

Victorian Local Governance Association

# Strategic Plan 2009 - 13



***“The VLGA supports and facilitates local governments and communities to work together for progressive outcomes and good governance.”***

# Victorian Local Governance Association

## Strategic Planning Framework

### 1. Framework

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) has a rolling five year Strategic Plan which sets directions for the Association. This Plan is reviewed every year. Each year, we also develop an Annual Plan that outlines the key goals and activities for that year. We measure our performance each year against the Annual Plan.

### 2. Planning Cycle

The VLGA operates on a July to June planning cycle. Each year, the Board reviews outcomes, identifies priorities and makes an initial consideration of key directions. Consultation with members then occurs in order to provide an opportunity for the broad membership to provide input into both the Strategic and Annual Plans. Staff Planning Day enables the staff to contribute to the Plans and also consider the activities which will enable the Association to deliver on its goals and strategies.

Following the consultation process described above, the Board adopts the Strategic and Annual Plans.

## 2009-2013 Strategic Plan

### VLGA Vision, Mission and Values

#### Vision

Our communities will be inclusive, sustainable and dynamic, characterised by strong leadership and effective local governance.

#### Mission

The VLGA is a unique peak body for councillors, community leaders and local governments working to build and strengthen their capacity to work together for progressive social change.

#### Values

We believe that transparent, accountable and democratic governance policies and practices in all settings enable citizens to create their own sustainable futures.

#### Locating the VLGA

There will be always more issues which are consistent with VLGA values, than the VLGA can address at any point in time given its size and resources. The VLGA prides itself on its responsiveness to its members but will always be required to make decisions about which issues it can take on. While all issues need to be considered on their merits, the following factors will guide the VLGA's decision-making:

- The current Strategic and Annual Plans
- The VLGA has a particular focus on democratic governance, engagement and equity and will be more likely to address issues in which these are key elements
- The VLGA works to support its local government and community members. It will always be looking for projects and issues which involve supporting its membership in the achievement of their goals, rather than acting as an independent agency
- The VLGA acknowledges the role of the MAV and will seek to build the relationship with the MAV through cooperative and collaborative actions wherever possible and avoid duplication with the MAV or any other relevant agencies
- The VLGA has the capacity to harness considerable skills and experience both internally and through partnerships, however needs to align its capacity to address issues with its available resources, and
- The VLGA seeks to blend strategic leadership and agile responsiveness in a dynamic environment.

## **VLGA Outcomes**

### **A. Strengthening local government**

Local governments will be strong leaders of their municipalities and deliver excellence in governance. They will be the leading force in promoting sustainable and engaged communities.

The VLGA will be seen as providing strategic and responsive leadership to its members and the sector.

### **B. Connecting communities and local governments**

Local communities and local governments will work together to be strong, sustainable, and active in creating their own futures through transparent, accountable and democratic governance. People will have the opportunity to be involved in and influence decisions that affect them.

### **C. Strong VLGA**

The VLGA will be a strong, sustainable organisation which models good governance.

## Outcome A

### Strengthening local government

Local governments will be strong leaders of their municipalities and deliver excellence in governance. They will be the leading force in promoting sustainable and engaged communities.

The VLGA will be seen as providing strategic and responsive leadership to its members and the sector.

### Objectives

#### A.1: Local government leadership

To support local governments to provide leadership in their communities

#### Strategies

- Provide advice and support for local governments, councillors and officers
- Lead and be responsive to local governments and communities to identify and act upon key issues which impact the social, economic and environmental health of stakeholders, particularly those in which democratic governance, engagement and equity are key elements
- Facilitate partnerships between local governments, other levels of government and stakeholders on issues of common concern
- Actively promote information development and sharing on key issues

#### A.2: Good governance

To promote best practice democratic and corporate governance to local governments and communities.

#### Strategies

- Develop, promote and review models and procedures of good governance
- Respond to queries and concerns from local governments, councillors, officers and communities about good governance issues
- Advocate on behalf of local governments with state and federal governments on governance issues
- Promote participation in local government of women, young people and people of differing cultural backgrounds and abilities
- Support and encourage implementation of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter
- Advocate and act to increase the levels of participation and democratic involvement in local government elections

### **A.3: Local government's place**

To enhance local government's position in the Australian system of governance.

#### **Strategies**

- Promote constructive coverage of local government in the national, state and local media
- Promote recognition in the community of the importance of vibrant local government
- Advocate for a level of remuneration for Mayors and Councillors which reflects the importance of local government in the national governance system
- Utilise partnerships with other levels of government, local governments, communities, educational institutions and businesses as a means of promoting local government's role in the national governance system
- Undertake advocacy, on behalf of local governments and communities, to State and Federal Governments

### **A.4: Learning**

VLGA Training will be recognised on a national level for quality, innovative and specialised training to strengthen the capacities of Councillors, officers, and community members.

#### **Strategies**

- Build partnerships with training bodies across Australia, Asia and the Pacific
- Facilitate quality training programs for Councillors, officers, and community members
- Further develop the Annual Mayors Training Program and Mayoral Chain initiative

### **A.5: Member support and communication**

Provide members with high quality, relevant and timely support and communication.

#### **Strategies**

- Plan and consult to ensure the goals and activities of the VLGA continue to meet the needs and wishes of members
- Be responsive to requests for support and advice
- Provide the right information at the right time to the right people
- Strengthen communication and response systems, particularly with local government members and community members.

## Outcome B

### Connecting communities and local governments

Local communities and local governments will work together to be strong, sustainable and active in creating their own futures through transparent, accountable and democratic governance. People will have the opportunity to be involved in and influence decisions that affect them.

### Objectives

#### B.1: Engagement and Empowerment

Assist communities, groups, and individuals to engage and work effectively to achieve high levels of participation and engagement between local governments and their communities.

#### Strategies

- Support local governments and communities in improving engagement and consultation through the provision of appropriate information sharing, support and training
- Explore, develop and promote new and innovative models of community leadership
- Support and promote community building projects and activities, which will deliver identifiable outcomes
- Promote training and capacity building among communities, groups and organisations
- Promote stronger community/local government partnerships

#### B.2: Planning and Place

Strengthen the capacities of communities to plan for sustainable futures.

#### Strategies

- Provide leadership and advocacy on critical land use planning issues
- Provide leadership on local area planning and community planning concepts
- Promote the need for partnerships between levels of Government and the community
- Protect the right of local communities and governments to participate in land use planning issues

## Outcome C

### Strong VLGA

The VLGA will be a strong, sustainable organisation which models good governance.

### Objectives

#### C.1: Internal governance

The Board will provide excellence in modelling good governance. The staff will support the operations of the Board in providing inspirational leadership to the organisation.

#### Strategies

- Provide the VLGA Board with all necessary support, training and development
- Report to the VLGA Board on progress of Strategic Plan, Annual Plan and Budget delivery and matters of strategic importance
- Provide good systems and information to enable the Board to make decisions and the organisation to implement them and report back
- Provide every opportunity for members to stand for the Board and participate in the governance of the Association
- Review the Constitution periodically to ensure it is relevant and supports the activities of a dynamic organisation
- Maintain policies and procedures which promote the stability and development of the organisation

#### C.2: Financial stability

Ensure the VLGA is financially viable and secure.

#### Strategies

- Identify sources of income that are reliable, secure over time, and maintain the Association's independence
- Develop alternate revenue streams such as sponsorship and fee-for-service which are consistent with mission and values
- Cost and resource new projects properly
- Review financial position at regular intervals to ensure sustainable robustness and organizational priorities continue to be reflected.