

LOCAL WOMEN LEADING CHANGE

your campaign
toolkit



VLGA

acknowledgements

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This publication follows in the footsteps of 'A Gender Agenda' which was originally researched by Leonie Morgan and Sara Charlesworth (1998) for the Victorian Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition. We thank them and their subsequent collaborators, including Alice Aird, Linda Bennett, Rosemary Hancock, Jenny Wills and Sophie Arnold.

Case studies: The case studies included were correct at the time of publication in 2019.

Disclaimer: While we have tried to make the information in this publication generic, it is your responsibility as a candidate or campaign team member to understand all aspects of the conduct of local government elections.

Please enquire with the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) or the Victorian Local Government Inspectorate (LGI) for detailed information on regulations and legislative requirements.

The VLGA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the country throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, their elders, past, present and future and to their cultures.

Thanks to Linda Bennett

The VLGA wishes to thank Linda Bennett for her immense contribution to the cause of women in local government.

Linda was the Women's Officer at the VLGA from 2002-2017 and her tireless efforts have resulted in huge increases in the number of women elected to councils across Victoria.



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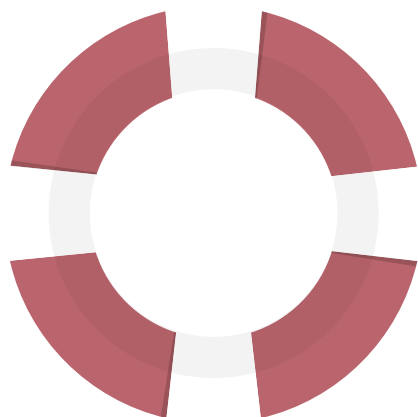
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about the VLGA

The VLGA is a progressive, independent not-for-profit peak body for councils and councillors. We support, facilitate and provide opportunities for councillor networking, professional development and information exchange, actively engaging with key policymakers and broader stakeholders to inform, influence and lead the conversations that determine the priorities for the local government sector.

In the lead up to each council election cycle, we provide training to equip candidates with the tools that they need to run a successful campaign and prioritise good governance should they be elected.



We're always here to help.

Don't hesitate to get in touch if you feel that you need support throughout the course of the campaign.

Stay in the loop with our events and training by signing up to our newsletter.

Although the VLGA is based in metropolitan Melbourne, we run regular training in rural and regional Victoria - let us know if there is a program that you would like to see us deliver in your area.

Now You're A Councillor

'Now You're A Councillor' is a resource available on the [VLGA website](http://vlga.org.au), containing stories and advice from councillors past and present on what they have learned from their time in local government.

Victorian Local Governance Association

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foreword

Women make up more than 50 per cent of Victoria's population, but only 38 per cent of women are local government councillors.

It is over 20 years since the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter was created by a group of committed and inspired organisations and individuals. The Charter has now been adopted by 72 of the Victoria's 79 councils and continues to provide a platform for gender equity work across Victorian communities, supported by the VLGA and MAV.

Gender stereotypes and male dominated decision-making are acknowledged as two of the key drivers of violence against women. By encouraging more women to stand for local government and represent their communities, we can challenge these factors and lead change.

In 1999, 26 per cent of Victoria's elected councillors were women. Following the last council elections in 2016 that figure rose to 38 per cent. The number of women mayors and deputy mayors has also risen over time. The story is changing – but not fast enough.

The Victorian government has identified a goal of 50 per cent women councillors by 2025. We believe that there will be enough women elected in October 2020 to get there - five years ahead of schedule!

To achieve this goal, we need to support women to participate more fully in local democracy.

We need to give them the resources they need to build the knowledge and skills that will allow them to succeed as elected representatives.

This resource is designed to guide them through the process of local government elections – a toolkit that they can come back to again and again.

We know that gender equality benefits all of us, and gender-balanced decision-making leads to better outcomes.

With that in mind, we look forward to supporting women on the journey.

Kathryn Arndt
CEO, Victorian Local
Governance Association

Cr Marg Attley
President, Victorian Local
Governance Association

background

our history

The Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) was formed in 1997 to work towards the equal participation of women and men in Victorian local government through the *Victorian Local Government Women's Charter*.

By 2013, as the work for gender equity in local government gathered strength, the Coalition dissolved itself and handed responsibility for this work to the statewide organisations, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) and Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA).

The *Victorian Local Government Women's Charter* promotes the principles of gender equity, encouraging diversity in representation and participation and women's active citizenship.

72 of Victoria's 79 councils have become signatories to the Charter, affirming their commitment to improving the representation of women on Victorian councils.



VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT WOMEN'S CHARTER

Recognising the need for increased women's participation in the key decision making forums in the community and in democratic governance, we, the local governments of Victoria, on behalf of our communities, support the following principles:

GENDER EQUITY

Women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.

DIVERSITY

The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities.

Councils and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women. **ACTIVE**

CITIZENSHIP

Local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.

our goal

This toolkit is a resource designed to equip you with the tools that you need when considering running in local government elections.

In line with the Victorian Government's [Gender Equality Strategy](#), and the [Best practice guide to gender equity in local government](#), our vision for the October 2020 local government elections is to see 50 per cent women elected.

It is an ambitious goal – one that requires action from women (and men) across the state.

Our aim is to engage communities that have long been disenfranchised and under-represented at a local government level.

In every part of the state, women play a pivotal role in the leadership of their communities, but this work is often underappreciated and not formally recognised.

Local councils need to look like the communities that they represent. Local government is the level of government that is closest to the people.

It delivers essential services which women access on a daily basis.

Councils are a significant contributor to the Victorian economy, employing over 50,000 people, spending more than \$7 billion on service delivery, \$2 billion on infrastructure annually and managing over \$70 billion in public assets.

Women's connections to their community, their skills and their perspectives mean they are rich with potential to be elected representatives.

We live in a world where there are **local women are leading change**, and it is important to support them into leadership positions.

50 per cent women by 2025



local government 101

another level of government

Take a moment to think about who you voted for in the last local government elections. Do you remember? Did they get elected?

If you don't know, you wouldn't be alone. Local government is the level of government closest to the community.

But we don't seem to pay our elected representatives, who govern the councils and make decisions on behalf of our communities, nearly as much attention as their state or federal government counterparts.

In a practical sense, councils facilitate essential community networks, provide services, and act as advocates for the diverse needs of communities through physical, social and economic planning.

There are 79 councils in Victoria, which represent over 5.9 million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016).

All councils have between five and twelve councillors, who are elected by the people who live in the local area or who own a local property or business.

Services provided by each council can differ, depending on its financial resources and the needs of its community.

Councils receive most of their income from rates and untied Australian government funds. However, they also receive some targeted state and federal government financial grants, usually for projects and initiatives driven by the council (and its councillors).

LOCAL COUNCILS

- Provide leadership and good governance for their communities
- Develop and maintain community infrastructure such as roads, bridges, drains, halls, libraries, recreation facilities, parks and gardens
- Plan for future growth and development
- Provide a diverse range of property, economic, human, recreational and cultural services
- Enforce state and local laws relating to such matters as land use, environment protection, public health, traffic and parking and animal management.

It's important that you understand the roles and powers of local councils before you make a commitment or take a stand on issues.

Local government is run according to the provisions of the *Victorian Local Government Act* (1989), and any subsequent revisions or amendments. Although it's not necessary to read through an entire piece of legislation, having a grasp of the key concepts covered in the Act will help prepare you to run.

the role of a councillor



Every day and every week councillors perform a diverse range of tasks – far beyond attending weekly council meetings and opening the odd building.

The role of a councillor is like a part-time job.

Councillors do receive a taxable allowance, determined by the council, within parameters set by the state government.

The part-time role of a councillor is often undertaken while juggling family, community and paid work responsibilities.

The legislation dictates a minimum number of council meetings that councillors must attend, but after that it's up to the individual councillor to determine how much time she spends on council matters.

It could be 11 hours, or it could be 30 (MAV Councillor Census 2017).

It all depends on what you can do – and what you want to achieve.

local government 101

how local government elections work

who can stand?

Almost* any Australian citizen enrolled for state and federal elections in the municipality or on the council voter roll is eligible to stand for council.

The voter roll closes 57 days or about 8 weeks before election day. You don't need to live or be enrolled in the ward you are seeking to represent, but you must be enrolled as a voter in the municipality itself as a resident or taxpayer.

**The Local Government Act (1989) disqualifies some people from standing, e.g. if they are an undischarged bankrupt. Seek advice from the VEC about this if you have any questions.*

who can vote?

You can vote in council elections if:

- You are 18 years and over and reside in the municipality – just like state and federal elections (the Victorian Electoral Commission manages your enrolment); and/or
- You are a ratepayer in the municipality
- You are an eligible applicant (e.g. you own a business in the municipality but do not live in the area) – this may include non-Australian citizens who own property/businesses

Voting is compulsory for all, with a few exceptions.

Non-Australian citizens should check their voting status with the Returning Officer or the VEC.

You can exercise only one vote per municipality.

how many candidates are elected?

Internal boundaries (wards) and the number of councillors who represent each ward are determined by electoral reviews conducted under the *Local Government Act* (1989).

Councils consist of between five and twelve councillors.

Some councils have no wards and are known as “unsubdivided”. Some are divided into many wards, each of which has a single councillor representing it.

Other councils are subdivided into multi-councillor wards, some with the same number of councillors in each ward. Others have differing numbers of councillors in different wards.

It's important to understand how your municipality is structured because this will affect the strategies you choose to use in your campaign. Additionally, if you live in the City of Melbourne there are some unique differences.

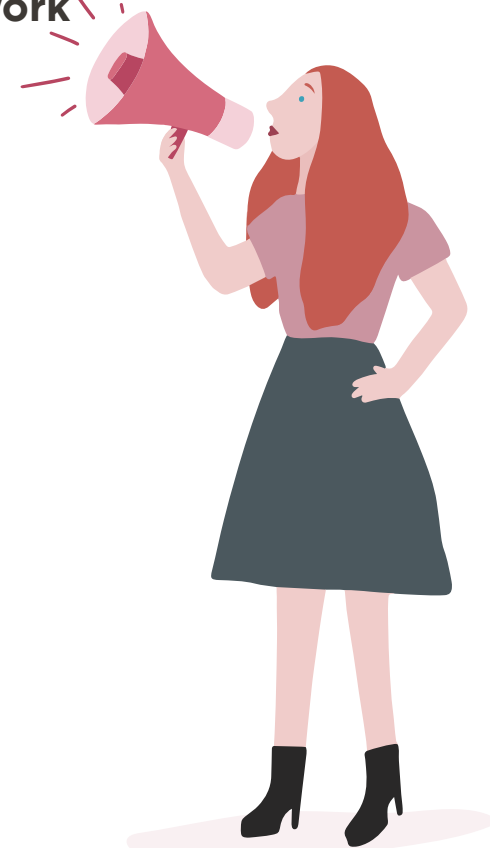
how do I nominate as a candidate?

1. Complete the nomination form available from the VEC
2. Pay the prescribed fee (in 2016, the fee was \$250)
3. Lodge the form and fee with the VEC in person before 12 noon on the thirty first day before election day (about 4-5 weeks).

It is essential that you check and double check all the requirements for nomination. The [VEC](#) is the most reliable source for this information.

Remember that the Victorian government may review and change electoral regulations before each election, so keep an eye out for key dates for lodging nominations and other details which are advertised in the local media and through the VEC.

The nomination fee (or deposit) will be refunded if the candidate polls a certain percentage of the first preference votes or if they are elected.



postal voting:

All eligible voters in the municipality should automatically receive their ballot papers by post, along with a booklet of candidate statements.

attendance voting:

Voters are required to attend a polling booth in person on Saturday 24 October 2020. Just like a state or federal election, they can opt to receive their ballot papers in the post.

NB: Proposed changes to the Local Government Act which lapsed in 2018 would remove the option of attendance voting.

KEY ELECTION TERMINOLOGY

full preferential voting:

In Victorian council elections, voters must number every box on the ballot paper in the order of their choice for the vote to be counted. If no candidate has an absolute majority of first preference votes, preferences are distributed until one candidate has an absolute majority. This system of voting occurs in single member wards (i.e. one candidate to be elected).

proportional representation:

Similar to upper house or senate voting. This occurs in councils

that are unsubdivided or have multi-member wards. A candidate must receive a 'quota' of the votes to be automatically elected. If there are not enough candidates who reach quota to fill the vacant positions, the preferences are redistributed until all positions are filled.

$$\frac{\text{no. of formal votes}}{\text{no. of vacancies} + 1} + 1 = \text{quota}$$

your local council

local government 101

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Alpine Shire Council	4790.59	11,835	11,801	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	2 of 7
Ararat Rural City Council	4208.01	10,952	10,706	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	3 of 7
Ballarat City Council	738.62	103,249	113,800	Central - 3 councillors North - 3 councillors South - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Banyule City Council	62.61	127,387	133,286	1 councillor per ward Grimshaw Bakewell Beale Olympia Ibbott Hawdon Griffin	1 of 7
Bass Coast Shire Council	865.05	32,825	36,990	Bunurong - 3 councillors Island - 3 councillors Western Port - 3 councillors	2 of 9
Baw Baw Shire Council	4,025.33	47,548	54,318	Central - 3 councillors East - 3 councillors West - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Bayside City Council	37.42	102,427	107,566	Central - 3 councillors Northern - 2 councillors Southern - 2 councillors	1 of 7
Benalla Rural City Council	2350.49	13,390	13,252	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	1 of 7
Boroondara City Council	62.61	201,429	210,922	1 councillor per ward Bellevue Cotham Gardiner Glenferrie Junction Lynden Maling Maranoa Solway Studley	5 of 10
Borough of Queenscliffe	10.83	3,018	2,995	Unsubdivided 5 councillors	1 of 5
Brimbank City Council	123.35	200,144	207,288	Grasslands-3 councillors Harvester - 3 councillors Horseshoe Bend - 2 crs Taylors Ward - 3 crs	6 of 11

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Buloke Shire Council	7998.11	5,858	5,518	Lower Avoca - 2 crs Mallee - 2 crs Mount Jeffcott - 3 crs	2 of 7
Greater Bendigo City Council	2999.03	110,446	121,687	Eppalock - 3 councillors Lockwood - 3 councillors Whipstick - 3 councillors	4 of 9
Campaspe Shire Council	4517.76	36,814	37,371	Echuca - 3 councillors Kyabram-Deakin - 3 councillors Rochester - 1 councillor Waranga - 1 councillor Western - 1 councillor	4 of 9
Cardinia Shire Council	1280.91	95,518	117,994	Central - 4 councillors Port - 2 councillors Ranges - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Casey City Council	396.66	302,079	349,106	Balla Balla - 1 councillor Edrington - 2 councillors Four Oaks - 2 councillors Mayfield - 2 councillors River Gum - 2 councillors Springfield - 2 councillors	4 of 11
Central Goldfields Shire Council	1532.79	12,561	12,711	Flynn - 1 councillor Maryborough - 4 councillors Paddys Ranges - 1 councillor Tullaroop - 1 councillor	3 of 7 NB: Central Goldfields Shire Council was dismissed in Aug 2017.
Colac Otway Shire Council	3434.4	20,142	19,942	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	1 of 7
Corangamite Shire Council	4402.74	15,553	15,076	Central - 3 councillors Coastal - 1 councillor North - 1 councillor Central - 1 councillor South-West - 1 councillor	4 of 7
Darebin City Council	53.42	153,192	167,184	Cazaly - 3 councillors La Trobe - 3 councillors Rucker - 3 councillors	6 of 9
City of Greater Dandenong	129.42	155,773	169,656	Lightwood - 3 councillors Paperbark - 3 councillors Red Gum - 3 councillors Silverleaf - 2 councillors	4 of 11
East Gippsland Shire Council	20,929	44,415	47,118	Unsubdivided 9 councillors	2 of 9

your local council

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Frankston City Council	129.44	137,112	142,476	North-East - 3 councillors North-West - 3 councillors South - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Gannawarra Shire Council	3736.44	9,919	9,497	Avoca - 1 councillor Murray - 1 councillor Patchell - 3 councillors Yarran - 2 councillors	3 of 7
Glen Eira City Council	38.67	143,385	155,986	Camden - 3 councillors Rosstown - 3 councillors Tucker - 3 councillors	4 of 9
Glenelg Shire Council	6212.69	19,042	18,733	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	3 of 7
Golden Plains Shire Council	2701.65	21,216	23,644	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	2 of 7
City of Greater Geelong	1279.9	233,349	253,247	Bellarine - 3 councillors Brownbill - 3 councillors Kardinia - 3 councillors Windemere - 2 councillors	3 of 11
City of Greater Shepparton	2421.26	63,828	66,964	Unsubdivided 9 councillors	4 of 9
Hepburn Shire Council	1472.1	14,859	15,293	Birch - 2 councillors Cameron - 1 councillor Coliban - 1 councillor Creswick - 2 councillors Holcombe - 1 councillor	2 of 7
Hindmarsh Shire Council	7521.2	5,393	5,130	East - 2 councillors North - 2 councillors West - 2 councillors	1 of 6
Hobsons Bay City Council	64.60	93,577	98,582	Cherry Lake - 2 councillors Strand - 3 councillors Wetlands - 2 councillors	3 of 7
Horsham Rural City Council	4265.55	19,887	20,492	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	2 of 7
Hume City Council	503.08	200,215	228,651	Aitken - 4 crs Jacksons Creek - 3 crs Meadow Valley - 4 crs	5 of 11
Indigo Shire Council	2042.09	15,465	15,689	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	4 of 7
Kingston City Council	91.58	156,128	165,077	Central - 3 councillors North - 3 councillors South - 3 councillor	6 of 9

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Knox City Council	113.85	157,097	164,100	1 councillor per ward Baird Chandler Collier Dinsdale Dobson Friberg Scott Taylor Tirhatuan	2 of 9
Latrobe City Council	1425.03	73,646	75,038	Central - 2 councillors East - 4 councillors South - 1 councillor West - 2 councillors	2 of 9
Loddon Shire Council	6694.58	7,268	7,064	1 councillor per ward Boort Inglewood Tarnagulla Terrick Wedderburn	2 of 5
Macedon Ranges Shire Council	3841.24	46,023	49,599	East - 3 councillors South - 3 councillors West - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Manningham City Council	113.29	120,664	128,511	Heide - 3 councillors Koonung - 3 councillors Mullum Mullum - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Mansfield Shire Council	3841.24	8,325	8,719	Bonnie Doon - 1 councillor Jamieson - 1 councillor Mansfield - 2 councillors Tolmie - 1 councillor	1 of 5
Maribyrnong City Council	31.23	85,471	101,342	River - 2 councillors Stony Creek - 2 councillors Yarraville - 3 councillors	5 of 7
Maroondah City Council	61.38	113,841	119,149	Arrabri - 3 councillors Mullum - 3 councillors Wyreana - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Melbourne City Council*	37.64	135,726	177,010	Unsubdivided 9 councillors	4 of 9
Melton City Council	27.51	138,181	171,031	Cambridge - 3 councillors Coburn - 4 councillors Watts - 2 councillors	5 of 9
Mildura Rural City Council	22,084	53,356	55,257	Unsubdivided 9 councillors	2 of 9
Mitchell Shire Council	2861.04	39,920	47,075	Central - 3 councillors North - 3 councillors South - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Moira Shire Council	4043.68	28,942	29,897	Unsubdivided 9 councillors	2 of 9

*The Lord Mayor and Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne are two positions which are directly elected by voters in the municipality at the time of council elections.

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Monash City Council	81.44	189,591	199,837	Glen Waverley - 2 crs Mount Waverley - 3 crs Mulgrave - 3 crs Oakleigh - 3 crs	2 of 11
Moonee Valley City Council	43.09	121,846	129,889	Buckley - 3 councillors Myrnong - 3 councillors Rosehill - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Moorabool Shire Council	2109.68	32,126	36,132	Central Moorabool - 1 cr East Moorabool - 4 crs West Moorabool - 1 cr Woodlands - 1 cr	1 of 7
Moreland City Council	51.01	170,994	187,738	North-East - 4 councillors North-West - 4 councillors South - 3 councillors	5 of 11
Mornington Peninsula Shire Council	726.14	156,696	163,389	Briars - 3 councillors Cerberus - 1 councillor Nepean - 2 councillors Red Hill - 1 councillor Seawinds - 3 councillors Watson - 1 councillor	5 of 11
Mount Alexander Shire Council	1528.81	18,239	18,729	Calder - 1 councillor Castlemaine - 3 councillors Coliban - 1 councillor Loddon River - 1 councillor Tarrengower - 1 councillor	2 of 7
Moyne Shire Council	5478.7	16,272	16,600	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	1 of 7
Murrindindi Shire Council	3879.94	13,758	14,304	1 councillor per ward Cathedral Cheviot Eildon King Parrot Kingleake Koriella Red Gate	5 of 7
Nillumbik Shire Council	432.07	62,798	64,180	1 councillor per ward Blue Lake Bunjil Edendale Ellis Sugarloaf Swipers Gully Wingrove	2 of 7
Northern Grampians Shire Council	5726.53	11,420	11,119	Central - 1 councillor Kara Kara - 2 councillors South West - 1 councillor Stawell - 3 councillors	2 of 7
Port Phillip City Council	21.09	109,103	118,903	Canal - 3 councillors Gateway - 3 councillors Lake - 3 councillors	3 of 9

your local council

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Pyrenees Shire Council	3433.39	6,867	7,042	1 councillor per ward Avoca Beaufort De Cameron Ercildoune Mount Emu	1 of 5
South Gippsland Shire Council	3308.95	27,751	28,478	Coastal-Promontory - 3 councillors Stzelecki - 3 councillors Tarwin Valley - 3 councillors	3 of 9
Southern Grampians Shire Council	6652.73	15,657	15,363	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	3 of 7
Stonnington City Council	25.62	110,608	120,706	East - 3 councillors North - 3 councillors South - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Strathbogie Shire Council	3302.18	9,881	10,202	Honeysuckle Creek - 1 cr Hughes Creek - 1 cr Lake Nagambie - 2 crs Mount Wombat - 1 cr Seven Creeks - 2 crs	3 of 7
Surf Coast Shire Council	1552.41	29,386	32,312	Anglesea - 2 councillors Lorne - 1 councillor Torquay - 4 councillors Winchelsea - 2 councillors	5 of 9
Swan Hill Rural City Council	6114.17	20,394	20,437	Central - 4 councillors Lakes - 1 councillor Murray-Mallee - 1 councillor Robinvale - 1 councillor	2 of 7
Towong Shire Council	6661.24	5,747	5,657	Unsubdivided 5 councillors	1 of 5
Wangaratta Rural City Council	3646.02	27,040	27,162	City - 4 councillors North - 1 councillor South - 1 councillor Warby - 1 councillor	1 of 7
Warrnambool City Council	120.37	33,948	35,712	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	2 of 7
Wellington Shire Council	11,002.61	41,923	42,687	Central - 3 councillors Coastal - 3 councillors Northern - 3 councillors	3 of 9
West Wimmera Shire Council	9107.84	3,933	3,828	Unsubdivided 5 councillors	1 of 5

your local council

Council	Size (km ²)	Pop. 2016	Pop. 2021	Wards	Women Crs 2016
Whitehorse City Council	64.25	167,971	178,069	2 councillors per ward Central Elgar Morack Riversdale Springfield	5 of 10
Whittlesea City Council	489.47	203,397	240,398	North - 3 councillors South East - 4 councillors South West - 4 councillors	5 of 11
Wodonga City Council	434.34	203,397	240,398	Unsubdivided 7 councillors	3 of 7
Wyndham City Council	541.62	39,358	43,400	Chaffey - 4 councillors Harrison - 4 councillors Iramoo - 3 councillors	3 of 11
Yarra City Council	19.55	92,610	103,830	Langridge - 3 councillors Melba - 3 councillors Nicholls - 3 councillors	5 of 9
Yarra Ranges Shire Council	2467.99	151,355	156,322	1 councillor per ward Billanook Chandler Chirnside Lyster Melba O'Shannassy Ryrie Streeton Walling	1 of 9
Yarriambiack Shire Council	7324.45	6,645	6,254	Dunmunkle - 2 crs Hopetoun - 2 crs Warracknabeal - 3 crs	4 of 7

REMEMBER:

unsubdivided means that the ballot is based on proportional representation, so you are aiming to reach quota to get elected. This also means you will have to represent the entire municipality.

1 councillor per ward means that you need to achieve the highest number of votes in your ward (following preference distribution) in order to be elected.

multiple councillors in a ward mean that the ballot is based on proportional representation within your ward, so you are aiming to reach quota to get elected. You may want to work with other candidates in your ward to increase your chances.



you, the candidate

what makes a good councillor?

Is a good councillor one who is consistently re-elected? One who is always in the local paper? Or one who has a reputation in the community for being willing to listen, and get things done?

If you have experience with any kind of community group or with running your own business – chances are, you'll make a good councillor.

If you have ever gathered your neighbours to sign a petition on an issue that affects your street, or you have brought a group of concerned parents together to lobby the school council – you're more than halfway there.

If there is something (or things) that you care about, if you want to make a difference in your community, and if you have the willingness to listen and fight for change (however incremental) – you will make a good councillor.

Running for council can give you the opportunity to:

- influence outcomes on issues that you believe in
- contribute to policy and programs that impact on the local community
- meet people from other places and from all walks of life
- know more about what's going on in the local community
- work on interesting and diverse local issues
- learn more about your community through an interesting and diverse workload; and
- develop a range of policy, negotiation and procedural skills.

“ The greatest satisfaction comes from assisting people with their individual problems or concerns. ”

Even if you don't think you're ready, chances are you know someone who might be.

So, if you know a woman who you think would make a good councillor, ask her to stand. Better yet – ask her to stand with you.

you, the candidate

getting started

Pull out a fresh notebook or open up a new Word document and buckle up.

Here we've compiled some things to consider, research and explore that might help you in your journey towards deciding to run. Don't try to answer them all in one go or treat it like an assignment – this is purely for your own benefit, and your own reference down the track.

BEGINNER

EXPERT

council

- What council area do you live in?
- What ward do you live in? Would you run in this ward, or is there another one in which you have more connections to leverage?
- Who are your current councillors? What do they stand for, and how does this align with your own values? What have they done that you do and don't agree with?
- Look up your council's website and Facebook page – have a browse and note down some issues and initiatives (or improvements) that exist in your municipality. The council's 'vision' or strategic plan is a great starting point.
- Consider attending a council meeting, watching the live stream online, or looking through some meeting agendas and meeting minutes.
- Consider joining a council committee (if the opportunity arises) for a policy area that you are interested in or attending as an observer.



community groups

- Take stock of what community groups you, your family and your friends are involved in. The council website should have a listing of several community groups that may be a good checklist.
- What are these community groups aiming to achieve in the community? How does council support them to do this at present, and how might council better support them to do this in the future?
- Who are the leaders (office bearers, or key influencers) in these community groups? If you know them, consider reaching out to let these leaders know you are considering running, and ask them what issues are most important to them or their group.
- Look up Facebook groups that are run by and for your local community, such as community discussion spaces and buy-sell-swap pages – they are a great way to gauge community sentiment, as well as engage with other community members.

your ward

If you're not sure what ward you want to run in, you can do this for any of the wards you're considering.

- Make a list of the suburbs in your ward. The VEC website will help with this.
- Make a list of key landmarks or community hubs in your ward – i.e. shopping centres, schools, kindergartens, sporting grounds/clubs – high traffic areas where the community comes together. Don't worry too much about getting every single one – jot down the ones you're familiar with.
- Can you think of at least three major issues facing the ward? If not, time to do some reconnaissance with friends and neighbours. They don't need to be time-sensitive, pressing issues – it can be something that a lot of people care about, like access to children's services, aged care or the local pool.

WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNANCE?

Good governance is about the processes for making and implementing decisions. It's not about making 'correct' decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions. Practising good governance will allow you to be a good leader.

- **Accountable and transparent:** be transparent in your actions and decision making. Even if someone disagrees with your point of view, you can be comfortable in knowing that you have made good decisions if you are able to justify to other people how you came to them.

- **Equitable, inclusive and participatory:** bring the community with you. Consider all points of view and actively empower voices that are marginalised or underrepresented. Listen.

- **Follow the rules:** make sure that your actions and decisions are consistent with the laws and procedures of the forum in which you are operating. You may be surprised at how often being across the rules – even if it is just meeting procedure – will give you a significant advantage.

- **Effective, efficient and responsive:** balance competing interests and time pressures to ensure that concerns are addressed in an appropriate manner. Work collaboratively to achieve your objectives. Having a reputation for being able to 'get things done' is the best tool you can have in your toolkit.

you, the candidate

your family

- Have a chat to your family about the possibility of you running for council. Are they supportive of your goal?
- Do you have caring responsibilities at the moment? How might you accommodate them during the campaign and while you are on council? Keep in mind that councils do provide childcare arrangements for councillors while they are performing official business, but it is always useful to have a support network of family and friends.
- Is your family willing to be in the spotlight with you as a public figure? If not, how will you protect them from unwanted scrutiny?
- Will your family form an active part of your campaign? Consider whether you want to include images of them in your campaign materials or at public appearances, particularly when it comes to children.

your reasons

- What is your number one reason for wanting to run? Is it wanting to make a difference across the board, or are there more specific issues that you want to improve? Either way, make a list of 10 things that you would want to get into council to achieve. These aren't set in stone – we're just brainstorming. Now, identify which of your personal values these things are connected to.
- Think about your past interactions with elected representatives (councillors, state and federal MPs). What kinds of issues did you approach them with, and what kind of response did you receive? What positives and negatives can you take from those interactions to improve your own style of advocacy and representation?
- What traits do you possess that you think would make you a good councillor?
- What will you do differently? If you had to identify one reason (no more than a paragraph) why people should vote for you, what would it be?
- How will being a councillor benefit you? What will you learn and achieve that will make your time on council worthwhile (for you, your family and your constituents)?
- What are you willing to sacrifice in order to be a successful councillor, and what is absolutely non-negotiable?

“ example

I am passionate about **social justice**, and want to see council deliver for everyone in our **community**, particularly those who are most vulnerable. I am **principled**, **progressive** and **pragmatic**, and if elected will work with my fellow councillors and council officers to achieve the best possible outcomes for our municipality.

YOU



your values

When it comes to the political sphere, we can view our personal values in two particular ways:

a) values that inform our passions or policy interests, i.e. fairness, equality, diversity

b) values that inform how we behave, i.e. tolerance, conscientiousness, logic

Select five values for each category, and use these to think about how you might communicate your values to voters.

achievement	creativity	inclusion	progress
authenticity	curiosity	integrity	reason
authority	determination	intuition	recognition
autonomy	diversity	justice	reliability
balance	empathy	kindness	reputation
boldness	equality	knowledge	resilience
challenge	experience	leadership	respect
citizenship	fairness	learning	responsibility
community	family	logic	security
compassion	foresight	loyalty	stability
competency	generosity	openness	status
conscientiousness	growth	optimism	success
consistency	happiness	pragmatism	tolerance
contribution	honesty	principles	trustworthiness
cooperation	humour	proactivity	wisdom

you, the candidate

developing your platform

Once you have taken stock of the issues facing your community, the next step is to decide which of these issues you will focus on throughout the course of your campaign.

Although it is important to listen and absorb the issues that residents might raise with you, you are not expected to be an expert on every issue. More importantly, you are entitled to take a different position.

Focus on the things you feel passionate about and run with them. Find out all you can about these issues - not just the concerns themselves, but their history of advocacy and action, who the key players are and what has and hasn't worked so far.

From there, you can develop your responses. Think of practical, achievable actions that you can implement, either over the course of your campaign, or in the event that you are elected.

You may even choose to take the position that the concerns raised require further investigation and consultation - that you will listen to the issues and concerns raised by local residents and businesses while campaigning and raise them if you are elected.

As a candidate, your job is to listen to the community, advocate for the positions and views you believe in, and remain open, transparent and honest. Don't make promises you can't keep. Once you're on council, change will require the support of other councillors, and some things you would like to change may not even be part of the responsibilities of local government.

If you're a member of a political party, be mindful of policy platforms or rules that you may be expected to adhere to - the last thing you want to do is backtrack on your stated position because you weren't aware that your party had a different one.



lucinda congreve brimbank 2016-



I actually decided to run for council because of my experience with the Maternal Child Health Service when I had my first child.

I was having trouble breastfeeding and needed additional support but my council did not provide a lactation consultant through our MCH service. I found out that the service had been removed in previous years as a cost cutting exercise.

This was one of my major items that I campaigned on and when I was elected it was the first thing that I really wanted to get fixed.

Within six months of being on council I had managed to get the lactation service reintroduced on a 12 month trial. The trial was successful and well loved by the mums in the community. It is now a permanent service.

We are hoping to really promote the service going forward in an effort to start improving the breastfeeding rates across the municipality (which are some of the lowest in Victoria).

What is your position on the issue?

Do you have one? Or do you still need to find out more? Has your position on this issue changed over time, and can you explain the reasons behind your position changing?

What will you do throughout the campaign?

What can you do to link your previous actions to your candidacy? Are there additional steps that you can take which leverage off your increased profile as a candidate? Are there actions that you can take that can form part of your community activation strategy (i.e. petitions, street stalls, issues-based doorknocking)? Do you need to find out more about the issue, or hear other points of view? Can you schedule meetings with some of the key players to listen to their perspectives and outline your plan for change?

What have you done so far?

What is your history of advocacy on this issue? Can you demonstrate your commitment to achieving change through actions that you have taken? Do you have other experiences that are relevant to the issue that demonstrate your courage of conviction?

What will you do once you are on council?

What steps will you take on this issue once you are elected? Keep in mind that you will have to work with council officers and other councillors, following council processes in order to achieve change.

Will your commitment be to resolve the issue, or is it safer for you to commit to prioritising the investigation of the issue once on council, working collaboratively to achieve the best possible outcome?

you, the candidate

prue cutts whitehorse 2016-



I recall the months of running for Council as a crazy time.

I was doing things I'd never done before like standing on station platforms giving out my own campaign material, walking up to people in the park and introducing myself, standing in public malls trying to get people's attention, even redrawing on my mortgage to fund my campaign.

Being an independent, I didn't have any experience in electioneering, so this really was an eye opener for me.

One of the major learnings was to hold fast to the reasons why I wanted to stand. This held me in good stead.

I have only ever been interested in making a positive difference in my local community and I am not afraid to stand up and speak out for things I believe in.

Probably the main obstacle was my own self confidence in thinking was I good enough? Was I worthy enough?

Other barriers paled into insignificance compared to my own self-doubt. But when elected, I moved on from that! I'm ready to take anything on now!

I love so many aspects of the role however my favourite part is being able to make a positive difference to the community I love.

I love engaging with the community, listening to their needs, desires and aspirations and as a councillor I am in a position where I can make things happen.

community networks

No matter how good you are at campaigning, it is impossible for you to speak to every voter in your ward in person.

Nevertheless, you need to be able to get your ideas out there into the community. People need to know who you are and what you stand for. Then they can choose to vote for you.

Your networks and the community groups you are involved with can help make sure your name is heard around your area.

When meeting people for the first time, they may recognise your name even if they don't know your face.

The best way to demonstrate that you are connected to the community that you want to represent is to be seen, heard and spoken about in that community.

You may not be able to knock on every door and speak to every resident, but you can at least aim to speak to most of the people that you know will speak to others.



marijke graham maroondah 2016-



Over the course of my campaign, I met so many amazing local people who are doing fabulous things for our

community.

I also heard a lot about many of the challenges facing local groups, cohorts and individuals in our municipality.

There were some people that I met who really judged me by my appearance - I was often asked how I old I was, or comments were made along the lines of '... you're too young to be a Councillor ...'

Mostly though people I worked with and met were really encouraging and made it clear **they'd be very happy to have someone like me represent them - the term 'new blood' was used a lot!**

I really learnt that you need to have a strong support team of family and friends around you to help you run a campaign.

Now as a councillor, I love working across so many different important issues every week.

I really get to indulge my passions of problem solving, sustainability, education, communication, wellbeing, equality and youth.

I love witnessing how our community members help others in times of need and the amazing, innovative and progressive ideas that are coming out of our municipality - it makes me so proud!

campaign timeline

March - September 2019	Information gathering and self-reflection. Develop your knowledge about your council, your ward and yourself, and start to develop your platform. Use the questions in the section 'getting started' as a basis.
October - November 2019	ONE YEAR OUT - profile and skills building. With one year until the election, you need to have more of an idea of whether you want to run. If you belong to a political party, you need to be testing the waters and speaking to others about your candidacy - check the rules to see what your obligations are and what support you can receive. Start your social media presence - if you're not quite ready, you don't need to announce that you are a candidate - you can position yourself as a community leader (which is what you are!). Keep an eye out for candidate training. The VLGA , the MAV and local councils run training for those considering their candidacy in local government elections. Consider the gaps in your knowledge and the skills that you might need to work on - and seek out training in these areas.
December 2019 - January 2020	Start to get the word out, and develop a plan. Although it is usually wise to avoid political conversations over the festive season, this is an ideal opportunity for you to speak to friends and extended family about your candidacy. You might find that they are actually extremely supportive - and they may also have a different (and valuable) perspective on many issues. This is also an ideal time for you to plan your year. Fill in the gaps in 'developing your platform' and consider what you need to achieve before your campaigning really ramps up. With family and friends around, you can do the 'hard ask' - request their assistance in activating the community, street stalls, doorknocks and letterbox drops. Make sure you leverage their skills and networks.
February 2020	Compile a budget and bring your team together. Figure out your budget and stick to it. Don't end up owing money at the end of your campaign. What can you source through friends, family and volunteers and what will you have to pay for? You don't need to build your entire team at this stage - try to find a campaign manager at the very least. You might also want to find someone who can organise fundraisers, manage your social media or contact community groups and businesses on your behalf. Keep having conversations.
March 2020	Get prepared for the campaign. Have some professional photos taken - do you know someone who can do this for no/low cost? If not, try to use a local business. Consider whether you need a separate mobile phone number just for the campaign - this means you can switch off when you need to. Do you need a campaign website, or is a Facebook page enough? Developing a website can take a lot of time, so set the wheels in motion.

April 2020	Develop your messaging and strategy. Keep your key messages simple and memorable. Think about what you want to say in print flyers and brochures, in your 200-word statement and online or on social media. Send the drafts and concepts around to friends for proofreading and comment and then get it proofread again! Your messaging should be consistent across all platforms although the language or tone might be different. Maintain your social media presence - even if it's just photos of you visiting local parks and cafes!
May 2020	Information gathering - election specific Attend any election information sessions your council is running (or at nearby councils) and make sure you have all the relevant information from the VEC . Learn about the nomination process, voting systems and look at previous voting results. If you are a member of a political party, preselection processes may have started by now. Make sure that you are conscious of any rules or protocols that your party might have around its members running as candidates - or be prepared for any consequences. Continue to hone your messaging and build your profile. Meet regularly with your campaign team (in person or remotely) to maintain momentum.
June 2020	Gather your materials and get campaigning. What kinds of materials do you need, and what can you afford? At the very least, you should get some business cards and some flyers or brochures with information about you and your plan for the ward. You might also decide to get postcards, print ads or fridge magnets - but these all cost money. Decide on the size of your print run and get it happening as this step can take 3-4 weeks. If possible, support a local business. Try to print on recycled paper. Remember that you must follow VEC guidelines about this material and what must be included - for example, ensure they are all authorised. Once you have some printed materials (even if you print them at home), get out and start talking to the community.
BONUS: Postal voting	If your council is holding a postal vote, contact Australia Post to understand how the bulk mail-out rules operate in your area. Explore the costs, benefits and timeline constraints of using Australia Post distribution versus volunteer or paid advertising delivery. Remember that the VEC will no longer accept or distribute your 'how to vote' preference order - you are responsible for distributing this information if that is what you want to do.
Week 1 - 2 July 2020	Be seen, be heard, and listen. Keep meeting with local community groups (see 'community networks') to raise your profile and to gain a better understanding of what the local government issues are in your municipality. Attend local events, festivals and farmers markets, or hold a 'listening post' at the local shops. Hand out your business card and election material when you can. If you're speaking to someone who seems particularly receptive, don't hesitate to ask them to get involved with your campaign. At worst, they'll say no. At best, you'll gain an invaluable volunteer.

campaign timeline

Week 3 - 4 July 2020	<p>Candidate statement and key messaging. Prepare the final draft of your 200-word statement – make it clear and straightforward.</p> <p>Decide on the key issues for your campaign - you should have an idea by now from your conversations with residents and community groups. Put out a press release on one of these issues, try to arrange a topical photo opportunity or just post regularly about them on social media.</p>
BONUS: Budget/ time considerations	<p>Consider whether you can take some leave from your employment duties in September and early October to really raise your profile with doorknocking, letter writing and meetings in your electorate.</p> <p>Review your budget and see if you have funds for placing advertisements in the local paper, community newsletters or with sporting clubs. September and early October may be useful times to place these ads.</p>
Week 1 - 2 August 2020	<p>Direct voter contact. Develop a regular roster of street stalls, doorknocks and letterbox drops with volunteers. Be seen and be active.</p> <p>When doorknocking, there may be something you can help people with during your campaign or let them know that if elected you will follow it up. Make sure you get back to them if elected and don't make promises you may struggle to keep.</p>
Week 3 - 4 August 2020	<p>Be creative - what else can you do to build your profile? Keep attending local council meetings, writing letters to the papers, posting on social media, getting on radio and raising your profile.</p> <p>Contact your local community radio station (if you have one) and introduce yourself - let them know that you would love to be interviewed about a local issue. Find out when any 'Meet the Candidate' forums are being held (either by your council or community groups) and put them in your diary.</p> <p>Make sure you and your supporters are correctly enrolled to vote - the rolls close 57 days before election day.</p>
BONUS: Attendance voting	<p>If your council elections are held via attendance voting (only a few across the state choose this option), plan a strategy for Election Day (Saturday 24 October).</p> <p>Have a look at the VEC website for an idea of the booth locations from the last council election in 2016 (these are subject to change) and how many voters on average attend each booth. This will be helpful as you consider which of your volunteers you might station on each booth, and how many volunteers you might need. You can also plan where you will spend your time on election day.</p> <p>Can you incorporate the attendance voting model into your campaign in other ways, e.g. making sure voters are aware that they need to attend in person (or request a postal vote) on 24 October? Could you try other 'get out the vote' techniques?</p>
Week 1 September 2020	<p>Continue to be visible and active. Finalise election logistics. Scrutineers are useful not only for election transparency and accuracy, but to give you an early indication of results. Appoint one or more scrutineers for election-day counting - preferably someone who has experience in this aspect of elections and can oversee the counting of votes on election day. If you don't have someone on your team who is experienced in scrutineering, don't despair - just make sure your appointed person reads the scrutineer handbook carefully.</p> <p>Remember - as the candidate, you can't be a scrutineer, and if your council opts for attendance voting you should try to appoint a scrutineer for each booth.</p>

Week 2: September 2020	<p>Time to make it official. Nominations will open in mid-September and close 5 days later at 12 noon (32 days before election day). You can pre-fill the nomination form online using the VEC's 'Candidate Helper', however the form and your nomination fee must be lodged in person with the Returning Officer.</p> <p>Your candidate statement and photo also need to be lodged before the deadline. Make sure you check the dates, deadlines and specifications on the VEC website.</p> <p>If you haven't already got posters or corflute signs prepared, order them now and ask friends, neighbours and local businesses to display them for you.</p>
Week 3: September 2020	<p>You're a candidate. Use social media to announce that your candidacy is now official! Find out about the other candidates who have registered. Get in touch with them and introduce yourself, and if you have time, try to meet.</p> <p>Think about your strategy with preferencing and 'how to vote' cards. You may choose not to distribute HTVs, but if you are in a multi-member ward, it may be useful for you to work with other candidates and swap preferences. If your council holds attendance elections, this step is particularly important: most voters will expect you to have material that lists a suggested preference order, and this must be registered in advance with the VEC.</p> <p>Remember that if you are a member of a political party, you should check your obligations in relation to preferencing.</p>
Week 4: September 2020	<p>Keep campaigning - voting starts soon! Spend as much time as you can out and about, speaking to residents and business owners about your policies and ideas. You may be surprised by how many people don't know that council elections are coming up.</p> <p>When you speak to voters, make sure you have materials that you can give them that include your contact details, bio, key messages and a photo of you. Don't hesitate to ask local businesses to put up a poster - the worst that can happen is they say no.</p>
October 2020	<p>This is the month. Ballot packs will begin to be mailed out by the VEC for postal elections. This occurs 17-19 days before election day. Ballot packs are distributed via post to every enrolled person in a random order over three days. No more than 35% of the ballot packs can be distributed on any one day.</p> <p>Councils holding attendance elections will have at least one early voting booth open from the day after the close of nominations until 6pm, 23 Oct. Try to assign at least one person to hand out HTVs throughout the early voting period.</p>
ELECTION DAY 24 October 2020	<p>Today is the day. If your election is by attendance, your work is not over yet! Move around the booths to speak to voters and volunteers, and spend more time at booths with higher than average attendance. It is useful to ask your volunteers to keep you up to date on how busy their booths are - play it by ear.</p> <p>Results are usually declared in the last week of October. Celebrate your campaign whether you win or lose. Publicly and privately thank all your supporters. Have two speeches ready for the declaration of the poll: one for if you are elected and one to thank your supporters and team.</p>

campaign infrastructure

the political minefield

For many candidates, running for council is part of the natural progression of their political activism. Becoming active in a political party can offer practice in many of the skills you may need as a candidate and as a councillor – local leadership, partnerships, communication skills, political understanding, governance, meeting procedures, and so on.

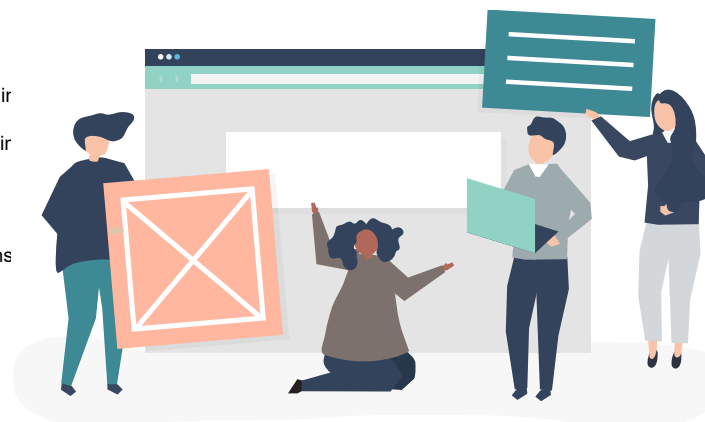
However, running for local government as a member of a political party can be complicated and involve a number of different considerations.

Political parties have their own rules that govern their members when it comes to local government elections

Here are a few things to consider:

- Does your political party endorse or support candidates for local government?
- Are you bound by rules that require you to endorse members of your party ahead of other candidates? Does this still apply if you are not endorsed or supported?
- Do you have the numbers to win a preselection process if required? What will happen if you are unhappy with the other candidates that your party selects?
- What will you do if you are not endorsed or supported but still want to run?
- What kind of message does your political party membership send to voters (rightly or wrongly)?
- Will your membership, support or endorsement translate into support (in kind or material) for your campaign?

Remember, you will need to consider making your party affiliation known when running for council. It is important to be up front and honest about this, especially once you are officially a candidate.



your campaign team

Campaign teams can come in many shapes and sizes, formal and informal, but it is crucial that you have a team around you to provide support when you need it.

Although you might be tempted, you won't be able to run the campaign entirely by yourself.

A good campaign is more

work than one person can handle. You need to be out there meeting voters, not stamping envelopes. The last thing you want to do is burn out - and as multi-talented and exceptional as you are, there will always be someone in your networks that can do something with more ease and finesse than you - use that to your advantage.

Who you choose to be part of the campaign team will be important to your election. As well as being people who are loyal to you and committed to your success and your vision, they need to be people who can quickly pick up particular skills, such as publicity and fundraising. If you have people with some experience of previous campaigns, that's an added bonus. Use their knowledge and their skills.



campaign manager

Your campaign manager might be an organised friend or family member, someone with experience on political campaigns, or even a former or retiring councillor.

Most importantly, your campaign manager needs to be someone that you trust and can work with collaboratively.

You might be looking for someone with political nous, someone who is great at proofreading, or someone who is terrific at organising events.

They don't have to be able to do everything - but they should be able to take the reins when there is something else you need to do.

Once you have put your team together, make sure you stay in regular contact with them.

They should have a clear idea of what you need them to do and that you appreciate their help.

Remember, you are only as good as your team - and you need them to get elected.

other campaign roles

There is no hard and fast rule about how large or small your team should be.

You should build your team around the skills that they bring to the table.

For example, someone that is good at event planning might be an ideal fundraising or events coordinator. Someone who has experience managing a public Facebook or Twitter page might be a terrific social media manager.

It may also be useful for you to have someone on your team that can assist you by contacting community groups and businesses on your behalf.

campaign infrastructure

budget

It's important that you plan what you are prepared to spend on your campaign before you begin to spend the money.

The budget should be based on your campaign plan and take into account what you need to spend, and anticipated income from donations or any other sources. The difference between how much you need to spend and how much income you can count on will then become your fundraising target.

You don't need to have thousands of dollars to be a successful candidate. Many successful candidates don't have any source of funding apart from their own money or that of their family. Think about what can you source through friends, family and volunteers and what will you need to pay for.

A campaign budget will vary for each campaign. It could depend on where you are standing and how many candidates are running. No matter how much or how little you think the campaign will cost, you will still need a budget.

You may want to assign a specific person in your campaign team the responsibility of fundraising or managing the campaign budget.

This is particularly helpful when it comes to sourcing funding so that your time can be used for campaigning, and so that you can ensure you are meeting your reporting requirements set out by the *Local Government Act*.



fundraising ideas

- ★ micro-donations - ask friends, family or colleagues for \$10
- ★ bake sale
- ★ garage sale - great opportunity to talk to your neighbours!
- ★ trivia night (ask for donated prizes and sell tickets)
- ★ raffles (ask for donated prizes)
- ★ supper club (invite some friends over for dinner in return for a donation to your campaign!)
- ★ 'gofundme'
- ★ barbeque
- ★ cocktail party
- ★ afternoon tea
- ★ movie night (sell tickets)

campaign donation returns

Election candidates are required under Victorian law to provide campaign donation returns - a record of donations or gifts, including in-kind support, given to a candidate during the campaign period.

The [Local Government Inspectorate](#) (LGI) supplies a form to enable candidates to fill in details of donations or gifts they have received above the \$500 threshold, as applicable under the Act.

Under the [Local Government Act \(1989\)](#), all candidates must submit their completed campaign donation return to the council's Chief Executive Officer within 40 days after election day, even if they were not elected and/or did not receive gifts.

Failure to submit a return, or providing false or misleading information can result in prosecution and fines of more than \$9,600.

Make sure that you or a member of your campaign team keep records of any donations and gifts throughout the campaign, as this will make it much easier to file your return.

Key details to include:

the full name and address of each person who made the gift or donation

- the date on which the gift or donation was given to you (the candidate)
- the exact value of the gift, and the form in which the gift was given (i.e. electronic transfer, cheque, cash etc)
- in the case of a gift in the form of goods or services, a description of the gift and its estimated market value.

Campaign costs	\$
Nomination fee	\$250.00
Photoshoot at discounted rate	\$300.00
Brochures (x500) incl. design	\$500.00
Business cards (x500)	\$250.00
A2 posters (x100) incl. laminating	\$400.00
Zip ties	\$5.00
Website design	donation
Facebook advertising	\$400.00
Basic phone + SIM card and initial phone credit	\$75.00
Snacks for volunteers	\$50.00
Pizza night for volunteers	\$150.00
TOTAL	\$2,380.00
Campaign income	\$
Personal investment	\$1000
Donations from friends and family	\$500
We need to raise:	\$880



campaign infrastructure

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time management/ planning

Managing your time wisely is crucial to running a successful campaign and to being an effective councillor.

Use the campaign timeline to draft a rough plan of the campaign preparation and activities you will need to undertake.

As soon as the nominations close, it is only a matter of days until votes will start to come in.

Although it is important to have the major tasks and milestones mapped out, it is just as important for you to manage your time effectively on a daily basis.

The amount of time that you dedicate to your campaign

should increase as the date of the election grows closer, but it is up to you to decide what you can manage as you balance your candidacy, work, family and social commitments.

Once you have an idea of how much time you can set aside, you can determine how much you can achieve on your own, and how much assistance you will need from other people.

At the start of each week, write a list of tasks that you need to complete.

Initially, you may only have one or two small things per week that can be achieved on your own.

As the campaign progresses, your lists may get longer and require some help from volunteers.

Make sure that you identify the things that only you can do (i.e. going to candidate forums, speaking to voters) and the things that you can delegate to others on your team.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Break down tasks into achievable steps.
- Break your spare time (your campaign time) into blocks.
- Goals should be SMART: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**elevant and **t**imely.
- Prioritise tasks by level of urgency.
- Set yourself a time limit to complete each task (or each step).
- Take a break or reward yourself when you finish each task.
- If you can delegate, do it. As the candidate there is always something useful you can be doing. Lighten your own load.
- Reflect regularly on how well you're achieving your goals and managing your time. If something's not working, change it and then reassess in a week or two.



rebecca
gauci
maurici
moonee
valley
2016 -

I ran for council because I am an active member of my community across mothers' and children's groups and service organisations. I wanted to be able to advocate for better long term planning and solutions to meet the needs of our community.

Being a councillor has been incredibly rewarding. In particular, having the ability to deliver long term strategic planning that will mean the municipality of the future, which my children will grow up in, will be the best it possibly can.

It has been difficult to learn to balance expectations, commitments and priorities. You are so eager to please everyone when initially elected that you run the risk of over committing and under delivering.

We are a female dominated council and that has been a blessing - there has been great support, and it's a family friendly environment.

I think it's crucial that we have women on council **because of our abilities to hear the concerns of those who may be less able to voice them, to translate and communicate across a breadth of people and groups and ages, and the diversity and wealth of experience we have and bring with us.**

I love being able to connect community groups to help each other, helping find a solution to the smallest of issues, and allowing people to feel heard.



roz
blades
AM
greater
dandenong
1987* -

I had been involved in the community for several years in community and welfare groups before standing for council.

There was a local issue that I involved the community in and then ran successfully for the local council. I didn't have any initial barriers, but when I ran for re-election, I came across significant issues and political barriers.

I could say every part of being a councillor was rewarding because it is.

Every time I have shaken a new citizen's hand both as a mayor or councillor at a citizenship ceremony, knowing some of the difficult circumstances new citizens have come from makes me proud.

I love being able to share the knowledge I have to improve lives.

Put simply, I entered council to make a difference.

My general experience as a councillor has been positive. It was a steep learning curve from community groups to an elected position though, especially with no political experience.

I think it is very important to have female voices in local government, **especially those with varieties of experiences.**

Greater Dandenong is the most multicultural municipality in Australia and values all the different experiences and knowledge of people from other countries - our city reflects this.

**Roz Blades was initially elected in 1987 prior to the amalgamation of the City of Springvale*

campaign in action



**alison
champion**
banyule
2016 -

When I ran, I followed the advice of my predecessor and supporters who had campaigned before and were elected successfully.

I learned to be on the journey and create enrolment conversations to gather other support from my friends and other community members, as well as my workplace directors.

Empowering members of my community to create a big enough voice to make 664 submissions was one of the most rewarding experiences.

It was one of the highest number of objections Banyule has received in my time.

I enjoy meeting more people in my community at events, or privately as they ask for my assistance.

Our communities are made up of both men and women, and our leaders need to be a mixture of genders to reflect that community as well as resonate with them fairly.

Being a councillor is a role within our community. It isn't necessarily related to gender.

I bring my skills, knowledge, education and experiences to the role, just like my fellow councillors do.

We are equal. We treat each other equally and we hear each other equally.

During this term at Banyule City Council I am the only female of 7 councillors.

**steph
amir**
darebin
2016 -



Running for council was daunting, but when things got difficult, I thought about all the women who had run before me - paving the way - and remembered that if I won, I would be paving the way for younger women in my community.

It helped me to stop getting caught up in my own fears and stay focused on the bigger picture.

Before getting elected, I was worried that residents and council staff wouldn't take me seriously as a young woman.

But in the council chambers, my voice and vote count just as much as the other councillors', and residents with strong views certainly don't hold back in trying to win my support or give me a piece of their mind!

If you wait for the "perfect" time to run for council, it may never happen.

My daughter was born two months after my election and, while it's been challenging to juggle multiple responsibilities, **being a new parent gave me new perspectives** on our municipality's physical spaces, services and communities.

Local councils are meant to represent local people, and that means people of all genders at all stages of life.

communication

Although there is nothing that beats one on one communication or organic community engagement, ultimately you want to reach as many voters as you possibly can.

This is where mass forms of communication can be extremely effective.

You want to get your name, face and message out there, so that voters will think, "I know her - I like what she stands for," when they see your name on the ballot paper.

Some commonly used forms of communication include:

- local newspaper/s
- local radio (this is particularly effective in regional/rural areas - but you know your community and you know what they listen to)
- direct or unaddressed mail (these have very different costs and levels of effectiveness)
- public speeches or appearances
- social media - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

Make sure that any media that you have to pay for (i.e. advertisements) are targeted to your community. There is no use in paying exorbitant amounts of money for a statewide publication that only a handful of voters in your ward will read.

You should always be asking yourself, "Where do people in my community get their information?"

If you know that the local paper hasn't been delivered in your neighbourhood for years, why would you advertise in it? Or if it is delivered, but immediately tossed in the recycling bin, why waste your money? But if you know that there is a publication - even if it is a small community newsletter that most people read cover to cover - then get in touch with the publishers and place a small ad.

Think about how you can get free, organic exposure.

If you have an interesting perspective, or a compelling story on any local issue, put it in a media release and send it to the local journo. Include quotes that get your message across in a succinct and effective manner. Tell the story, including key facts. You want to make it as appealing a proposition as possible - the less work the journalist has to do, the more likely they are to publish your story.

Social media is a (mostly) free, effective way of getting your message across. It is a great way to cut out the middle man and communicate directly with voters - but you need to find ways to target your community rather than shouting into the ether. The best way to do this is with content that is interesting to a local audience and geographically grounded. Write about visiting local cafes, restaurants, parks and sporting groups and tag them into your posts. Post articles that are relevant to local people and issues that users are likely to share - this expands your audience.



campaign in action



facebook

These days, we use Facebook for everything from messaging friends and selling second-hand goods to following and interacting with politicians and public figures.

Facebook is a terrific tool as it integrates users' personal lives (their friends, family and colleagues) with news and information. Used correctly, it has great potential as a tool not only for you to broadcast information to voters, but to engage and connect with them on a more accessible level.

It's a way for you to get your message out, to engage and to build a profile.

Create a page

Make a public page (not a profile). Think about what you might want to name the page (you can always change this later) - you could just use your name, i.e. 'Firstname Lastname' or your name and ward that you are running for, i.e. 'Firstname Lastname for Council Ward'.

Facebook will ask you to choose a category for your page - you should select 'Community or Public Figure', and then 'Politician or Political Candidate'. Add a cover photo and a profile photo - make sure that these are not blurry and reflect the image that you want to present to the community.

Create engaging content

Post consistently. Aim for a post 2-3 times per week, and eventually, you'll want to post at least daily to maintain your presence. Use a variety of post types (e.g., photos, videos and text), subjects (e.g., news, quotes, calls to action and updates on projects or issues), and original and shared content (e.g., links to articles and individual's posts). Make your content local, topical and timely, and respond promptly to any messages or comments. Facebook also has some [great tips](#) for you to engage with your community as a political candidate.

Consider Facebook advertising

Although you can get great results by inviting friends and asking them to share your page, Facebook advertising can be a cheap and easy way to promote your campaign. You can set a limit for spending (e.g. \$150) and set a target demographic for your ads - for example, women aged between 18-60 who live in your suburb. Your page will then be promoted to the audience that you've set and you will only be charged when these people 'like' your page.

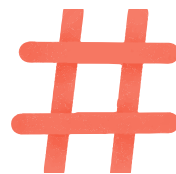
Remember: if you don't feel comfortable managing your own Facebook page, ask for help from someone on your campaign team. Google is your friend - there are countless 'how to' articles online on how to effectively manage a public page.

Stay on message, be genuine and make sure you come across as a real person, not a robot. Proofread every post before publishing it - and have a friend who will message you straight away if there's a typo in any of your posts - you can always go back and edit.

Facebook is much more than just your public page though.

Think back to your list of community groups that are active on Facebook and engage with them. Post about your campaign, ask for input on issues, and invite them to events.

You may want to reach out to the administrator of the Facebook group before you post to check that it is okay. This person might end up being a great ally for your campaign - as a community leader in their own right - and connect you with community groups on and offline.



twitter

Twitter is not necessarily a useful campaign tool unless you already have an established profile. If this is the case, make sure you go through your tweets and delete anything that you wouldn't want a voter to see -

keep in mind that it may still be archived somewhere on the internet.

You don't use Twitter for local information - so don't expect voters to. Use it to connect with existing networks.



instagram

Instagram is a popular platform that is very visually dynamic, but unless you have experience using it, don't be too worried about making a candidate profile.

You won't be able to use it to communicate with voters on a meaningful level, but it is a good way to document your interactions with the community. Use colourful, dynamic photos.

traditional media

Make contact with your local newspapers - you should be able to find a contact email address and/or phone number online. e.g. Leader, Star Weekly, Weekly Review, and other regional newspapers.

Introduce yourself as a candidate. If you can organise to have coffee with the local reporter, make sure you come prepared with issues that you want to speak about, in line with your key messaging.

- Nothing is ever off the record - don't speak ill of other candidates, or say things you wouldn't want published.
- Frame your messages in a positive way - i.e. 'I want to change this,' rather than 'This is bad'.
- Be succinct
- Know your issue or subject
- Don't be afraid to say, "I will get back to you on that," - and then get back to them.
- If a journalist rings and wants a comment, ask them to send the question in an email - this will give you time to understand what it is they want and what you want to get across.
- Consider that social media gives you an opportunity to speak directly and in more detail to the community - a Facebook video can complement an article.

TIP: Get in touch with community radio stations to see if you can get a weekly segment during the campaign.



campaign in action



**ash
fitzpatrick
wangaratta
2017 -**

Currently, I am the only woman on council, and to be quite honest I am very lucky to be working with the 6 men I do.

They are very respectful and always make sure I am heard. It would be lovely to have more women represented but I feel it comes down to values. At the moment the 6 men I work with value respect and honesty, and that is why I believe we work well together.

I believe women show different qualities and perceive things differently to men. Women show different characteristics than a man can. I believe that having that around the table is very important.

My overall experience campaigning and running for LG was quite positive and had major support from the community. I had the odd comment of "you are too young" or "no life experience". I was running at 18 years of age and elected at 19.

Besides being the youngest ever councillor in Wangaratta and currently the youngest in Victoria (now 21), giving our youth a voice in the community and showing anything is possible is one of my proudest achievements.

My absolute favourite part being on council is being able to represent our future, our next gen voters. Being able to give them a voice and inspiration motivates me each morning. I also love being with our community and simply communicating with them, if it's being at events, inviting them to briefings, forums and representing them at the table.

The biggest reason I ran? Diversity.

**stephanie
asher
geelong
2017 -**



I ran because I wanted to connect the community more closely with council processes - ie. to understand why decisions are made and to be able to explain how things work.

The first and obvious barrier was becoming familiar with the process. **It's really daunting at first but it's actually quite simple once you've done it once or twice - ask for help from people who've done it before!**

The biggest lessons for me were to trust my own judgement and be true to myself. Trust that voters get it even if the media doesn't.

Finally, PERSIST. Everyone will try and tell you why you shouldn't do it. Don't listen, do it.

In Geelong we have a great team of councillors. It's definitely different for women, but I'm lucky to have two other amazing women on council.

We pushed hard for live streaming and we continue to advocate for more friendly meeting times - nearly all our meetings are out of hours.

Family friendly hours are a struggle - many of our meetings start at 6pm or 7pm. This is neither sustainable nor accessible to many residents and ratepayers.

Getting people's requests met and receiving positive feedback that actual change has occurred is one of the most rewarding parts of being a councillor.

Getting things done seems like a huge achievement in local government!

direct voter contact - street stalls



A street stall is a great way to increase your visibility and speak to voters about their concerns.

They are less challenging than doorknocking, but they still take some getting used to.

Set up outside the local shops, near school pick up or drop off, or anywhere else that there is a regular flow of foot traffic.

Make sure that you check council regulations - you may need a permit - and if you are set up outside a business, ask them for permission before you begin.

It is useful to have a small card table that you can put materials on and display a sign.

Alternatively, you can put together (or purchase) an 'a-frame' sign with your corflute on both sides.

The same advice applies as with doorknocking - prioritise safety, don't be pushy or argumentative, and never hesitate to say you'll get back to them.

A useful tactic in street stalling is to use a petition.

Choose a local issue that you can lobby on, and print out a few pages of a petition - it is easy to look online for suitable formats. Think about who you want to petition - it might be the current council or your state member of Parliament. This way, you have an easy 'call to action' and it is a great way to get phone numbers and email addresses.

some other ideas...

Coffee with a Candidate

Train stations

Attending events and festivals

letterboxing

Letterboxing is considered 'indirect' voter contact, because you are not necessarily having a conversation with voters as you deliver the letters or flyers.

This is a task that you should probably delegate to volunteers, unless you are letterboxing at a time that you are likely to catch residents at home and in their front yards.

Make sure any material has your contact details so that voters can look you up and get in touch.



campaign in action

direct voter contact - doorknocking

Doorknocking is one of the most common community campaigning activities, and when done by the candidate, certainly the most effective at changing voters' minds.

You or your supporters knock on the door of a voter and talk to them about the issues that are important to them.

Leave some campaign literature with the resident - this is where flyers come in handy. If there is no one home, you can leave a flyer under the door (make sure it is not visible from the street). Ensure you have your contact details printed on the flyer so that they can look you up or get in touch.

In addition to building your profile, doorknocking may also help you to identify your supporters and even recruit enthusiastic voters as volunteers. You and your supporters might benefit from some training prior to going doorknocking.

This could include some role-play to practise what you will be saying, as well as some important considerations when it comes to safety.

To those who haven't done it before, doorknocking can be a daunting prospect. Once you jump in the deep end, however, you will be surprised at how enjoyable it can be to get out and speak to voters.

Get advice from others about your ward. When are residents likely to be home? Are certain areas better to doorknock than others? Consider asking your volunteers to doorknock their street.

Remember that when you or your volunteers are out speaking to voters, your aim is to connect your values and vision with the values and concerns of residents. Tell your story - and stay on message.



- Doorknock in pairs at each door, or in pairs with one person on each side of the street.
- 'Do not knock' stickers do not apply to charities or political candidates - that said, you might want to use your discretion as to which doors you and your volunteers knock.
- Do not hesitate to say, "I'm not sure, but I'll get back to you."
- Remind your volunteers that they can always say, "I'm not sure, I'm just a volunteer, but I can get the candidate to contact you."
- If a house looks unsafe, obstructed, there is a menacing dog or the front door can't be seen from the street - skip it. It is always better to be safe than sorry - you can leave a flyer in their letterbox.
- Never go into someone's house, no matter how friendly they may seem. You are on a tight schedule - they should understand this!
- Remind your volunteers to be respectful and considerate of residents. Once you knock on the door or ring the doorbell, take a step back so you're not in their face when they open the door.
- If someone says that they're busy or not interested, listen to them. Give them a flyer and wish them a good day.
- There is no use being pushy, insistent or argumentative. If someone is not going to vote for you, don't bother arguing with them. Be polite, understanding and cordial - win their respect if not their vote.
- Don't spend more than 5-10 minutes at any one door. If their concerns are complex, take notes and promise to call them at a later date.

STORY = VALUES + MOTIVATIONS + EXPERIENCES



**michelle
kleinert**
manningham
2012 -

“ I seriously ran for council having no idea what I was in for.

I just wanted to be more involved in my community and help people feel heard.

I realised after being elected **how important a woman's perspective is** in shaping one's city.

It's been an incredible journey and my love of the city I have lived in all my life has made it a wonderful experience.

If I can do it, anyone can with good people around them.

”

“

I believe having a diversity of voices on Council (including women of various ages and cultural backgrounds) means our diverse municipalities are better reflected.

Running for Council as a woman in my 20s, I came up against a lot of comments about my age and experience. **It was challenging, but it also improved my confidence and sense of self.**

I am a councillor and a social worker. It is a lot of work that involves a lot of empathy. It also means I work directly with the diverse community that I make policy decisions on behalf of, which I believe is invaluable.

Some of the issues I am passionate about on Council are supporting vulnerable families, empowering young women, female participation in sport and making Moreland a more liveable city for older people and people with a disability.



**annalivia
carli hannan**
moreland
2016 -

”

campaign in action

candidate statement

A candidate statement is only required in postal elections. However, preparing your candidate statement will help you to refine your key messaging - so even if your election is by attendance, it is worth working on a candidate statement that you might want to put on your how-to-vote card.

Your statement of up to 200 words should state why you're running and why people should vote for you, and include:

- A brief outline of your policies, proposals, and party affiliations (if any)
- Your reasons for standing for council and what sets you apart
- An overview of your goals if elected
- Personal or community experiences as examples of what you believe in
- Information about connection with your area: how long you've lived there, community or business involvement

This is the pitch that the majority of voters will see. Ask for their vote.

Present and arrange your statement to attract the attention of voters. Use plain English and avoid using slang, lingo or colloquialisms.

Where possible, mention specific problems that you want to try and address in your area, but don't make promises you can't keep.

Try to persuade voters that your presence on council will ensure their voice is heard.

Emphasise your accessibility and skills and your pride in making your area a great place to live and visit.

You will need to include a high quality photo that appears well in black and white (this is how it will be printed). Smile and make sure voters can clearly see what you look like.

Ensure your authentic voice comes through - balance a professional tone with your heartfelt sentiments.

Make sure the statement does not contain spelling or formatting errors. Ask a supporter to proof read it.

Double check and meet all VEC requirements about electoral material, including format and word limit for candidate statements in postal voting elections. There are very detailed guidelines on formatting and what content is allowed in the candidate handbook that the VEC produces.

example 1



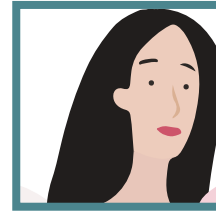
**family
and
community**

I care about the kind of world we will leave for our children. I believe that local Council is the one level of government that you can influence so I have made the decision to stand as a candidate in Cherry Lake Ward. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi: 'be the change you want to see in the world.'

As the mother of two school-aged children, and the daughter of ageing parents, I understand the needs, pressures and pleasures that come with family life. I have been a resident for 18 years, active as community campaigner for public transport, on Sports Club Committees, a School Council member and Council President and represented community on Council Advisory Committees.

In my professional life, I have worked in the fields of equal opportunity, training, policy and community service. I am not a member of any political party.

example 2



**representing
local
causes**

I am standing as a candidate in Magpie Ward because our growing community needs to focus on better delivery of the basics. Properly maintained roads, responsible development of community infrastructure and quality services are my top priorities. We need a Council that embraces change, is responsive and puts the immediate needs of ratepayers first.

Born a local, I returned with my young family 15 years ago. My family has a long tradition of community involvement in the district. As a parent, small business owner, and with a background in education and land management, I am very aware of the diverse needs of our community.

I have been on kindergarten, netball club and school committees, as well as The Valley Landcare Group. I am a graduate of the Community Leadership Program.

If elected as an independent Councillor, I will listen, be accountable and work hard towards achieving the best results for our community.



**susanne
newton**
darebin
2016 -

I am lucky enough to sit on a council with six women and three men. I absolutely love being a part of a strong female-led team that makes important strategic decisions for the future of our city. When I enter the council chamber, I know there are people around me that will have my back and support me.

It's a good feeling. The respect and support that we show each other in the chamber also shows our staff and community that we respect them.

We also demonstrate to younger women and girls that being a Mayor or Councillor is absolutely a path they can, and should, pursue.

**samantha
byrne**
moonee valley
2016 -



Being a Councillor has been one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. It's a lot of work, but being in the position to improve the area for generations to come makes it all worth it.

At Moonee Valley we're extremely proud that we have a female majority and have had for a while.

I learnt a lot about myself while campaigning. I had a very small budget and hand delivered all of my material, but this was a great way to get out and meet residents.

I was driven to run for Council because I wanted to do more for the Community.

I believe that as long as you stick to your values people will respect you, regardless of whether they agree with you.

notes

