

## Council Member Benefits

### Lobbying and representation

**We aim to protect, advance and advocate for effective local government.**

To this end, the VLGA holds regular meetings with the Minister for Local Government, Local Government Victoria, the Chief Municipal Inspector, CEO of IBAC, Victorian Auditor General and other industry stakeholders.

We participate in working groups, steering committees and reference group discussions on the implementation of government policy impacting the local government sector, including:

- the Ministerial Council on Women's Equality
- the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework Steering Committee
- the Local Government Gender Equity Working Group; and
- the Rural and Regional Councils Sustainability Steering Group.

We also provide feedback and submissions on key government inquiries and discussion papers, based on the views and concerns of member councils. We give member councils a seat at the table with state government decision-makers.

### Connecting councillors

**We aim to support and assist councillors to do their job well.**

The VLGA has recently established the Councillor Advisory Network ([CAN](#)), made up of member councillors, which meets quarterly to drive our advocacy agenda and discuss pertinent issues facing the sector. We are also establishing the [Young Councillor Network](#), a social and professional network for young councillors to provide them with the organisational and peer-based support they need to thrive in complex council environments. This network is open to member councillors 30 years and under.

We also hold networking opportunities for Mayors and Deputy Mayors, such as the member only Mayors, Deputy Mayors & CEOs Welcome Drinks and the Mayors and Deputy Mayors FastTrack Leadership Program, scheduled annually at the beginning of the mayoral term.

### Professional development for councillors and council staff

**We aim to provide resources, information and education, and undertake projects to support good governance and leadership.**

The VLGA runs high-level training for councillors and council officers, including masterclasses in governance and integrity in both metro and regional areas, and leadership training for Mayors and Deputy Mayors. We work with councils to deliver training that meets their needs and requirements, available to member councils at a discounted rate.

We are a sought-after provider of introductory training for newly elected representatives, and will offer a comprehensive program of councillor induction workshops following the October 2020 elections.

### Bringing together experts and leaders

**The VLGA holds monthly Leading the Agenda panel discussions on various topics of interest to the local government sector.** Our March Leading the Agenda was on [Treaty](#), April on [Activating Community](#) and May on [Empowering Children](#).

## Pre-candidate training for women

[Local Women Leading Change](#) is the VLGA's signature women's campaign for the 2020 local government elections.

The campaign [launch](#) was attended by over 100 people, with Lord Mayor Sally Capp welcoming attendees to the City of Melbourne. We were pleased to receive [an important funding announcement from the Andrews Government](#) to support our efforts in this space. As part of the campaign, we have developed '[Your campaign toolkit](#)', which is an essential guide for women considering running in 2020.

The VLGA will be providing training across Victoria over the second half of 2019 and throughout 2020, visiting various regional hubs.

## Pre-candidate training and information sessions for local government elections

**We encourage participation in local government by equipping community members with the skills, knowledge and connections they need to be successful community leaders.**

The VLGA will be holding information and training sessions over the second half of 2019 and throughout 2020. These sessions are provided at a discounted rate to member councils.

## Preventing harm from gambling

**We aim to be a sustainable, focussed and values driven organisation.**

The VLGA has received concurrent funding over several years from the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF) to work with councils and local communities to reduce harm from poker machine venues.

These short videos ([here](#) and [here](#)) showcase our work in supporting strong, resilient communities. We also host the Local Government Working Group on Gambling ([LGWGOG](#)) which meets every second month. LGWGOG provides an opportunity for councillors, council officers and representatives from various organisations working in the gambling harm prevention space to come together to discuss ways to prevent harm from gambling in local communities.

## Highlighting brilliance and innovation in the local government sector

Last year, the VLGA launched its Innovation in Local Government Series. The first video in the series highlights the innovative approaches that Cardinia Shire Council, Brimbank City Council and Wyndham City Council are undertaking to benefit their communities.

The reinvigorated [Victorian Local Government Women's Charter](#) Champions Network (WCCN) will also provide an opportunity for councils to showcase the work that they are doing in the gender equity space and collaborate to achieve better outcomes.

In partnership with Reconciliation Victoria, the VLGA presents the annual [HART Awards](#), now in its sixth year. The Awards recognise and celebrate Victorian partnerships and initiatives that contribute to local reconciliation outcomes. These initiatives demonstrate Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people working together to build and strengthen ongoing relationships, respect and understanding. Nominations are submitted by local governments and community groups.