

Victorian Local Governance Association

Strategic Plan 2011/12 – 2013/14



*Connecting Communities
Strengthening Democracy*

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

2011/12 – 2013/14 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.

2011/12 – 2013/14 Strategic Plan (with key 2011/12 Activities)

A. Strengthening local government

Support local governments to be strong leaders of their municipalities and deliver excellence in governance

2011/12 - 2013/14 STRATEGIES	2011/12 ACTIVITIES
Maintain and grow advice, support and training to local governments, councillors, officers and communities	Consult stakeholders and draft a Planning Policy Position Paper to lobby the State Government on its election commitments to respect local governments and communities and improve community knowledge and capacity to participate in land-use planning decisions
	Develop and implement a 'social media for councillors' training program and distribute relevant case studies and resources
	Work with partners to develop 'good practice' guidelines for Aboriginal cultural awareness training for local governments
	Consider targeting 'How local government works' training for Aboriginal communities
Promote good governance via training, publications and advocacy	Revise and publish the Good Governance Guide
	Plan and deliver the Essential Mayors Weekend 2012
	Provide ongoing advice and deliver targeted/responsive/normal training programs as requested on a case by case basis
	Scope, and deliver if practicable, a significant training event for councillors on: 'Power and communities: latest community engagement techniques'

Promote diversity in participation in local government particularly amongst women, young people and people of differing abilities, cultural backgrounds and socio-economic status	Undertake relevant stages of the 'Think women in local government 2012' Project and support all local governments as required on women's participation issues
	Prepare and implement a young councillors development event and network
	Reconciliation in Local Government Project – support and encourage local governments to develop Reconciliation Action Plans which include actions to increase representation and participation of Aboriginal people in local governments
Advocate on behalf of local government to other levels of government	Scope and implement a 'Sector Futures Task Force' to address key sector issues as identified or as they arise
	Undertake advocacy on behalf of members and the sector as issues arise
Be aware of and meet the needs of members	Review community member benefits and services
	Maintain and improve liaison with members via the Annual Tour, Board/delegates policy and reporting
Improve engagement of communities with their local governments and local governance	Plan and implement a local government elections strategy which promotes the sector, engagement and participation
	Develop resources to support members and the sector in consultation and engagement and scope other possible partnerships

B. Policy development

Support 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, sustainability and social justice are key elements

2011/12 – 2013/14 STRATEGIES	2011/12 ACTIVITIES
Engage members and key community players in policy development and action on key issues of concern to members and the sector, via Policy Advisory Groups, research and other means	Develop and promote tools and activities to enable local governments and communities to have the population-growth debate utilising the Sustainable and Resilient Communities Policy Advisory Group (PAG) and other means
	Find a way of delivering and deliver the next stage of the 'Liveable and Just' program
	Operate effective PAGs in the areas of diverse and affordable housing, women's policy and gambling, and deliver the DAHAG work plan
	Participate in the Ballarat University gambling research project (social and economic impacts of pokies)
	Deliver training and one-on-one policy development support to local governments on pokies assessments
	Review the Timor-Leste PAG
	Maintain the 'Thinking Transport' website and scope future sustainable transport project with DoT, DPCD and other stakeholders
	Support the sector in publicising and addressing food security issues (pending funding and partnerships that are being pursued)
	Deliver intensive, fee-for-service support to local governments wishing to adopt food security plans and strategies
	Scope and seek funding for a food security 'community of practice' web-based clearing house
Participate in policy development via partnerships and participation in activities facilitated by other levels of government, NGOs and stakeholders	Respond to appropriate policy issues as they arise
	Advance reconciliation through continued involvement in Reconciliation in Local Government Project
	Participate in the local government Aboriginal partnership initiative with State Government agencies and Local Government peak bodies, which aim to provide guidance and support to local governments to effectively engage with Aboriginal communities

C. Strong VLGA

To build the VLGA to be a strong, sustainable organisation that models good governance.

2011/12 – 2013/14 STRATEGIES	2011/12 ACTIVITIES
Support the Board's governance via advice, reporting, development, governance structures and systems	Implement a Board evaluation process
	Put a Risk/Audit Board Sub-Committee into place
	Undertake periodic reviews of the Board meeting agenda so as to allow for adequate scope for creative and strategic discussions
Promote the financial sustainability of the VLGA by seeking to supplement membership fees with appropriate other sources of revenue including fee for service and project funding	Resource grants-seeking and submission-writing activities
Increase local government memberships by a net three over three years and strengthen the relationships with members	Strengthen liaison with members via implementation of the Board/delegate policy
	Implement a 'Members engagement day'
	Develop and implement a strategy for providing extra support to rural members
	Consider co-opting an extra Board member who comes from a rural council
	Implement next stage of IT Strategy (Content Management System)
	Develop and implement a strategy by which the Board and the organisation combine to identify and engage with potential local government members
Maintain and develop policies and procedures which promote the stability and development of the organisation	Introduce succession planning and staff retention strategies for the organisation