

MAV STATE COUNCIL & ALGA NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY MOTIONS

Report Author: Senior Advocacy & Government Relations Advisor

Responsible Officer: Chief Executive Officer

Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

The author(s) of this report and the Responsible Officer consider that the report complies with the overarching governance principles and supporting principles set out in the Local Government Act 2020.

CONFIDENTIALITY

This item will be considered at a Council meeting that is open to the public.

SUMMARY

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) will hold the next State Council meeting on Friday 16 May 2025. The MAV has called for councils to submit proposed motions of importance to the local government sector in Victoria, to be considered at the meeting. If supported by the member councils, motions become resolutions, informing advocacy and policy positions of the MAV.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) will hold its National General Assembly from 24-27 June 2025. Motions have been invited from member councils, focusing on issues of national significance to the local government sector. If supported by the member councils, motions become resolutions, informing advocacy and policy positions of the ALGA.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council

- 1. Endorse the motions to be submitted to the Municipal Association of Victoria for consideration at the State Council Meeting on 16 May 2025.***
- 2. Endorse the motion to be submitted to the Australian Local Government Association for consideration at the National General Assembly from 24-27 June 2025.***

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council did not submit motions to the last State Council meeting, held on 23 August 2024 but did submit three motions for the State Council meeting held on 17 May 2024.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

State Council is the MAV's governing body and is made up of representatives from each member council. State Council's powers include:

- determining the Rules of the Association
- electing the President and other members of the Board
- determining the Strategic Direction
- appointing the Auditor.

State Council meets twice a year, or more if needed. The MAV calls for councils to submit motions approximately two months in advance of State Council.

As decisions of State Council constitute policy directions of the MAV and remain active until the issue is resolved, motions should relate to either new policy directions, or variations to existing policy directions.

The MAV Rules require that motions: be of state-wide significance to the local government sector; link to the strategic outcomes in the MAV Strategy 2021-25; not be identical or substantially similar to a motion submitted to State Council at any of the previous four State Council meetings; and not seek to endorse a motion to be put to the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly.

When submitting a motion, Council is required to identify whether the motion is supported by a council resolution.

The Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) has released its Discussion Paper ahead of the 2025 National General Assembly with the theme of *National Priorities Need Local Solutions* along with a call for motions from Australian local governments.

Guidelines for motions have asked councils to consider:

- Any new practical programs or policy changes that can strengthen the system of local government nationally to provide the services and infrastructure required to support and strengthen our communities; and/or
- New program ideas that that would help the local government sector to deliver place-based solutions to national priorities.

Council's proposed motion is relevant to the ALGA's priority areas of:

- Intergovernmental relations and
- Jobs and skills.

Options considered

Council has considered various emerging issues and strategic risks impacting Council as an organisation, as well as the broader community and the suitability of these matters for advocacy through MAV State Council for issues of Victorian state significance and of national significance for advocacy through the ALGA National General Assembly.

Recommended option and justification

Of the strategic risks and issues currently impacting Council and the community, the proposed motions have been determined as appropriately matched to the advocacy opportunity presented by State Council, in terms of both timing and MAV's submission criteria.

1. Improved communications with Local Government on resolution timeframes for locally reported road hazards and issues

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: That the MAV work with the Victorian Department of Transport and Planning (DTP/VicRoads) to create an issue resolution portal to communicate with Councils on VicRoads hazard resolution.

Rationale

The general public are often unaware of whether a hazardous road issue is the responsibility of the LGA or VicRoads. Regardless of hazard reporting route, a public-facing VicRoads/DTP centralised reporting dashboard of hazards and timeframes for resolutions would assist local government councils to answer queries from the public that are awaiting resolution and set expectations and where appropriate, support local safety information to communities.

A partnership between MAV and DTP to work together to create inter-governmental collaboration and data transparency in the spirit of community safety would be of benefit to all Victorians.

2. Improved clarity on Small Second Dwellings in the State Planning Scheme

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: That the MAV work with the Victorian Government and Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to clarify planning legislation for tiny homes

Rationale

Tiny homes are gaining popularity as a housing solution for housing affordability, seasonal workers, intergenerational living and tourism accommodation. Tiny homes are considered to be a partial solution for the housing crisis and are a potentially inexpensive offering to address housing diversity.

We request clarification from the Victorian Government and DTP on an appropriate definition for tiny homes in the Victoria Planning Provisions and clarified information by the Victorian Building Authority over the application of the Building Act 1993 to tiny homes.

This could be achieved through an MAV hosted workshop or working group with the DTP and VBA to ensure consistency between Councils and a clear forward pathway for community.

3. Local Government Financial Sustainability Framework

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: That the MAV pursue recommendation 8 of the Local Government Funding and Services Inquiry to encourage the Victorian Government to work with the Local Government Sector to establish a financial sustainability framework

Rationale

The report of the Legislative Council Economic and Infrastructure Committee's Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services recommended that the Victorian Government work with the sector, including councils and peak bodies, to establish a local government sustainability framework.

The elements of this framework should incorporate: a risk-based approach to financial sustainability; different financial criteria for different council groups; and the inclusion of adjusted underlying result, unrestricted cash and asset renewal indicators in addition to the financial indicators outlined in the Local Government Performance Reporting framework. This framework would need to include a 10-year horizon and allow both aggregate sector view and individual LGA view.

4. Financial viability and workforce planning of Maternal & Child Health as State co-funded services

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: MAV review the financial viability and workforce planning of the Local Government Maternal & Child Health (MCH) Service in light of the adopted *Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Health Sector) Single Interest Employer Enterprise Agreement 2024-28*, creating an employment market for highly qualified nurses that is beyond many Councils' financial capacity.

Rationale

The *Nurses and Midwives (Victorian Public Health Sector) Single Interest Employer Enterprise Agreement 2024-28*, adopted by the Victorian Government introduces salary increases and other benefits, such as roster allowances, that local government cannot match. MCH nurses have additional qualifications and experience and in future years of current EBAs there is significant risk to local

government MCH services that our experienced workforce will leave to take up high-paying work within the Victorian Government health system.

5. Consideration be given to flexibility measures and alternatives for Victorian glass recycling services

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:

- a. Apply more flexibility with the introduction of the state's glass recycling service to prevent inefficient and cost prohibitive service structures impacting on community.
- b. Seek to expand the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) to include glass bottles, broadening the opportunity for community to positively contribute to the circular economy.
- c. Invest in enhancing recycling infrastructure to broaden the state's recycling opportunities, removing the need for singular recycling solutions.

Rationale:

A group of 22 Councils undertook detailed modelling and research in 2024 and identified the cost to implement a kerbside service across the 22 Councils at \$75 million with an ongoing annual average cost of more than \$1.43 million to operate the kerbside service, amounting to more than \$30 million a year across these municipalities.

Current implementation expectations do not allow for flexibility for Councils to develop services that better suit community needs, such as in outer-metropolitan areas where distances for kerbside collection add significant costs and a local drop-off solution may suffice.

The Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) for Service Standards provided by the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) used assumptions of the cost benefits of the glass only service did not align with the costs forecast by Councils and would impose a significant cost to communities.

The report also found that similar benefits could be found via an expansion of the Container Deposit Scheme to include wine and spirit bottles. This would negate the implementation and ongoing servicing costs to communities, instead having the producers of the waste wear the cost to recycle the materials they put into the market.

6. Improved transparency of MAV advocacy arising from motions passed at State Council

Submitting Council - Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: That the MAV provide regular and transparent reporting to member councils on advocacy efforts undertaken by the MAV to the Victorian Government and relevant entities, advising of outcomes arising from motions passed at each State Council meeting.

Rationale:

Issues and consequent motions of concern to many councils are put forward twice yearly at MAV State Council meetings, but Councils are concerned that there is often limited reporting back on the advocacy, actions and outcomes arising from their motions.

A more regular (eg monthly) reporting of actions against motions adopted at State Council would be welcomed by Councils.

The following motion is proposed to be submitted to the ALGA National General Assembly.

1. National Tertiary Education Partnership Planning

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Council

Resolution: ALGA facilitate a national conversation about strategic satellite university campuses or tertiary learning hubs that leverage available LGA Infrastructure in outer urban and regional areas

Rationale

University operating models are under pressure from financial sustainability threats and historical models of centralised education delivery are under transformation.

The digital transformation landscape offers many options for remote and offsite learning and satellite models of education delivery and university student connectedness. This new age of satellite universities offers outer metropolitan and regional areas an opportunity to explore shared future infrastructure partnership models such as libraries and study hubs to enhance offerings to a broader range of students and learning models in a broader geographical area.

Local Government as a sector is rich in community connection and infrastructure such as libraries. The ALGA could connect the two sectors together through a working group, summit or event to drive partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

Council's participation in the bi-annual MAV State Council meetings and the annual National General Assembly of the ALGA contributes to the following action in the Council Plan:

- Consolidate and strengthen advocacy through evidence and stronger relationships to ensure other levels of government are effectively and efficiently engaged to support local services and programs.

RELEVANT LAW

Not applicable.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Economic Implications

Financial sustainability concerns have informed a number of Council's proposed motions to the MAV and ALGA. Should the Victorian or Australian Governments act on the recommendations this would positively impact Council's ability to deliver services and infrastructure to our community and economic activity in our region.

Social Implications

Not applicable.

Environmental Implications

Council's motion regarding glass recycling, if supported by the MAV and the Victorian Government, will offer the opportunity to manage and promote glass recycling within the municipality.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As the submission of motions to State Council is operational in nature and presents no change to Council's strategic direction, community engagement was not undertaken on this matter.

An internal process has been undertaken with Officers and Councillors to identify potential motions for submission. The proposed motions support Council's existing strategies and Council Plan, which have been developed through community consultation and deliberative engagement processes.

COLLABORATION, INNOVATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The proposed motions build on policy and advocacy efforts that Council, the MAV and ALGA have undertaken in recent years to:

- Ensure the financial sustainability of Yarra Ranges Council and the wider local government sector.
- Clarify the status of definitions and changes in the planning scheme.
- Ensure a flexible and viable recycling system for Yarra Ranges.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The proposed motions to be considered by the MAV and ALGA for their local government sector advocacy to the Victorian and Australian Governments contribute to mitigating Council's identified Strategic Risks regarding Financial Sustainability – Failure to maintain long-term financial health and Council Reputation – Failure to implement the Council Action Plan.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No officers and/or delegates acting on behalf of the Council through the Instrument of Delegation and involved in the preparation and/or authorisation of this report have any general or material conflict of interest as defined within the *Local Government Act 2020*.

ATTACHMENTS TO THE REPORT

Nil.