

Media Release

17 September 2020



Local Government Elections Nominations Now Open

There is excitement in the air as nominations to run for council have opened and candidates and voters alike are taking note – or at least they should be.

Amid COVID-19 and the introduction of a new *Local Government Act 2020*, now more than ever, Victoria needs councillors with community standing as well as financial, organisational, and political acumen. So candidates need to fully understand and appreciate these responsibilities when they nominate to be considered for election.

The scope and responsibilities of Victorian councils are legislated for under the *Victorian Local Government Act 2020* – they are essentially a creation and extension of the state. In spite of the opinion that the business of local government is limited to or should be limited to *roads, rates and rubbish* – the fact is the responsibilities are far-reaching and complex and, as a result, the role of a councillor is not simple.

Local government plays an integral role in connecting and caring for people and communities, which is clearly evidenced by state and federal levels of governments delegating the delivery of critical services to local government. It is the grassroots level of government and closest to the community.

If considering nominating as a candidate in local government elections, it is important to understand as much as possible about the role's responsibilities and the regulatory environment in which it operates. Once elected and when entering the council chamber, a councillor will be required to make decisions regarding multiple issues which will impact the entire community.

It is vital that councillors are representative of their communities – diversity in the chamber leads to better decision making on behalf of the municipality. Young people, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Victorians and those from CALD communities are encouraged to participate as both voters and candidates in these upcoming elections.

The VLGA recommends that, if considering nominating as a candidate in local government elections, there is an understanding of the role's responsibilities and the regulatory environment in which a council operates. Effective local government and service delivery is dependent on good governance, and those governance processes are clearly provided for in the *Local Government Act 2020* and within a council's own governance rules and policies.

To be eligible to nominate with the Victorian Electoral Commission (VEC) to be a candidate in these elections, it is a requirement to undertake the Local Government Victoria [Mandatory Candidate Training](#). This is an online training module. Nominations close at 12pm (sharp) Tuesday 22 September.

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Campaigning in 2020 is more constrained due to COVID-19, therefore, it is important that all candidates are aware of and adhere to the Victorian Government's *Safe Campaigning Guidelines*.

The VLGA congratulates all candidates in the up-coming election and looks forward to working with the newly (and continuing) elected councillors.

ENDS:

Please attribute to VLGA Chief Executive Officer Kathryn Arndt

Media Contact: Liddy Clark 0403 542 411

Addendum:

If standing in the upcoming election, ensure you familiarise yourself with the following documents and websites.

- [Metropolitan Safe Campaigning Guidelines](#) (Updated September)
- [Regional Victoria Safe Campaigning Guidelines](#) (Updated September)
- The VEC [Candidate Handbook](#)
- The VEC [Website](#)
- [Local Government Victoria](#)