



2018-19 ANNUAL REPORT

Current Members

Banyule City Council
Bass Coast Shire Council
Baw Baw Shire Council
Boroondara City Council
Brimbank City Council
Buloke Shire Council
Campaspe Shire Council
Cardinia Shire Council
Darebin City Council
Greater Dandenong
City Council
Greater Shepparton
City Council
Hobsons Bay City Council
Horsham Rural City
Council
Hume City Council
Kingston City Council

Knox City Council
Latrobe City Council
Macedon Ranges
Shire Council
Manningham City Council
Mansfield Shire Council
Maribyrnong City Council
City of Melbourne
Melton City Council
Mildura Rural City Council
Mitchell Shire Council
Monash City Council
Moonee Valley City
Council
Moorabool Shire Council
Moreland City Council
Mornington Peninsula
Shire Council

Mount Alexander
Shire Council
Murrindindi Shire Council
City of Port Phillip
Pyrenees Shire Council
Stonnington City Council
Strathbogie Shire Council
Warrnambool City Council
Whitehorse City Council
Whittlesea City Council
Wyndham City Council
Yarra City Council
Yarriambiack Shire Council
Nillumbik Shire Council
Yarra Ranges Shire Council
Hepburn City Council





The VLGA is an independent organisation committed to supporting Councils and Councillors in good local governance. We work to support and strengthen partnerships and collaboration between councils, their elected representatives and local communities.



President's Report

In my second year as President, the VLGA has worked closely with our members and the sector more broadly, to advance and support the principles of effective governance.

At the AGM in 2018, we delivered a new constitution that was supported by 95% of members and came into effect for the 2019 Board elections. I am happy to welcome our two appointed skills-based directors, Joanna Hayter AO and Louise Hill, who took up their positions in June 2019 and whose contribution to date has been inspiring.

The advent of the new constitution and the board elections drew the fiscal year to a close.

In 2018, we continued to deliver on our 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, engaging with our membership through events and training, and our regular meetings with the Minister for Local Government and other ministers. The VLGA is well placed with a strong seat at the state government table.

The VLGA advocated to the re-elected state government to review the rate cap imposed on councils as a matter of priority. We welcomed the debate on the *Local Government Bill 2019* (Vic) and in consultation with Local Government Victoria ran numerous information sessions.

The VLGA continues its partnership with Pitcher Partners this year to deliver our signature **Leading the Agenda** series which included:

- **Activating Community** with community campaign leaders from across Victoria
- **Child Friendly Cities and Communities: Empowering Children** with Liana Buchanan, the Commissioner for Children and Young People

We launched *Local Women Leading Change* funded by a grant received from Local Government Victoria. This program aims to inspire women to run for council in the 2020 election. The program celebrates our ongoing commitment to the Local Government Women's Charter and supports the work that we undertake as members of the Ministerial Women's Roundtable.

The VLGA introduced the Mayors and Deputy Mayors FastTrack Leadership Training. We continue to support and collaborate with our long-time partners Reconciliation Victoria and Child Friendly Cities and Communities.

I would like to acknowledge my board colleagues and thank them for their support. I am very proud of the board's involvement in a time of strategic change for the organisation.

I would particularly like to acknowledge outgoing board members Rae Kingsbury and Terry Larkins who finished their term on the board on 30 June 2019. Both Rae and Terry have been long-term supporters and board directors of the VLGA, and we thank them for their ongoing commitment to the organisation and to the sector. It is also a great pleasure to welcome them as life members.

My time as President has been enhanced by the stewardship of the Chief Executive Officer Kathryn Arndt whose diligence, intelligence and values have set the VLGA on a strong path as an independent peak body for the local government sector. To the staff, thank you. At times you have gone above and beyond in the work you do to support me. You too, have made my time as President enjoyable.

To our membership, thank you for your ongoing support. The future is about collaboration and partnerships. It has been a pleasure.

Cr Marg Attley OAM
President



CEO's Report

The VLGA continues to be a recognised peak body for local government. As part of the 2018-2022 strategy the VLGA supports and assists councillors to do their job well and aims to be the professional association for elected representatives in local government.

Local government plays an integral and well recognised role in connecting and caring for people and communities. This is evidenced by state and federal levels of government delegating the delivery of critical services to local government. It is seen as the grassroots level of government and closest to the community.

The VLGA's five-year strategic plan, which was launched in November 2017, continues to guide the work of the organisation.

Over the past twelve months the VLGA has continued to provide support and opportunities for networking, professional development and information exchange. We actively engage with key policymakers and broader stakeholders to inform, influence and lead the conversations that determine the priorities for the local government sector in Victoria.

At a governance level - and in line with our goal to be a sustainable, focussed and values-driven organisation - a comprehensive review of the VLGA's constitution or

"Rules" of the Association, was undertaken in the 2017-2018 period. This review resulted in constitutional reform, guided by the goal of creating a contemporary fit for purpose model of governance. It was presented to our members in November 2018. I am proud to say that the new constitution was adopted by a 95% majority vote in favour of reform.

The revised structure better positions the organisation for future funding and partnership opportunities, in addition to providing a model of best practice governance. Unlike other local government peak bodies in Victoria, the VLGA is a not-for-profit and independent membership-based organisation and its governance structure aligns with the organisation's purpose and vision.

The VLGA continues to support and assist elected representatives to do their job well.

I would like to thank the outgoing VLGA board under the leadership of President Cr Marg Attley OAM, who worked tirelessly with me to advance reform in the best interests of our membership and the local government sector more broadly. I also recognise and acknowledge the contribution of all VLGA staff and thank them for their resilience, agility, professionalism and support over the past twelve months.

Kathryn Arndt
CEO



LGA

Local Governance
Association



Treasurer's Report

The 2018-2019 *End of Year Audit Report and Financial Statements* reflect the positive outcomes of the past two years of review and consolidation at the VLGA.

In summary:

- Income decreased by 14.8 per cent to \$1,304,725
- Net result was \$164,803 which was approximately \$44,298 above a budgeted surplus of \$120,205. This result reflected some funding that was allocated before the financial year end and was anticipated to be received in the 2019-2020 period
- Total expenses were marginally higher by 1.88 per cent

Council membership income for the 2018-2019 period decreased slightly. However, as the VLGA continues to work to promote itself as a professional association for elected representatives, membership for the 2019-2020 period has risen.

Funds were used to invest in a new website and membership database which has improved the quality and quantity of information accessible to members. A new IT server has been installed to support the VLGA's overall IT infrastructure which is critical to the organisation's seamless functioning.

Investment was allocated for the legal costs associated with the constitutional reform that now provides the organisation with a contemporary fit for purpose governance model which supports the VLGA's strategic aims.

VLGA council membership subscriptions essentially cover the costs associated with the extensive advocacy and policy work that the VLGA undertakes on behalf of the local government sector in Victoria. The new Associate Member category provides the organisation with further opportunity to raise revenue to support the work we do.

The 2019-2020 financial year is anticipated to deliver a balanced end of year result, as the VLGA continues to develop the services it provides to its membership and diversify its revenue streams.

Investment has been allocated to review the VLGA's leased office premises with the objective to provide a more comfortable, accessible and professional workplace for staff and visitors alike.

The VLGA is partnering with La Trobe University in research funding for a paper entitled *Future at the Top: Barriers to Women's Representation in Local Government*.

Planning is also underway to create an important partnership with a leading academic institution to undertake research in governance at the elected representative level. This partnership may result in the VLGA contributing seed funding, however, multiple funding opportunities are being explored.



Retained earnings will be used to deliver some of the projects outlined above and members should feel confident that the conservative management of the budget over the past two years will position the VLGA well into the future.

The VLGA delivered two externally funded projects over the year – a gambling harm prevention project funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation and the *Local Women Leading Change* program. Both projects are funded into the next financial year.

Cr Lambros Tapinos
Treasurer

VLGA Advocacy

Advocacy and training are at the heart of what we do. We give councils a voice through regular meetings with key government departments, the Minister for Local Government, portfolio ministers and their advisors. VLGA members benefit from subsidised training, events and policy analysis. We are a consultative organisation with a strong focus on representing our members through lobbying and advocacy.

Submissions

- Local Government Bill 2018 (Vic)
- Environment and Planning Committee Inquiry into Waste and Recycling
- Australian Citizenship Ceremonies Code
- Implementation of the Affordable Housing Amendment to the Planning and Environment Act
- Royal Commission into Mental Health
- Victorian Public Health and Well Being Plan

External Committees

- Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) Steering Committee
- Ministerial Council on Women's Equality
- Ministerial Roundtable for Women in Local Government
- Stakeholder Reference Group – Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment
- Gender Equity Working Group
- Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan – First Implementation Partnership Group
- Alliance for Gambling Reform



Representing our members

In the last fiscal year, the VLGA continued to have input into government policies and implementation of programs which affect our members and their communities. This includes:

- Officers for the Protection of the Local Environment (OPLE) Pilot Program Stakeholder Reference Group. This reference group aims to foster closer working relationships between council staff and the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to respond to community complaints on issues such as illegal dumping of rubbish.
- Victorian Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan Implementation Partnership. This Action Plan guides the actions in local government aimed at improving the relationship with Aboriginal Victorians. The Action Plan also aligns closely with councils' plans at a local level, as well as with the state government's Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework.
- Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Advisory Group. The Reporting Framework provides essential data to the Know Your Council website, which provides public information on key performance indicators by each of the 79 Victorian councils.

We also partnered with councils and supported the implementation of key council resolutions and government policies. These include:

- Implementation of the Affordable Housing Amendment to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*. This involved providing input to the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning as part of their consultation and feedback process leading up to and immediately after the Amendment to the Act.
- Mayoral Taskforce Supporting People Seeking Asylum. The Taskforce was established to support people living in the community while their applications for asylum are being processed. Changes by the federal government have reduced financial assistance available to people seeking asylum. The Taskforce continues to advocate for and provide support to people seeking asylum in their communities.

In response to the waste and recycling crisis, we made a comprehensive submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry into Recycling and Waste Management. This was followed by a presentation to the Parliamentary Committee during its public hearing in late June.

We also held a number of meetings and forums with a diverse range of stakeholders, including:

- National Growth Areas Alliance
- Committee for Melbourne
- Leadership Victoria



*L to R Kathryn Arndt,
Cr Marg Attley OAM,
Minister Adem Somyurek*

*Cr Henry Barlow
VLGA Councillor Advisory Network*



Training and events

The VLGA offers dynamic and best practice training and events on current issues facing councils and their communities. We provide thought-provoking forums and authoritative, consistent and high-quality training.

In the last year, we have continued to support member councils, councillors and communities through the following briefings, events and training sessions:

- Governance and Integrity in Local Government training: providing an in-depth understanding of the responsibilities and obligations under the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic)*, as well as an exploration of ethics and integrity in the local government context
- VLGA State Election Series
- Post budget Wrap Up 2019. We provided a comprehensive wrap up of the 2019-2020 Victorian State Budget, including a two-part video presentation and an analysis of the key budget measures and their impact on the local government sector
- Annual Mayors and Deputy Mayors FastTrack Leadership Development Program
- Supporting community leadership programs by providing information on local government, including roles and responsibilities of councillors. Participants in these sessions gained significant insight into the governance and operational aspects of councils

Leading the Agenda

On a monthly basis, in collaboration with our sponsors Pitcher Partners, we continue to bring high profile leaders, councillors and community members together to discuss a range of issues facing local government.

In the lead-up to the 2018 state government elections, we presented our *Leading the Agenda* Election Series moderated by Sally Warhaft. Sally conducted one-on-one interviews with the Hon Marlene Kairouz, the Hon Jaala Pulford, the Hon Lily D'Ambrosio, the Hon David Davis and David Morris MP.

In 2019 our panel discussions began with Treaty, followed by Empowering Children in partnership with the Child Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC) Network and the Local Government Women's Charter Champions working lunch.

Local Government Working Group on Gambling

Bi-monthly LGWGOG meetings have been dynamic and engaging with increasing participation from council officers and councillors. Presenters have included Kirstan Corben from VicHealth discussing learnings from public health campaigns in other areas; John Rantino and Kate Lyle of Maddocks sharing their observations from another year at the VCGLR and VCAT; Petrina Dodds Buckley on the community and council win in Officer; Tim O'Farrell, Cameron Warfe, Seona March and James Hibberd from the Victorian Commission for Gambling and Liquor Regulation.

We also have regular updates from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation's (VRGF) Gambling Information Resource Office, the Deakin University gambling research team and the Alliance for Gambling Reform. Strong and growing attendance is testament to the high regard of the local government sector for this forum.



2019 FastTrack Leadership Development Program

Building on the success and responding to feedback from participants on the 2018 Mayors and Deputy Mayors Development Weekend, the 2019 FastTrack Leadership Development Program was a one-day action-packed event in March. The day commenced with an official opening from the newly appointed Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Adem Somyurek MP, followed by an impromptu Q&A with participants.

The day also included sessions on leadership styles as well as current and emerging trends in CEO recruitment processes. An informative panel discussion on optimising the relationship between council administration and councillors was another highlight.

The VLGA will continue the one-day format for FastTrack Leadership Development in 2020.

Forums and Roundtables

- Leading the Agenda series – Pitcher Partners
- Transport for Melbourne
- Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFCC)
- ICEGOV 2019 International Conference on Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance – Digital Transformation of Local & Regional Government Service Production & Delivery, in partnership with RMIT
- Melbourne Knowledge Week – Leadership roundtable
- Balaki Wurrekang (Mob talking to Mob) – Treaty Engagement Introduction for Local Government Authorities
- Waste Management Crisis - Reshaping the Conversation
- 2018 Election Series with Sally Warhaft
- Building Communities Symposium with Wyndham City Council
- Thought Leadership with AON Australia
- New Mayors and Deputy Mayors welcome with KPMG
- Population roundtable with the Hon Alan Tudge MP Minister for Cities, Urban Infrastructure and Population



*Top: Panel discussion
'Empowering Children'
in partnership with
Child Friendly Cities
& Communities*

*Bottom: Local
Government Women's
Champions Workshop*

*VLGA Chief Executive Officer,
Kathryn Arndt with Minister
for Local Government the
Hon Adem Somyurek*



Gambling Harm Prevention Project

The VLGA's gambling work has continued to achieve great outcomes and play a key role in reducing harm from gambling. The VLGA has a formal partnership with the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) which funds this important work.

Councillor Champions

This part of the project builds councillor knowledge and skills in developing and implementing actions to reduce harm from gambling. It encourages councillors to initiate and implement actions to raise awareness and reduce harm from gambling.

With support from the VLGA, councillors around Victoria have:

- Passed motions highlighting local gambling losses and advocating for reform
- Strengthened policy responses to prevent gambling harm in their municipality
- Initiated actions that hold gambling industry operators to account
- Attended awareness and advocacy events
- Funded actions to prevent gambling harm
- Opposed applications for more poker machines in municipalities around the state

Civic Communities

The Civic Communities aspect of the project builds social connectedness and community resilience with a key focus on assisting communities to build knowledge and skills to participate in the licensing and planning processes for poker machine applications. VLGA's work in encouraging community participation in these processes has been a significant contributor to positive outcomes in several municipalities.

Libraries After Dark

The VLGA is a proud partner with Moreland City Council in the Libraries After Dark program which was funded in the 2017-19 VRGF Prevention Partnership Program. Libraries After Dark provides a safe alternative social recreational activity on a week night in four libraries for communities who are at risk of gambling harm. The program has attracted tens of thousands of participants, great media attention and an Andrews Government election promise of a million-dollar four-year grant to continue and expand the program. The VLGA will remain a key partner as this program grows in the future.



Urban Planning, RMIT
Committee for Melbourne

PITCHER PARTNERS
See the bigger Pitcher

*Leading the Agenda
at Pitcher Partners*

Supporting Women: Gender Equity

With the next round of local government elections taking place in October 2020, the VLGA's Women's Engagement work has focused on providing information, training and support to equip women to be successful candidates for election.



Kaushaliya Vaghela MP

Local Women Leading Change project

Following extensive preparation for 'Your Campaign Toolkit' we launched our campaign for increased representation of women in the October 2020 local government elections.

The project recognises the significant contribution that Victorian women can make to public life, including their connections to their community, their skills and their unique perspectives.

As part of the project, we worked with locally based groups including Voices of Women Yarra Ranges (VoW) and Women in Local Democracy (WILD) Geelong.

We look forward to continuing to work with VoW and WILD as the October 2020 elections draw closer.

Women's Charter

Currently, 72 of 79 Victorian councils are signatories to the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter. Our aim is to have all Victorian councils as signatories by the October 2020 elections.

The VLGA convened a Women's Charter forum as part of our *Leading the Agenda* series, hosted by Pitcher Partners. It brought together more than 40 Charter Champions from metro, rural and regional councils, with representation from officers, councillors and CEOs.

Victorian Local Government Charter Champions events will be held across the state on an ongoing basis.



HART Awards and Reconciliation

As part of the VLGA *Leading the Agenda* series we presented a Treaty forum moderated by Marcus Holmes with key speakers:

- Treaty Commissioner Jill Gallagher AO
- The Hon Natalie Hutchins MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Treaty
- Dr Shireen Morris, Melbourne Law School

The 6th annual HART Awards (Helping Achieve Reconciliation Together) were delivered by the VLGA with Reconciliation Victoria and supported by Bank Australia and Local Government Victoria.

Each year we see an exciting number of quality nominations, featuring a breadth of initiatives across the state. Nominations are submitted by Victorian local councils and community groups for projects that reflect Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together, and initiatives that have contributed to reconciliation through relationships, respect and understanding.

The HART Awards are an action item of the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan 2016 (VALGAP), developed by Local Government Victoria.

The VLGA and Reconciliation Victoria encourage all councils to participate in the HART Awards in 2020.



Allara Pattison Briggs



Treaty

The VLGA is working with the local government sector and the Victorian Treaty Advancement Commission to help inform local government and their communities on Treaty and what it means for them.

It is intended that all VLGA's activities (current and future) will be connected, coordinated and consistent with the aims of Treaty and Reconciliation.

"The highlight of the annual calendar, for me, was the 6th Annual HART Awards where I had the profound privilege along with Reconciliation Victoria CEO Diana David and Andrew Jackomos to be part of the judging panel. It was a wonderful day of celebration and acknowledgement of our First Nation Peoples and the work that the community and councils do in reconciliation. It is always an inspiring and heartfelt ceremony."

Cr Marg Attley OAM
VLGA President



Membership

Membership is the lifeblood of the VLGA. We undertake an active engagement process with our members and key stakeholders. We have worked hard not only to retain our existing members, but also to gain new members. The VLGA undertakes regular visits to councils for briefings, consultations and to deliver training for councillors and senior staff.

We actively advocate on behalf of our members to government agencies and key reference and advisory groups tasked with implementing government policy which impacts councils and their operations.

At the November 2018 Annual General Meeting a new Constitution was adopted, including a new membership model. All Councillors at VLGA member councils can now vote in all VLGA elections.

Two new membership categories were introduced:

Associate Member – Organisation
Associate Member – Individual

VLGA Board 2018-19

President

Cr Marg Attley OAM – Mansfield Shire Council

Vice Presidents

Cr Michelle Kleinert – Manningham City Council
Terry Larkins – Community Member

Treasurer

Cr Lambros Tapinos – Moreland City Council

Members

Cr Sharon Ellis – Whitehorse City Council
Rae Kingsbury – Community Member
Cr Susanne Newton – Darebin City Council
Cr John Sipek – Moonee Valley City Council

Appointed Skills Based Directors

Joanna Hayter AO
(appointed 16 May 2019 for a three-year term)

Louise Hill
(appointed 16 May 2019 for a three-year term)

2018-19 Board Attendance

| Directors* | Board Meetings | | Governance & Risk Meetings | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------|----------------------------|----------|
| | Eligible to Attend | Attended | Eligible to Attend | Attended |
| Cr Marg Attley OAM (P) | 8 | 8 | 4 | 4 |
| Cr Michelle Kleinert (VP) | 8 | 7 | 4 | 3 |
| Terry Larkins (VP) | 8 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Cr Lambros Tapinos (T) | 8 | 7 | 4 | 4 |
| Cr Susanne Newton | 8 | 6 | - | - |
| Cr Sharon Ellis | 8 | 6 | - | - |
| Cr John Sipek | 8 | 2 | - | - |
| Rae Kingsbury # | 8 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Joanna Hayter AO + | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Louise Hill + | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |

* Directors' fees are annual pro-rata, with the exception of the Independent Directors, until 30 June 2019

President \$29,630pa

Executive \$5,800pa

Board members

Rural/Regional \$4,500pa

Interface \$3,000pa

Metro \$1,500pa

VLGA Board Sitting Fees
(effective 1 July 2019)

President \$557 per meeting

Directors \$426 per meeting

+ Paid to Independent Directors from the time of their appointment.

Directors fees waived



Core Staff

Kathryn Arndt
Chief Executive Officer

Bo Li
Senior Policy Advisor

Liddy Clark
Communications Advisor

Deborah Wu
Women's Engagement and Project Officer

Ruth Ball
Executive Assistant

Natalie Karipidis
Membership and Administration Support Officer

Grant Funded Staff

Dr Susan Rennie
Gambling Project Coordinator (part time)

Rose O'Leary
Community Engagement Officer (Gambling) (part time)

Jane Robinson
Project Officer (Gambling) (part time)

Hosted Organisations

- The Alliance for Gambling Reform (AGR)
(VLGA Associate Organisation Member)
- Australian Local Government Women's Association
Victoria (ALGWA Vic)

Partner Organisations


- Child Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC)
- Ethnic Communities and Council of Victoria (ECCV)
- Victorian Local Government Multicultural Issues
Network (VLGMIN)
- Reconciliation Victoria
- Aspire Pty Ltd (VLGA Associate Organisation Member)

Sponsors and Supporters

- Pitcher Partners
- KPMG



VLGA Staff with Cr Marg Attley OAM



The Victorian Local Governance Association 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.

Victorian Local
Governance Association



Suite G06, 60 Leicester Street
Carlton VIC 3053
03 9349 7999
vlga@vlga.org.au
www.vlga.org.au