

MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA - STATE COUNCIL MEETING

Report Author: Senior Advocacy and 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 biannual State Council meeting on Friday 10 October 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.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorse the proposed motions to be submitted to the Municipal Association of Victoria for consideration at the State Council Meeting on 10 October 2025.

RELATED COUNCIL DECISIONS

Council considered motions at the Meeting on Tuesday 11 March 2025 that were duly submitted to the State Council meeting, held on 16 May 2025 and were adopted by State Council. A resolution of Council is required for the MAV to accept motions.

DISCUSSION

Purpose and Background

State Council is the MAV's governing body and is made up of representatives from each member council. State Council meets twice a year, and 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.

Yarra Ranges Council has regularly put forward motions to the biannual MAV State Council meetings.

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.

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.

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.

MOTION 1:

That the MAV undertake statewide research into occupational violence incidents against Council staff and Councillors and seek WorkSafe support for a public safety campaign.

COUNCIL: Yarra Ranges Council

RATIONALE:

Occupational violence and aggression (OVA) is an escalating concern across Australian workplaces, with public-facing roles, such as those held by council workers, being particularly vulnerable. Despite growing anecdotal evidence and national data indicating a rise in workplace violence, there is a critical gap in sector-specific research that captures the scope, nature, and impact of OVA on local government employees in Victoria.

Council employees, which includes elected councillors, frequently engage with the public in high-pressure and emotionally charged environments. These roles may include local laws officers, customer service staff, compliance officers and field workers. These interactions increasingly expose them to verbal abuse, threats, and

physical aggression. The absence of comprehensive data and coordinated prevention strategies leaves councils ill-equipped to respond effectively and protect their workforce.

We therefore call on the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to:

1. Undertake a statewide research initiative to quantify and qualify incidents of occupational violence against council staff and councillors.
2. Collaborate with WorkSafe Victoria to develop and launch a public safety campaign aimed at raising awareness, promoting respectful engagement with council staff, and reinforcing zero tolerance for workplace aggression.

This initiative will:

- Provide councils with evidence-based insights to inform policy, training, and support systems.
- Strengthen advocacy for legislative and regulatory protections.
- Foster a culture of safety, respect, and accountability across Victorian communities.

By taking a proactive and unified approach, MAV and WorkSafe Victoria can lead the way in safeguarding council staff and councillors and ensuring that local government remains a safe and sustainable sector for all employees.

This motion aligns to MAV 2024-27 Strategic Priority 3. Health & Wellbeing.

MOTION 2:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for the enhancement of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) through alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to better reflect the strategic leadership and impact of councils.

COUNCIL: Yarra Ranges Council

RATIONALE:

Local governments are uniquely positioned to drive meaningful progress across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. The current LGPRF, while valuable, presents an opportunity for evolution toward a more holistic, future-focused framework that fully captures the breadth of councils' contributions.

Key opportunities for improvement include:

- **Strategic Alignment:** Councils are more than service providers, they are leaders in climate adaptation, community resilience, and democratic governance.

Aligning the LGPRF with the SDGs would better reflect this broader mandate and support councils in demonstrating their strategic value.

- **Legislative Synergy:** The Local Government Act 2020 champions integrated strategic planning and performance reporting. An SDG-aligned LGPRF would strengthen this intent by enabling councils to measure and communicate progress against long-term objectives, including climate action and equity.
- **Climate Leadership:** Councils are at the forefront of climate response. A modernised performance framework that incorporates SDG indicators would empower councils to showcase their leadership in building resilient, low-carbon communities.

The SDGs offer a globally recognised, comprehensive framework comprising 17 goals. Already endorsed by the MAV through its 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, the SDGs align closely with councils' statutory responsibilities, including sustainability, governance, and community wellbeing. The City of Melbourne's Voluntary Local Review demonstrates the practical benefits of SDG-based reporting, setting a benchmark for innovation and transparency in local government. This reform represents a powerful opportunity to position Local Government Sector as delivering measurable, community-centred impact.

This motion aligns to MAV 2024-27 Strategic Priority 4. Sustainable Economy.

MOTION 3:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government for a commitment and funding towards education and support programs, such as the 2022-24 *Women Leading Locally* program to encourage and support more women and young people, particularly in regional areas, to run for elections to councils in 2028.

COUNCIL: Yarra Ranges Council

RATIONALE:

The Victorian Government has had a target to achieve 50/50 gender representation in councils by 2025. While the trend has been heading in the right direction, parity has not been reached. In the 2024 elections, 44.8% of people elected to local councils in Victoria were women, which is a small increase from 43.2% in 2020, and a sharp increase from 38% in 2016. Currently, it is predominantly in rural and regional areas where there are the lowest numbers of women councillors.

The previously delivered *Women Leading Locally* program was developed through Local Government Victoria with funding support from the Government and with the input of local government councillors, professionals and supporters. This ran successfully from 2022 to 2024.

According to the 2024 Victorian Councillor Census by the VLGA, the average age of councillors in Victoria is 57.5 years, with very few under 30. A program to educate and encourage young people to participate in local leadership opportunities and seek

election to councils would be beneficial. The development of younger candidates to increase diversity, ensure inter-generational representation and future-proof governance would enhance our local democracies.

Funding in the 2026-2027 Victorian Budget would enable a similar program to target areas with low female representation to support and encourage women to run for elections to councils in 2028.

This motion aligns to MAV 2024-27 Strategic Priority 1. Active local democracy & 8. Diversity, equity and inclusion.

FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

There is no direct cost incurred in putting motions forward to the MAV State Council. Advocacy activities and the officer time to prepare motions can be met as part of business as usual.

APPLICABLE PLANS AND POLICIES

Council's participation in the bi-annual MAV State Council meetings contributes to the following action in the 2021-25 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

There are no identified economic implications.

Social Implications

Council's proposed motions and implementation of programs suggested for improving attitudes and behaviour towards Council staff and the suggested program to encourage more women to run for election to Council in future may both have positive social implications.

Environmental Implications

There are no identified environmental implications.

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 and the local government sector through the MAV have undertaken in recent years to:

- See safety and respect given to local government Councillors and staff to be as important an issue as other public sector workers such as nurses and emergency service workers.
- Contribute to the ongoing efforts of the Victorian Government and the local government sector to encourage more women to participate in local democracy and seek election to councils to achieve the 50/50 target.
- Evolve the performance and reporting of councils towards more holistic, future-focused framework that captures the breadth of councils' contributions and the community benefits delivered

RISK ASSESSMENT

The proposed motions to be submitted to the MAV for their local government sector advocacy to the Victorian Government contributes to mitigating Council's identified Strategic Risk regarding Council Reputation – Failure to implement the Council Action Plan.

Seeking to address customer behaviour towards Council staff would contribute to mitigating risks to staff of Occupation Violence and Aggression (OVA).

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