

OCTOBER



Victorian Local Government Elections

A Campaign Guide for Candidates 2018-2020

Who should use this Guide?

This document can be used by potential candidates and supporters. Its aim is to provide a framework for nurturing interest in the community around local democracy and to encourage and support greater numbers of diverse people to stand for council.

Why a gender equity campaign strategy?

Women and diverse communities are still significantly underrepresented in Victorian local council elections. Our experience shows that unless a concerted effort is made to attract, support and keep women interested in local democracy, the numbers fall. Gender equity in leadership positions benefits all communities – it brings a wider range of talents and skills to the table and shapes the public perception of women as leaders.

Now is the time to start

Experience also shows us that women do much better in local government elections if they prepare well in advance and allow significant time in the lead up. Many women candidates tell us 'I wish I started earlier' – that is why a longer-term approach is preferable. Councils and community groups can begin the work of nurturing interest in local democracy and governance well before the elections that are held every four years in Victoria.

Everyone has a role to play. The three principles of the [Victorian Local Government Women's Charter](#) are inclusive and far-reaching: gender equity, active citizenship and diversity. Working together, councillors, community and administration can achieve great things in local democracy.

Other resources

There are plenty of resources available to help with the process of engaging diverse local communities in local government. Apart from all that is available through the [VLGA](#) more can be found on the [MAV](#), [ALGWA](#) and [VEC](#) websites. You could also check out [Local Government Victoria](#), [Know Your Council](#) and [GoWomenLG](#) as well as becoming familiar with the website of your local council.

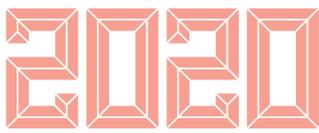
How to use the 3-year Guide

During past elections, women candidates have found this guide to be a useful tool, however, not all suggested actions will suit all councils and all communities. In some communities there are already strong and well-organised women in local democracy groups. Supporting such groups to encourage women to stand for local council is the work of councils and other agencies. This community-led approach to active citizenship is often the most sustainable and the most effective.

Try the ideas out, get help, ask for support from the VLGA, your council, current councillors and other agencies.

Join the VLGA's [Go More Women for Local Government](#) Facebook page to see how others are doing and to share stories.

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2018 - The Year of Connection

ACTION	DONE
Connect to your community this year!	
Find out more about what is happening in your community - make contacts	
Write down your most important values and how these will help you serve the community	
Write letters to your local papers about issues your community is concerned about	
Attend council meetings to get a feel for the operations and decisions of council in your community. You may also consider attending some council meetings out of your local government area	
Encourage your council to run some local governance/democracy workshops for community members	
Join the Go More Women for Local Government Facebook page	
Join local democracy action groups and become familiar with any other engagement and consultation opportunities your council offers	
Talk to current or past councillors to learn all you can about what the job is like and how to run a good campaign	
Nominate for a council sub-committee as a community representative on groups such as library committees, audit, sustainability, etc	

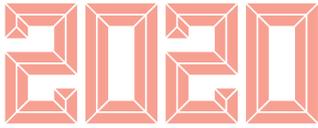
Document the VALUES that you would like to exhibit as a candidate and councillor

What sort of candidate & councillor do I want to be?

What model of behaviour do I aspire to?

What values will I take into the campaign and council?

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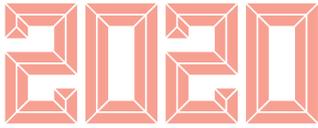
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2019 - The Year of Connection

TIMING	ACTION	DONE
January	Now is the time to DECIDE	
	The VLGA website has some great tools to help you decide, as does the women candidates kit A Gender Agenda . Or talk with us at the VLGA (03) 9349 7999	
February	Attend MORE council meetings. Read the Council Plan and Vision and other policy and strategy documents	
March	Discuss with your family and friends the level of effort and commitment that will be required to campaign and seek their support	
April	So, you've decided to run. CONGRATULATIONS!	
	Make a list of the people you'll need to help run your campaign. Think about who could be your campaign manager	
May	Make a database of key community contacts, service groups and networks	
June	Be ready for conversations about what people care about most in their community	
July	Social media savvy!	
	Familiarise yourself with all forms of social media and connect them to streamline your time more efficiently when posting. Ideas: Facebook (get a specific campaign page), 'like' Facebook pages in your local area, follow local people on Twitter, perhaps write a regular blog, develop a campaign website	
August	Think about appointing a social media manager	
September	Learn about the media - how will you deal with difficult or challenging media? This is a campaign and it can get very tough. This is where an experienced mentor would help!	
October	Campaign feel & support	
	Start gathering your support team around you. Identify a campaign manager - he/she will be your most wonderful asset during 2020!!	
November	Check that you are enrolled to vote!	
	Do some research into what your 2020 campaign materials might look like. Think about key messages. Reflect on community issues	
December	Find a mentor! All our experience tells us that women who have a mentor in the lead up to the elections do better. Talk to your networks or the VLGA for help to find one	

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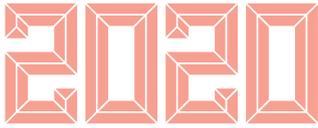
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2020 - The Year of Campaigning

TIMING	ACTION	DONE
JANUARY	<p>Build your profile</p> <p>Attend local council meetings, read the agendas and reports. Write letters to your local paper with your view, let people know you are running. Post to local Facebook pages to promote yourself to the community. Get tips on how to create a great photo that works in black & white as well as colour.</p> <p>TIP: Consider whether you need a separate mobile phone number just for the campaign.</p>	
FEBRUARY	<p>Build your campaign team and settle your budget</p> <p>This is SUCH an important step. You will do better and manage the hard work of this campaign if you have a good team of supporters and a campaign manager. Ask people - you will be surprised at their willingness to help.</p> <p>Figure out your BUDGET - and STICK to it. Don't end up owing money at the end of your campaign.</p>	
MARCH	<p>Get your message right</p> <p>Keep your key messages simple and memorable. Send the drafts around to friends for proof reading and comment and then get it proof read again! This will be the basis for your 200-word statement.</p>	
APRIL	<p>Get informed</p> <p>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 www.vec.vic.gov.au</p>	
MAY	<p>Prepare and finalise your election material</p> <p>Decide on your printing run and get it happening as this step can take 3-4 weeks. If possible, support a local business. Try to print on re-cycled paper. Products could include flyers, postcards, posters, business cards, newspaper advertisements, fridge magnets or personal letters to voters.</p> <p>Be VERY CAREFUL to follow VEC guidelines about this material and what must be included - for example, ensure they are all AUTHORISED.</p>	
JUNE Week 1	<p>Get more connected</p> <p>Develop a list of all the local community newsletters in your area and find out when their deadlines are for advertisements to appear in September and October editions (or earlier). These are often an inexpensive way to get your face known but they usually have a longer lead-time so be prepared to meet their deadlines.</p>	

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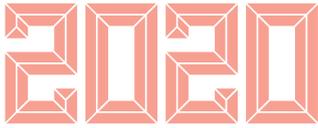
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TIMING	ACTION	DONE
JUNE Week 3	If your local government is holding a postal vote, contact Australia Post to understand how the bulk mail-out rules operate in your area. Explore the costs, benefits and time-line constraints of using Australia Post distribution versus volunteer or paid advertising delivery.	
JUNE Week 4	Keep meeting with local sporting, service and other community groups to raise your profile and to gain a better understanding of what the local government issues are in your municipality. Hand out candidate business cards and your election material when you can.	
JULY Week 1	Raise your profile - remember to use your mentor! Prepare the final draft of your 200-word statement – make it clear and straightforward. Put out a press release on an issue important to you. Try to arrange a photo opportunity. Stay active on local social media. Speak to a local group – ratepayer’s association, chamber of commerce, progress associations etc.	
JULY Week 2	Consider where and when you might put up corflute signs (hard, outdoor posters), banners or posters. See if you can team up with other candidates to bulk purchase corflute signs – may be cheaper! Note any by-laws about signs in your local government area as there are many places that signs just can’t go. Friends and supporters just need to be asked! Get in early.	
JULY Week 3	When nominations are accepted by the VEC in September, candidates will be provided with an electronic copy of the roll for the election which can be printed if needed or used for mail-merging letters. Talk with your campaign team about how you may use this database. Meet with your campaign team and work out a week by week plan of action for the next three months. Now, with 12 weeks to go, is when the rubber starts to hit the road and the campaign swings into top gear.	
JULY Week 4	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. Review your budget and see if you have funds for placing advertisements in the local paper or community newsletters. September and early October may be useful.	
AUGUST Week 1	Ramp up your campaigning Are you going to doorknock the area (useful for single and multi-ward candidates)? Develop a door knocking plan for you and your team. 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 DO get back to them if elected and don’t make promises you may struggle to keep. Make sure your doorknock teams are always in pairs for safety.	

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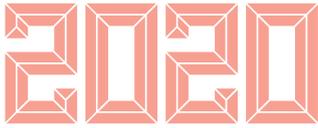
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TIMING	ACTION	DONE
AUGUST Week 2	While most local governments choose to have postal voting (where the VEC posts out voting packs 17-19 days prior to the election) some local governments will choose attendance voting. If yours is one, plan a strategy for Election Day and enlist support to hand out how-to-vote cards at the various booths in the third week of October.	
AUGUST Week 3	Consider whether you need to have any electoral material folded or sorted for postage and organise into parcels along Australia Post guidelines. Keep attending local council meetings, writing letters to the papers, posting on social media, getting on radio, raising your profile. Remember - get everything authorised!	
AUGUST Week 4	Contact your local community radio station (if you have one) and ask 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. Check for the Entitlement date. This is 57 days before election day and people must be on the State or local council roll by this date to be eligible to vote at the election. Finalise your 200-word statement. If budget allows, book advertisements for the next 5 weeks in your local papers.	
SEPTEMBER Week 1	Campaign logistics Appoint one or more scrutineers for election-day counting; someone who has experience in this aspect of elections and can oversee the counting of votes on election day. Finalise your doorknocking strategy with your team and start it if you haven't done so already.	
SEPTEMBER Week 2	Give yourself a deadline for lodging your nomination - nominations usually open mid-September and close 5 days later at 12 noon (32 days before election day) Candidates must nominate by: - filling out the nomination form by hand or online, and - submitting the nomination form to the Returning Officer, and - paying the nomination fee (\$250) by cash or bank cheque (payable to the Victorian Electoral Commission) to the returning officer see more at vec.vic.gov.au	
SEPTEMBER Week 3	This is a BIG week for you: You MUST lodge your candidate statement & photo by the deadline. If your council is having an attendance election, you also must submit your How To Vote Card registration this week. Check the dates on the VEC website.	
SEPTEMBER Week 4	Devote the next three weeks to getting your face known and hearing what the issues are in your area. If you and your team have the time over these weeks, nothing beats being out and visible.	

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TIMING	ACTION	DONE
OCTOBER	People are voting!!	
Week 1	<p>This week is the mail-out of ballot packs/uncontested ward leaflets by the VEC in 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>Your campaigning continues but most of the effort has been completed. Plan your electoral night party. Draft your speeches for declaration of the Poll; one for if you are elected and one to thank your supporters and team. Keep doorknocking, letterboxing and handing out leaflets; keep your profile up.</p>	
OCTOBER	People are voting; keep on social media, doorknocking, letterboxing and handing out leaflets; keep your profile up.	
Week 2		
OCTOBER	People are voting; keep doorknocking, letterboxing and handing out leaflets; keep your profile up.	
Week 3		
OCTOBER	ELECTION DAY! If attendance voting is happening move around the booths to thank supporters or stick to the ones with the biggest enrolments.	
Week 4	Results are usually declared in the last week of October. Celebrate your campaign whether you win or lose. Publicly and privately thank all your supporters.	
NOVEMBER	The results are in - CONGRATULATIONS	
	<p>Prepare to be a councillor if you are elected, and if not, take stock of what you learnt for next time.</p> <p>If you came runner-up you may be asked (if you are still interested) in the future if for some reason that councillor must resign. Keep being involved with your community groups and associations. Evaluate what worked well and what could be changed for next time. Refer to the first step in your campaign where you defined success and see how you measured up.</p>	
DECEMBER	Reflection	
	So, you're a councillor - well done. What support do you need over the next 12 months? Use the VLGA website and all the resources that exist to help you manage the work - and enjoy!	
	Didn't make it this time?	
	You did well - you managed an entire election campaign and probably got to know your community even better! Think about how you might work in your community over the next four years and how you will prepare to run again if that's what you decide to do. You are a community leader.	

NB Compiled by VLGA Go Women LG project team and volunteers as a suggested action list for council candidates. The VLGA takes no responsibility or liability for any possible consequences arising from use of this document. Please check with VEC guidelines to ensure correct process is followed. © Copyright 2018