

The logo for the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) is positioned in the top right corner. It consists of the letters 'VLGA' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a dark grey background. The logo is partially overlaid by a white geometric line that forms a large triangle pointing downwards.

VLGA

The background of the cover is a teal color with a halftone dot pattern. A large, white geometric line forms a triangle pointing downwards, bisecting the background. In the bottom right corner, there is a photograph of three people (two women and one man) in a meeting setting, overlaid with a red halftone pattern.

**Victorian Local
Governance Association**

Annual Review 2021-22

The VLGA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners, their elders past, present and future, and to their cultures.

The Victorian Local Governance Association

Contents

The VLGA Story/Who We Are	2
The VLGA Value Proposition	2
President's Report	3
CEO & Operational Report	4-5
VLGA Submissions & External Committees	6
Professional Development, Training, Events & <i>VLGA Connect</i>	7-11
Diversity & Inclusion	12
Funded Projects	13-16
Treasurers Report	17
Directors Report	18-19
Core Staff, Grant Funded Staff, Partner Organisations and Sponsors & Supporters	20
Current Council Members	21
Contact us	22

The VLGA Story/Who We Are.

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) is an independent governance organisation supporting councils and councillors in achieving the highest standards of governance on behalf of their communities.

The VLGA's overriding value is to strengthen and support good governance in local government that will enable, promote and facilitate trust and confidence in the sector.

The VLGA provides opportunities for councillor networking, professional development and information exchange and actively engages with key policymakers and broader stakeholders to inform, influence and lead the conversations that determine the priorities for the local government sector and support good governance at the local level.

The VLGA Value Proposition

The VLGA creates value in the following ways.

- We marshal thought leadership for the sector across a wide variety of topics;
- We present high calibre panels of professionals, agency leaders and senior bureaucrats and Ministers in areas relevant to the sector;
- We facilitate highly relevant discussions on complex issues which are readily accessible to all;
- We are agile and adapt our service offering to meet the needs of our member organisations;
- We advocate and represent the position of local government to other levels of government;
- We are engaged (and sought after) as a peak body - the independent local government governance organisation - to participate in forums, think tanks, advisory committees convened by government, academic institutions and other lead agencies;
- We provide resources, information, professional development and education and undertake projects and events that support good governance and leadership;
- We deliver funded programs which meet the strategic priorities of the government of the day;
- We advocate for participation in local democracy that is inclusive and represents the diversity of the community and deliver programs that build the capacity of candidates and councillors

President's Report

It is with great pleasure that I share with you the Victorian Local Governance Association's 2021-22 Annual Report.

No one could have predicted the global pandemic our world has lived through – and continues to endure – these past two and a half years. COVID-19 presented enormous disruption and challenges for our communities and the people who live and the businesses that operate within them.

Once again, the local government sector took a front-line role in supporting and delivering critical services to communities throughout the pandemic. They also continue to play a significant role in emergency and disaster response and recovery efforts – supporting communities impacted by bush fires, floods and extreme weather events – all of which parts of Victoria have endured.

Councils are facing increasing pressures and the VLGA has continued to support and work with the local government sector through the post COVID recovery phase.

As demonstrated in this Annual Report, since the October 2020 local government elections the VLGA has delivered multiple councillor induction sessions, one-on-one councillor mentoring, and an extensive range of ongoing professional development programs, including in the 21/22 period – two signature *FastTrack* Councillor Leadership Development workshops and over 100 episodes of the *VLGA Connect* YouTube and Podcast

program series – including the highly subscribed weekly Governance Update and the quarterly VLGA/LGiU Global Executive Panels.

The 2021-22 period marked the wrap up of the VLGA's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan and the beginning of an extensive consultation process to inform the organisation's next five-year objectives.

The 2017-2022 Strategy set four goals for the organisation:

- 1 Advocacy and Policy - *Protect, advance and advocate for the importance of the role of effective local government*
- 2 Local Government Support - *Support and assist councillors to do their job well*
- 3 Good Governance Leadership - *Provide resources, information, and education and undertake projects to support good governance and leadership*
- 4 Healthy and Sustainable Organisation - *Be a sustainable, focused and values driven organisation*

On reflection, the VLGA board is satisfied that the organisation has effectively delivered on each of these objectives and has established a strong foundation and proposition for the future.

I look forward to officially launching the VLGA's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan in late 2022.

To our valued members, supporters and partner organisations, it has been our pleasure to work with you and support you over the past twelve months. We look forward to continuing our work together into the future.



I would also like to acknowledge the work of the VLGA CEO and staff who have continued to raise the bar in the delivery of services to support the local government sector and councils and councillors in achieving the highest standards of governance on behalf of their communities

Cr Denise Massoud
VLGA President

CEO & Operational Report

Once again, I am both honoured and humbled to lead the VLGA in its work to support the local government sector in achieving the highest standards of governance on behalf of their communities.

Throughout the year, and amidst the recovery and emergence from the global pandemic, the VLGA delivered multiple programs and engaged in many forums to strengthen and support good governance in local government.

The VLGA continued to provide opportunities for councillor networking, professional development and information exchange while actively engaging with key policymakers and broader stakeholders to inform, influence and lead the conversations that determine the priorities for the local government sector in Victoria.

Consistent with the role of VLGA to support good governance at the local level, the VLGA embarked on an extensive consultation process to inform the organisation's next five-year strategic plan, 2022-2027, which will be launched in late 2022.

The VLGA's overriding value is to strengthen and support good governance in local government that will enable, promote and facilitate trust and confidence in the sector

The VLGA continued to deliver its signature *VLGA Connect* program – in video and podcast form. Over 300 episodes have been delivered to date. This series commenced at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic to provide the sector with a way to stay connected in an online environment, and to share crucial information from sector leaders at a time of great uncertainty and challenge.

It has since become a highly valued source of interviews and discussion for people within and beyond the local government sector in Victoria. Regular participants include Federal and State ministers, public sector leaders, mayors and council CEOs.

The *VLGA Connect* family includes:

- The weekly *Governance Update* with Chris Eddy and Steve Cooper
- *In Conversation* with thought leaders, decision makers and public sector leaders
- Live Panel Forums on key topics of importance and relevance to the sector
- Global Executive Live Panels, in partnership with the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

I would like to acknowledge and thank Chris Eddy for his ongoing role in hosting the *VLGA Connect* series on behalf of the VLGA.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank our most valued and beloved production director and editor – John Lloyd Fillingham.

The VLGA is proud to continue our support of the *Local Government (LG) News Roundup* podcast which was launched last year. The 'Local Government News Roundup' is produced and presented by Chris Eddy, a local government and media veteran of 40-year, and features news and interviews from around the local government sector. The program is released twice weekly and includes Victorian, interstate and international roundup segments and now has a global following.

The VLGA Governance Hotline was another service that was well used by councillors and officers from member councils throughout the year seeking confidential support on due process, tactics for communication and implications of the Local Government Act 2020.

Membership is the lifeblood of the VLGA. We continued to undertake an active engagement process with our members and key stakeholders and have worked hard not only to retain our existing members but also to gain new members.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the VLGA President, Cr Denise Massoud and the VLGA board for your guidance, input, and support. Finally, I would like to recognise and acknowledge the contribution of all VLGA staff and thank them for their resilience, agility, professionalism and support over the past twelve months, especially in the disruptive time of 'lock downs' and working from home; your continued support during this time sees me extremely grateful. To our members and supporters, thank you, it has been yet another challenging year for many of you, and I hope you have enjoyed our blend of online engagement and face to face programs as we emerge from the 'shutdowns' previously endured. We look forward to working with you next year.

Please enjoy the following updates of the work of the VLGA over the 2021-22 year.

Kathryn Arndt
Chief Executive Officer



VLGA Submissions & External Committees

Representing the local government sector is at the heart of what we do and throughout the year the VLGA continued to give councils a voice through regular meetings with key government departments, the Minister for Local Government, portfolio ministers and advisors, and represented our members on several external committees, including;



External Committees

- Local Government Act 2020 Implementation – Project Control Board
- Local Government Performance Reporting Steering Committee
- Gender Equality Advisory Committee (GEAC)
- Environmental Sustainability Commissioners Reference Group
- Library Board of Victoria Advisory Committee on Public Libraries
- EPA Waste and Recycling Industry Reference Group
- Welcoming Cities Advisory Committee
- Local Government Advisory Committee – Recycling Victoria
- Child-Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC) Network



The VLGA also made numerous submissions to government, including but not limited to:

Submissions

- Submission on Councillor Allowance, August 2021
- Submission on Decriminalisation Sex Industry, August 2021
- VLGA Response on the Draft Discussion Paper Lines of Inquiry, November 2021
- Submission Protections within the Victorian Planning Framework, January 2022
- Submission Local Government Culture Review, March 2022
- Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS) 21-26





Professional Development, Training & Events and VLGA Connect

Since the launch of the VLGA's Council Professional Development Prospectus last year, and as part of the VLGA's commitment to good governance, training and information sharing, we delivered numerous networks/forums, events and council and councillor professional development programs throughout the year, working with individual councils to tailor programs to meet the specific needs of the councillor group.



Testimonial

"I 'tuned in' to a number of VLGA sessions and found them invaluable as I did my due diligence on whether and how to engage with the campaign process. Thank you to you and your colleagues for the work you do there."

VLGA Member Network Groups

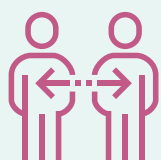
Governance Advisory Network (GAN)

The VLGA's GAN met five times during the year. This VLGA "Member Only" network was established to seek councillor and officer input into policy development and implementation, sector advocacy, and support and networking opportunities for councillors and staff.

- August 21
- October 21
- November 21
- February 22
- May 22

Local Government Working Group on Gambling (LGGWG)

The VLGA's LGGWG continued to convene bi-monthly throughout the year, with participation from over 50 representatives from across 26 councils. The network is a recognised sector leader for thought leadership – presenting guest speakers, updates, resources and information – on strategies to reduce harm from gambling and support effective policy, service delivery and advocacy in the Victorian local government setting.

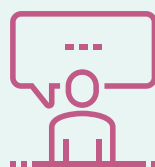


The key focus of the network continues to be:

- Exposure to current research and policy development.
- Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan implications.
- Supporting local government in the response to applications for Electronic Gaming Machines; and
- Attention to the regulatory environment.

LGGWG Speakers for 2021-22 have included:

- The Hon. Melissa Horne, Minister for Gaming and Liquor
- Scott May & Deirdre O'Donnell, VGCCC (Victorian Gambling and Casino Control Commission)
- Lindsay Shaw, Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF).



Forums

Leading the Agenda Forum

The VLGA was delighted to once again be in a position, following 'lock down', to host a face-to-face *Leading the Agenda* (LtA) forum event.

July 21 Contemporary Thinking for Risk Committees

The LtA forums bring together thought leaders to explore topics of strategic importance and relevance for councils and their officers and elected officials. During 'lock down', the *VLGA Connect* live panel discussions replaced the LtA forums, however, the VLGA looks forward to facilitating more of these face-to-face events into the future.





Partner Forums

The VLGA values the collaboration we have with our many partner organisations and key stakeholders. During the year we were pleased to actively support two key live panels.



- October 2021
Debt - Another Resource for Councils to Consider (The VLGA, LGV & FinPro). The panel was opened by The Hon. Shaun Leane, The Minister for Local Government. The panel included Andrew Greaves (The Victorian Auditor General), John Cromie and Lucy Roffey.
- May 2022
Local Government Professionals (LGPro) Panel Webinar - Dealing with the Grey with Rebecca McKenzie & Eric Braslis





Professional Development

FastTrack

FastTrack is the VLGA's signature councillor professional development one day program focusing on leadership for Mayors and Councillors.

The VLGA presented two *FastTrack* programs during the year focussing on specific themes. Topics and panellists included:

October 2021

FastTrack 2021: 'The Journey Continues'

- Minister for Local Government the Hon Shaun Leane MP
- Andrew Day – CEO of Manningham Council
- Noelene Duff – Former CEO at Whitehorse City Council & Current Administrator at the City of Casey
- Chris Eddy – Former CEO & current Administrator of Whittlesea Council
- Ian McCormack – President of Strategic Steps (Canada)
- Kate Redwood OA – Former Mayor
- Sarah Rey – Managing Partner, Justitia Lawyers and Consultants

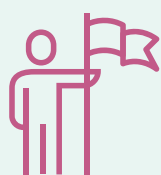
- Melissa Scadden – Partner, Justitia Lawyers and Consultants
- Nicole Wass – Director of Engagement, RPS Group

March 2022 - 'Trust - The Foundation of Your Leadership Journey'

- Minister for Local Government the Hon Shaun Leane MP
- Prof. Anona Armstrong AM – Local Government Culture Project
- Ass Prof. Dr Andrea Carson – Department of Politics, media & Philosophy, La Trobe University
- Cr Louise Crawford – Councillor at Port Phillip
- Bill Forwood – Former State MLC, Parliamentary Secretary & Chair of Victorian Public Accounts and Estimates Committee
- Dr Sandro Demaio – CEO of VicHealth
- Julie Reid – Executive Director, Local Government Victoria
- Chris Eddy – Former CEO & current Administrator of Whittlesea Council
- Andrew Gill – Master Communicator
- Cathy Henderson – CEO of

Merri-bek City Council

- Prof. Carolyn Hendriks – Crawford School of Public policy, Australian National University
- Prof. Liam Smith – Co-Founder, BehaviourWorks Australia



Online Professional Development & Programs

Throughout the year, the VLGA offered a range of professional development opportunities to assist councillors in understanding the roles and responsibilities of being an elected representative and the complexities and governance procedures of council. Two new programs were added to the VLGA's councillor professional development portfolio.

- Land Use Planning for Councillors – in partnership with Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
- Better Disagreements – in partnership with Justitia Lawyers and Consultants

The VLGA Connect Program Series

Established in early 2020 at the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, the VLGA Connect program series presents YouTube and Podcast offerings to the local government sector and the wider community.

This year the VLGA released 93 Episodes (Ep188 – 281) in the VLGA Connect series.

The VLGA Connect & LGiU Global Live Panels Series

Presented with our UK partners, Local Government Intelligence Unit (LGiU), the VLGA continued to deliver our quarterly global executive live panels with subject matter experts from across the world.

- August 2021 – Building Community Wealth
- October 2021 – Innovative Approaches to Addressing the Housing Crisis
- March 2022 – Local Government Reform
- May 2022 – Trust & Culture





Diversity & Inclusion

A strong commitment to diversity and inclusion continues to be a feature of our work. VLGA has had many programs and events to reflect this.

- International Women's Day (IWD)
- Women's Charter Network
- Gender Equality Advisory Committee (GEAC)
- YCCC (Your Community, Country, Council)
- Stepping Forward
- Represent Handbook
- ARC Linkage Grant Project with University of Melbourne and La Trobe University

International Women's Day Event

In March 2022 the VLGA celebrated IWD with a morning tea event 'Imagining the Future - Break the Bias' with guest speakers Professor Leah Ruppanner and Associate Professor Dr Andrea Carson.



Funded Projects

Building Council & Community Capacity

The 'Building Council & Community Capacity' project, funded by the Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF), has supported local government in the response to gambling harm. The program provides councils (councillors and officers) with access to information through a variety of platforms that include -virtual/digital mechanisms, social media, information sheets, workshops, and forums about gambling harm in Victorian communities and ways in which local government can reduce the risk of harm from gambling.

During the year, the VLGA has delivered several resources, supported councils in response to gaming machine applications, as well as continuing to help all Victorian councils by providing sector updates, facilitating workshops, network meetings and one on one support where required.

Resources that have been created or updated have included:

- Industry funding policy guidance document
- 'How to respond to gaming applications' flow chart
- Royal Commission into Crown Casino summary document
- Reducing Gambling Harm in a sport setting (roadmap for councils)

The project has provided tailored support to individual councils by way of presenting at workshops and talking to specific focus points that local government areas (LGAs) have needed support with.

Examples include:

Gambling Policy Support

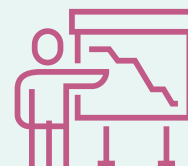
- An in-person workshop presentation delivered to council staff and local community organisations about how best to integrate effective gambling actions into policy, highlighting the use of good governance.

Councillor Education

- Speaking to the importance of council responding to the issue of gambling, how it is best placed within policy, and the importance of community consultation.

Reducing Gambling Harm in Community Sport (partnership with Vicsport & VRGF)

- A workshop designed specifically for staff working in local government. Focusing on the role that sporting clubs can play in reducing and preventing harm and understanding how to sustain a coordinated approach to gambling harm reduction in a sports setting within council.



In early 2022, the VLGA started the *Local Government Gambling Network* (LGGN) for interested councils to participate in, with a focus to support officers in work they are undertaking in responding to gambling harm. This network was initiated to provide a space for officers to discuss and share current work in the gambling portfolio and covers any issues, policy and council activity involving gambling.

Gambling Testimonial

“The VLGA supported Council by presenting at the 2022 Mitchell Shire Gambling Harm Policy Workshop, the first ‘in person’ event for several years due to the pandemic. It was a fantastic opportunity to reconnect with a range of important stakeholders, collaborate and consider the role that social policy has in preventing gambling harm. A range of important information was provided which really helped to set the scene for the group to workshop how a renewed gambling policy would look for Mitchell Shire. The VLGA’s information allowed participants to better understand both the state, regional and local settings surrounding gambling statistics, trends and the opportunities that could further empower Councils to address impacts through a policy setting.”

Your Community, Country and Council (YCCC) Program

The VLGA's YCCC program aims to address the under representation of First Nations Peoples in local government.

As part of the 21/22 YCCC project, funding from Local Government Victoria (LGV) assisted the VLGA to engage a project officer, to lead the YCCC in a self-determined pilot program, informed by a First Nations Steering Committee. Following a strong response to the EOI, steering committee members were appointed in May 2022 from across regional and metropolitan Victoria.

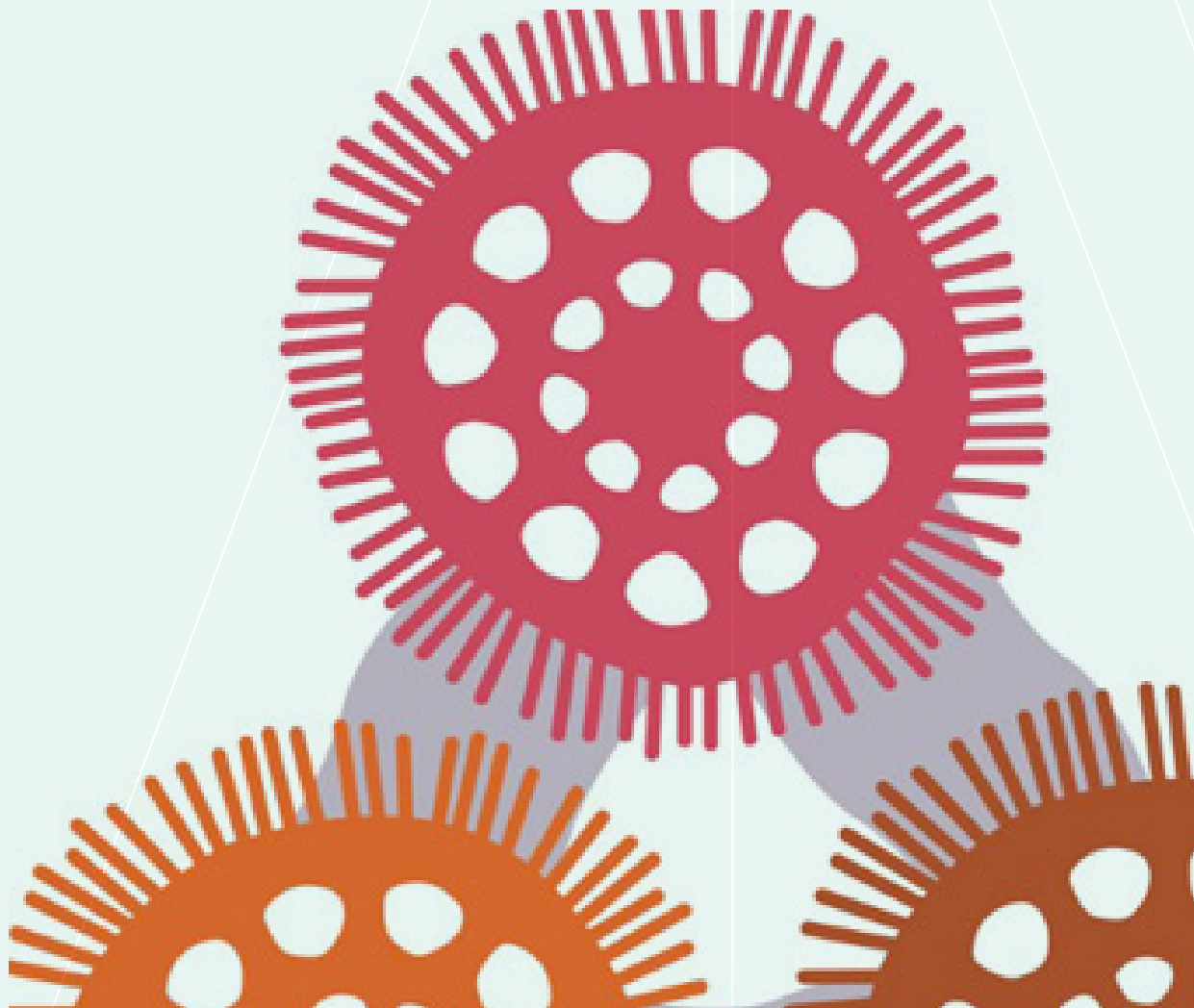
The Committee consists of two councillors, two members of the First People's Assembly and two experienced community leaders. The committee commenced in June 2022 with an online induction, followed by an in-person meeting to plan the future of the program and the launch of a pilot workshop and forum.

The Committee is developing a statewide framework for reaching First Nations people, to build knowledge, improve local government engagement, increase decision making capacity and encourage candidacy leading into the 2024 local government elections.

Steering Committee Members include:

- Cr Ashleigh Vandenberg
- Cr Greg James
- Alan Brown
- Jacinta Chaplin
- Tracey Evans
- Grant Hansen

The Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS) 2021-2026 'Pathway to Stronger Partnerships' provides a significant framework for informing the content and self-determined approach of the YCCC program.



REPRESENT Handbook

In early 2022, the VLGA partnered with Welcoming Cities to develop the Represent Handbook. The handbook's aim is to help people from culturally diverse backgrounds to understand what it takes to be elected to council and what it takes to be a council member.

To inform the content of the Handbook, project officers from Welcoming Cities and the VLGA conducted online one-hour interviews with culturally diverse councillors from around Victoria. The interviews covered a range of questions aimed at understanding each councillor's unique journey to local government, as well as the challenges and rewards of being an elected member and representing community. The interviews also aimed to uncover insights into good governance and leadership from the perspective of culturally diverse councillors.

The Handbook was released in July 2022 and is available in hardcopy and online. It is hoped that this resource will encourage a new generation of culturally diverse council members.



Treasurers Report

2021/2022 Treasurers Report

Again, another challenging year, as we transitioned through the Covid-19 pandemic to a more endemic phase.

The key aims for the year were to maintain an efficient and effective service to our membership and stakeholders, whilst ensuring that we maintained a financially sustainable business through the risks and uncertainties that the pandemic, in particular, presented. Congratulations to the VLGA staff for ensuring that we achieved these aims despite the challenges presented.

The VLGA Connect series has continued to serve the organisation and membership well, and we look forward to strategically enhancing our digital media and on-line platforms going forward whilst also returning to in-person engagement, which I know we all miss.

The year end result at 30 June 2022 reflects our commitment to the aims outlined above. Operating income reduced from 2021 due, mainly, to the reduction in Federal Government Pandemic stimulus funding. Our operating costs reduced year on year due to reduced occupancy costs and the full effect of the office lease cancellation during the 2020/21 financial year. A continued focus on administrative costs also saw a reduction year on year.

In summary:

- Operating Income for the year reduced by 10.6% to \$1,358,985 due largely to the non-recurring federal government Covid-19 pandemic subsidy of \$100,000 received in the 2020/21 financial year; and the
- The Net Profit was \$297,210 due to reduced occupancy and administration costs.

The VLGA's council membership subscriptions cover the costs associated with the extensive representation to, and engagement with, government and other stakeholders that the VLGA undertakes on behalf of the local government sector, in addition to underwriting the costs of program delivery for member councils.

We are exiting the pandemic period and entering a new strategic phase for the VLGA in a healthy financial position. With that foundation laid, we will shortly share our exciting new strategic aims with you and our stakeholders. We will be investing to ensure that our commitment and service to you, and your governance needs, continues at the highest and most innovative levels.

Yours in good governance.

Andrew Sloman
Treasurer



Director's Report

The VLGA board submits the financial accounts of the Victorian Local Governance Association for the financial year ended 30 June 2022.

The names of board members during the year are:

- Cr Denise Massoud
- Cr Susanne Newton
- Ms Louise Hill
- Mr Andrew Sloman
- Cr Grace La Vella
- Cr Josh Fergeus
- Cr Steve Holland
- Cr Collin Ross

The names of independent members of the Governance & Risk Committee (GRC) during the year are:

- Leanne Mulcahy
- Mark Davies

Principal activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were to provide support to members of the association.

Significant changes

No significant change in the nature of these activities occurred during the year.

Operating result

Year ended 30 June 2022

\$297,210

Year ended 30 June 2021

\$376,569

2021-22 Board of Directors

Board & Sub-Committee Members*	Board Meetings		Governance & Risk Meetings	
	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended
Ms Louise Hill	6	6	6	6
Cr Susanne Newton	6	6	1	1
Cr Collin Ross (Term ended 30 June 2022)	6	6	1	1
Mr Andrew Sloman	6	6	5	5
Cr Grace La Vella	6	6		
Cr Denise Massoud	6	6	5	5
Cr Josh Fergeus	6	6	5	5
Cr Steve Holland	6	6		
Independent Committee Members**				
Ms Leanne Mulcahy			6	6
Mr Mark Davies			6	6

Sitting Fees*

President	\$557
Board members	\$426
Sub-Committee	\$426

Footnote

* Sitting fees apply for board member attendance at board and sub-committee meetings

**Independent sub-committee members (non-board member)

Core Staff

Kathryn Arndt

Chief Executive Officer

Steve Cooper

Chief of Staff

Sue Prendergast

Executive Assistant

Deborah Wu

Diversity & Inclusion
Program Lead

Grant Funded Staff

Simon Harrex

Gambling Harm Policy Lead

Donna Spiller

YCCC Project Officer

Davey Wilson

Stepping Forward Project Officer

Acknowledgement of Partner Organisations

Child Friendly Cities &
Communities (CFCC) Network

Hunt & Hunt Lawyers

Justitia Lawyers and Consultants

Local Government Intelligence
Unit (LGiU)

Local Government Victoria
(LGV)

Scanlon Foundation

Victorian Responsible Gambling
Foundation (VRGF)

Welcoming Cities

LGPro Vic

Sponsors & Supporters

Hunt & Hunt Lawyers

Justitia Lawyers and Consultants

Current Council Members



Contact Us

For more information, please contact:

The Victorian Local Governance Association

(03) 9349 7999

vlga@vlga.org.au

www.vlga.org.au

PO Box 4089

Richmond East

Victoria 3121



facebook VLGA-Victorian Local Governance Association Inc



twitter @_VLGA



YouTube VLGA Connect



Podcast VLGA Connect

The logo consists of the letters 'VLGA' in a bold, dark grey sans-serif font. It is positioned at the top of the page, just below a thin horizontal line. Several thin, colored lines (green, yellow, blue, and white) intersect at various points above and around the text, creating a geometric, web-like structure. The background is divided into three main horizontal sections: a white top section, a large light teal middle section, and a bottom section with a colorful halftone pattern in shades of teal, orange, and red.

VLGA

