community Project you propose to establish. Please include what will be achieved by the creation of online groups. For example, will the project aim to change the way the groups communicate, reduce the isolation of members, or assist the members to increase their Internet and computer skills?

ONLINE GROUPS

4. Identify the core target group(s) in your project.

My Connected Community is for those Victorians who have not been able and are unable to gain Internet skills and access. In particular:

- senior Victorians (including seniors from non-English speaking backgrounds);
- recent migrants;
- unemployed Victorians and those outside the education system and workforce (including disadvantaged youth); and/or
- people with a disability.

Priority will be given to those groups that:

- currently do not have an online presence;
- are unable to create an online group elsewhere; and
- lack the financial capacity or skills base to establish an online group.

Applications should explain how your organisation has worked with the identified target group(s) in the past and/or how the organisation will market itself to appeal to the identified target group(s). Please note that Project Partners are not expected to work with all the target groups listed. Project Partners are encouraged to focus on the target groups within their networks.

5. How many online groups do you intend to establish and how did you arrive at this number of groups?

Level 2 and 3 Project Partners will be contracted to establish a specific number of online groups. Level 2 Project Partners are required to establish between 5 and 10 online groups. Level 3 Project Partners are required to establish between 15 and 30 online groups. The actual number of online groups each Project Partner is able to establish will vary according to the needs and abilities of each online group. Your proposal must clearly outline how many groups will be established under your project and why you arrived at this number.

6. Identify the purpose and objective of each group that is proposed to be established.

For each group that is proposed to be brought online, please provide a proposed name, description of the group and projected membership numbers. If possible identify the Moderator for each group.

The rationale for the proposed number of groups should be discussed including how these groups will benefit from the program, the purpose and the objective of each group and whether the groups currently use the Internet to communicate.

Proposed Name	Projected Membership Numbers	Proposed Moderator	Description of the Group (including purpose and objective)

7. Outline how you propose to meet the needs of your target group(s).

Proposals should outline how your organisation will meet the needs of My Connected Community users so that their involvement in the program is a worthwhile and a relevant experience. You may need to identify what these needs are. This may involve working closely with community leaders and organisations. For example, material may need to be presented in particular formats such as in languages other than English and physical and technical facilities may need to be provided to enable access to the My Connected Community website such as, special software and hardware for people with a disability, and large screens for the elderly. Meeting community needs also involves ease of access issues including physical access to the location of the facilities such as, ramp access for people in wheelchairs, a welcoming and comfortable environment to visit and work in.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY

8. Describe the strategies you will use to establish these online groups and how your organisation proposes to promote the program to prospective members.

Your proposal should outline how your organisation is going to work with other community agencies such as local public libraries, local community information centres, local migrant resource centres, and neighbourhood houses in order to establish these online groups.

Your proposal should also outline strategies to attract users, particularly those individuals with no access to online services. It should also include strategies focusing on encouraging sustained usage of the Internet.

9. Give a brief plan of how training will be conducted and where and when this will occur.

Level 2 and Level 3 Project Partners are required to ensure community groups have the necessary skills to go online. This will require Project Partners to deliver IT training to community groups. Proposals should provide a brief overview of how training will be provided to group owner/moderators and/or members including where and when this will occur, the content of training and the duration of training.

10. Provide a brief description of the computer facilities available for group members for access to the Internet. Also, identify how these facilities will meet the needs of your My Connected Community project.

In order to participate in the program, community groups must be able to access the Internet. Proposals should describe where members are anticipated to access the Internet and should detail the existing computer networks including how it is set up, managed and supported, and outline any further requirements needed to run the project. If your organisation does not have computer facilities and intends to use existing infrastructure at another organisation, please outline those facilities available and what arrangements will be made with this organisation.

11. Describe the existing skills of staff and volunteers who will be working on the project. Describe how existing skills will be built on to meet the needs of online groups.

Project Partners require staff who have, or plan to acquire, skills in using the Internet and in training people. Outline the existing skills base of those who will be supporting the online groups. Detail how their skills will be developed to meet the needs of providing a high quality My Connected Community project. This may involve staff attending training sessions either through VICNET or other similar organisations. Proposals should also detail the experience and expertise of those who will be responsible for managing the project.

12. Explain how your project will be managed for the funded period and how resources, including assets purchased, will be utilised beyond the funded period.

Describe the mechanisms your organisation will put in place to manage your project and outline your organisation's strategies to ensure the project is well managed.

Outline the ways in which the project proposes to use the resources obtained with My Connected Community program funding within and beyond the 2 year funded period to ensure continuation of the online groups well into the future without additional government funding.

BUDGET

13. Identify other sources of funding or income to support the project including in-kind and voluntary support.

The funding received for the establishment of a My Connected Community project is minimal and is intended to be a starting point. Therefore, to achieve the aims of the project, it will be necessary for the project to harness resources from other sources such as the local community, local business, Local, State and Commonwealth Governments.

Proposals should outline other avenues of support the project is to pursue to maximise the benefits of a My Connected Community project. Letters of support should be included with this Application Form.

Proposals must show the in-kind support your organisation expects to receive from all sources including volunteer support. You should take care to not underestimate the amount of in-kind resources your own organisation will be contributing towards the project.

14. Provide a total budget for the project including all income and in kind support for the 2 years.

The draft budget should provide details of all income, grant funds, and in-kind support and all expenditure over the 2 year period of the project.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

15. Provide an implementation plan for the proposed My Connected Community project including a timeline and key milestones for your project.

Use the attached template to detail the planning and preparation that has taken place to date on this proposal and the tasks that are yet to be carried out. The implementation plan should clearly outline the proposed project's timeline and key milestones for the full 2 years.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

OUTPUTS*	MILESTONES**	RESPONSIBILITY OF***	COMPLETED BY
Execution of Funding Agreement with Library Board of Victoria including an approved Project Plan outlining the purpose of the groups, activities and the membership (including target groups)	Commencement of project 1 st grant instalment received	Project Coordinator	
Six monthly progress report	Progress report accepted	Project Coordinator	6 months from commencement date
Six monthly progress report	40% of the online target groups created and active Progress report accepted 2 nd grant instalment received	Project Coordinator	12 months from commencement date
Six monthly progress report	75% of the online target groups created and active Progress report accepted	Project Coordinator	18 months from commencement date
Final report	100% of the online target groups created and active Final report including sustainability strategy accepted 3 rd grant instalment received	Project Coordinator	24 months from commencement date
Acquittal of Funds	Final Acquittal report for the full funding period accepted.	Project Coordinator	26 months from commencement date

*Suggested **OUTPUTS** being: staffing, promotion, training schedule, ongoing support

Suggested **MILESTONES being: establishment of groups, targets, progress reports received, grant instalments received

***Suggested **RESPONSIBILITY OF** being: Project Coordinator, Training staff, VICNET, Owners/Moderators, Active members

SECTION D: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q No one in our organisation has ever used the Internet before but we think our community would be interested in learning. Do we need to have computer experience to apply?

A No, it's not necessary to have computer experience in order for your application to be to successful. While you are developing your application, your organisation will need to decide whether they will find someone with computer skills to provide the training, or whether they will train current staff members to enable them to conduct the training sessions. VICNET provides training to Project Partners under the program.

Q We're interested in applying jointly with another organisation. Can you fund us together?

A Joint applications between two or more complementary organisations will be accepted. However, every organisation must sign the Application Form and only one of the partner organisations will be the signatory to the My Connected Community Funding Agreement with the Library Board of Victoria. This organisation will be responsible for ensuring all contractual requirements are met.

We strongly recommend that all the signatories draw up a separate agreement between themselves and any of the Project Partners. This agreement should outline the responsibilities of each partner in meeting the contractual targets and how the funds will be proportioned. Support and assistance to do this is available from the My Connected Community Secretariat.

Q Could you review our written application before we submit it?

A No, this is a single stage application process and we do not provide feedback on draft applications. However, you may contact us if you require additional information or clarification.

Q Do we have to pay GST on our funds and charge GST on our fees?

A You will need to consult your own tax advisers to determine this. We have found that most organisations need to pay tax on the funds we provide. For example, if the funding amount you receive is \$10,000, you will need to send a tax invoice for the \$10,000 funding amount plus the 10% GST, an amount equalling to \$11,000.

Q How will we know if our application is successful?

A A public announcement of successful applicants will be made. VICNET will also advise you in writing and by telephone. Ensure the telephone number(s) you provide is the most appropriate for this purpose.