

# **your campaign toolkit**



A CANDIDATE GUIDE TO THE 2020  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

**VLGA**

# acknowledgements

Published by the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA).

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**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.**



Victorian  
Local Governance  
Association

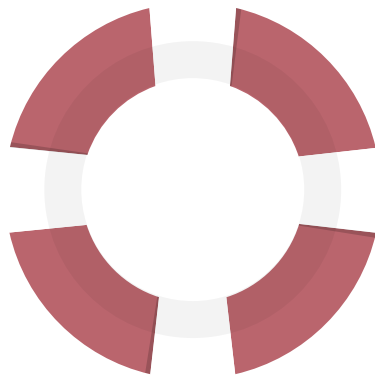
# contents

about the VLGA	4
foreword	5
<b>local government 101</b>	
another level of government	6
the role of a councillor	7
how local government elections work	8-9
what is good governance	10
more about councils	10
<b>you, the candidate</b>	
what makes a good local councillor?	11
getting started	12-15
developing your platform	16
community networks	16-17
<b>campaign timeline</b>	<b>18-21</b>
<b>campaign infrastructure</b>	
the political minefield	22
your campaign team	22-23
budget	24-25
time management/planning	26
<b>campaign in action</b>	
communication	27
campaigning	28-31
candidate statement	32-33

# about the VLGA

The VLGA is an independent 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 information and 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.

## Victorian Local Governance Association

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# foreword

Local government is an essential tier of government, one often described as “closest to the people”. From child and maternal health services to aged care, from libraries to sporting facilities and from supporting local businesses through to emergency management, councils play vital roles in our communities.

Councillors, as elected representatives of their community, play critical leadership roles in the setting of the strategic direction for Victoria's 79 municipalities.

As part of our mission to support councils and councillors in good governance, the VLGA is proud to support community members and encourage informed candidates to stand in council elections. We also provide support and training to councillors once they are elected to assist them to become effective and high performing councillors. High performing councils, led by high performing councillors, are responsive to community needs and strategically plan for and serve their communities in partnership with residents and based on informed decision making.

This booklet complements the VLGA Candidate Information and Training Program for the 2020 council elections. It contains tips and tools for you to consider as part of your candidacy.

Congratulations on your decision to nominate and run as a council candidate. We wish you every success on your journey ahead.

**Kathryn Arndt**  
CEO, Victorian Local  
Governance Association

**Cr Lambros Tapinos**  
President, Victorian Local  
Governance Association



# 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 (2020)* and any accompanying regulations. Although it's not necessary to read through the 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 regular council meetings, community events and functions.

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 they spend on council matters.

Sitting councillors have told us that they spend an average of 20-25 hours per week on council matters.

**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 (2020) 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* (2020).

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, with the same number of councillors in each ward.

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.

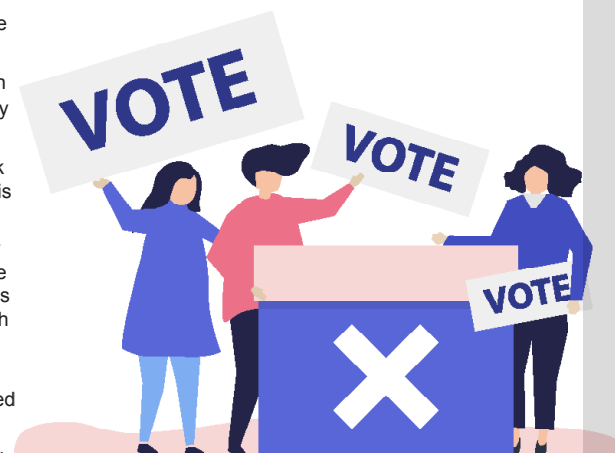
### how do I nominate as a candidate?

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.

#### 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).

### KEY ELECTION TERMINOLOGY

#### 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.

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

#### ward:

The internal boundaries within a council. Usually a suburb/town (or a few suburbs/towns).

#### unsubdivided:

means that the ballot is based on proportional representation, so you are aiming to reach quota to get elected. This also means you are elected by voters from across the 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.



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.

## more about councils

You can find out more about your council via a number of online resources.

Here are three websites you can visit to learn more about your council.

### Your council's website:

You can access key information such as wards and councillors as well as key documents such as the Council Plan and annual reports.

### knowyourcouncil.vic.gov.au:

This website provides important information on councils' performance and you can compare key data between councils.

### vec.vic.gov.au:

<https://www.vec.vic.gov.au/ElectoralBoundaries/CouncilProfiles.html>

The Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) provides comprehensive data on council profiles (ward boundaries, number of electors etc), as well as historical data on council elections.

# 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 someone that you think would make a good councillor, ask them to stand.** Better yet – ask them 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.

## 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 which 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 groups and 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 research with friends and neighbours. They don't need to be time-sensitive, pressing issues – they can be something that a lot of people care about, like access to children's services, aged care or the local pool.

# 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 issues did you approach them with, and what 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?



## 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

## “ 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, 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.

## 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.

You may not be able to knock on every door and speak to every resident, but you can at least aim to speak to the 'influencers' in your community - the ones that you know will speak to others.



**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.**

## 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 (e.g. 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?



# campaign timeline

March - September 2019	<b>Information gathering and self-reflection.</b> 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	<b>ONE YEAR OUT - profile and skills building.</b> 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 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	<b>Start to get the word out, and develop a plan.</b> 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	<b>Compile a budget and bring your team together.</b> 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	<b>Get prepared for the campaign.</b> 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	<b>Develop your messaging and strategy.</b> 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	<b>Information gathering - election specific</b> 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	<b>Gather your materials and get campaigning.</b> 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	<b>Be seen, be heard, and listen.</b> 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><b>Candidate statement and key messaging.</b> 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 or your campaign website.</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><b>Direct voter contact.</b> 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><b>Be creative - what else can you do to build your profile?</b> 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><b>Continue to be visible and active. Finalise election logistics.</b> 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><b>Time to make it official.</b> 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><b>You're a candidate.</b> 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><b>Keep campaigning - voting starts soon!</b> 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><b>This is the month.</b> 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.</p> <p>Try to assign at least one person to hand out HTVs throughout the early voting period.</p>
ELECTION DAY 24 October 2020	<p><b>Today is the day.</b> 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 will be declared between the last week of October and first week of November. 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.



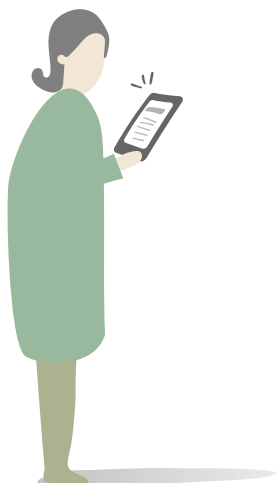
## your campaign team

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 in order 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 who 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 who 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 you can source through friends, family and volunteers and what you will 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*.

## 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 required 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.



## 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 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,380.00</b>
Campaign income	\$
Personal investment	\$1000
Donations from friends and family	\$500
<b>We need to raise:</b>	<b>\$880</b>



# campaign infrastructure



## 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.

# campaign in action

## 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 them - I like what they stand 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 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

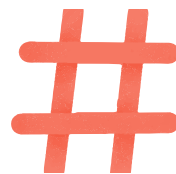
Although you can get great results by inviting friends and asking them to share your page, Facebook advertising can be a cheap and easy way to promote your campaign. You can set a limit for spending (e.g. \$150) and set a target demographic for your ads - for example, women aged between 18-60 who live 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

## 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 where 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 confluence 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.

As a political candidate, 'no junk mail' stickers do not apply to you - don't skip these letterboxes or you may end up skipping most of them!



## 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



# 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 proofread 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



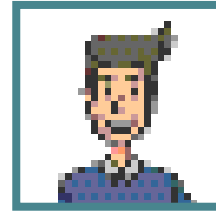
#### family and community

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-age 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.

# notes

