



Victorian
Local Governance
Association

FastTrack 2023

Leading in Times of Chaos

**Councillor Leadership
Development Program**

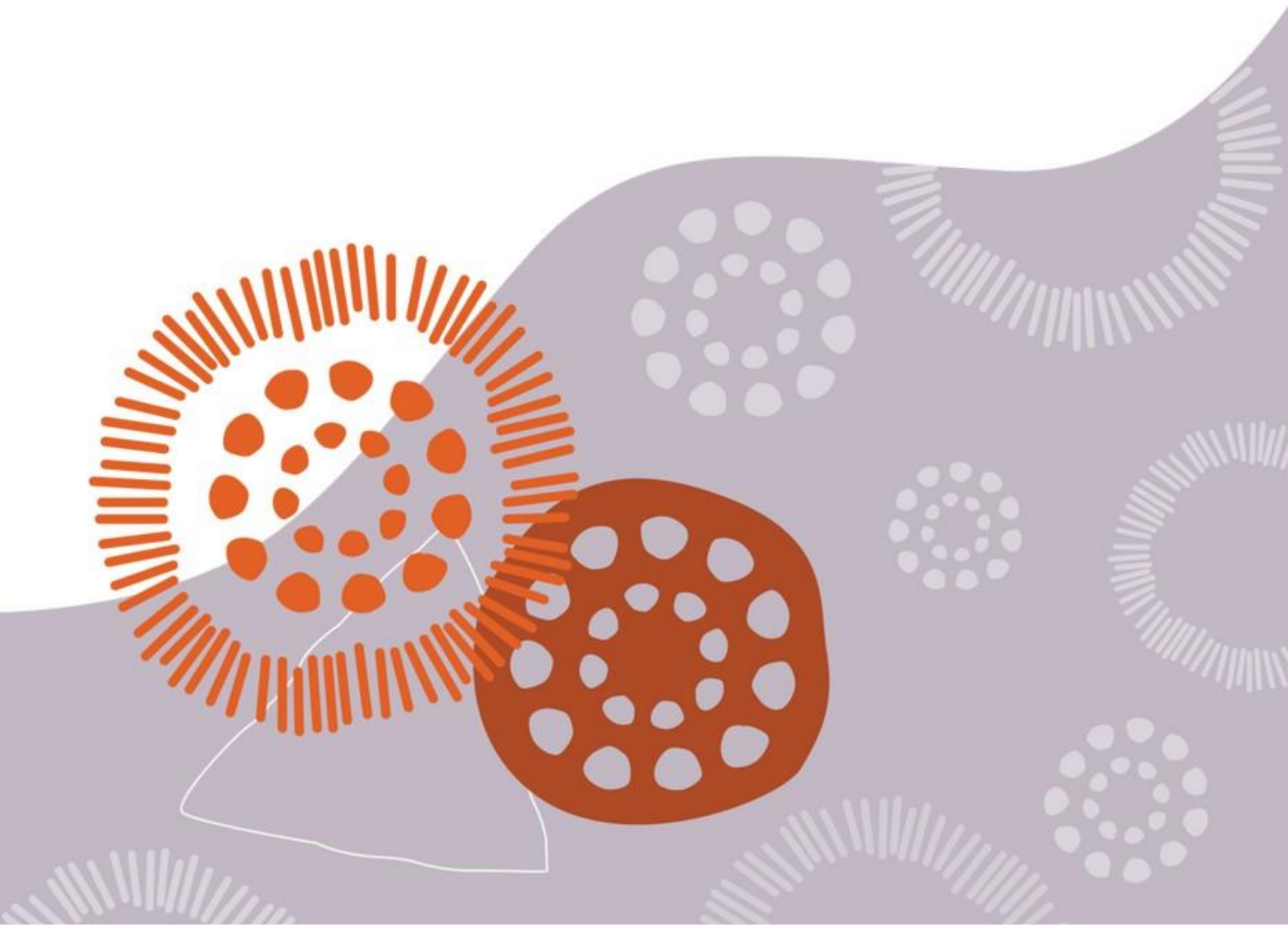
FRIDAY 31 MARCH 2023

9:30 AM - 6:00 PM

**RACV Club, 501 Bourke St,
Melbourne, 3000**

The VLGA acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Victoria and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters, and community.

We pay our respects to the Traditional Custodians, their Elders past, present and future, and to their cultures.





A message from our President

It is my pleasure to welcome you to *FastTrack* 2023! As President of the VLGA, I am honoured to introduce this recognised program that brings together some of the brightest minds in local government and beyond.

FastTrack 2023 promises to be a thought-provoking program filled with engaging discussions, insightful talks, and an opportunity for participants to learn and grow. I do not doubt that each of you will leave this conference with a renewed sense of energy, inspiration and motivation.

This year's conference features an exciting line up of keynote speakers, workshops, and interactive sessions. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity to learn from some of the best minds in the industry.

As you embark on this journey, to please take advantage of the many opportunities to engage with your fellow attendees, share your own experiences and insights, and build lasting relationships long after the conference ends.

Once again, I extend my sincere welcome to one of you, and I look forward to seeing the learnings that will come out of *FastTrack* 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Denise Massoud".

Cr Denise Massoud

President – The Victorian Local Governance Association



A message from our CEO

I am delighted to welcome you to this year's *FastTrack* conference. As the CEO of our organisation, I am thrilled to be hosting such a respected group of professionals from across Victoria.

FastTrack 2023 is a unique opportunity for all of us to come together, share knowledge and insights, and collaborate on innovative solutions to the challenges we face in the local government sector.

Throughout the day, we will hear from various speakers engaging in thought-provoking discussions and delivering interactive workshops that will inspire us to look at new ways of doing things.

FastTrack allows councillors to learn about best practices and provides innovative approaches to address their communities' challenges. As well, building constructive relationships with other elected officials and professionals in the field can help to foster collaboration, exchange of ideas and allow councillors to bring fresh perspectives and insights to their decision-making processes.

As we embark on this journey together, I encourage you to be open-minded, to listen and learn from your fellow attendees, and to actively participate in the many opportunities for engagement that we have planned. This is your chance to not only gain new insights and skills but also to build relationships that could lead to opportunities in the future.

I want to thank our sponsors, partners, and all who contributed to this event. Their support has been invaluable, and we are grateful for their commitment to advancing our collective goals.

Once again, I welcome you all to *FastTrack* 2023 and look forward to meeting each of you.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'K Arndt', written in a cursive style.

Kathryn Arndt

Chief Executive Officer - The Victorian Local Governance Association



Introducing the Minister for Local Government – the Hon Melissa Horne

Melissa Horne is the Member for Williamstown and Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation, Local Government, Ports and Freight, and Roads and Road Safety in the Andrews Labor Government.

Growing up, Melissa watched the area she grew up in buffeted by economic challenges that saw industries and employment disappear and working people face enormous and unforeseen challenges. Both of Melissa's parents were school teachers who instilled strong public sector and public education values in her.

Prior to being appointed as the Minister for Public Transport, immediately following the 2018 Victorian election, Melissa was a public affairs executive director in the Victorian public service. Melissa has previously worked as chief of staff in a previous Victorian Government in the Gaming, Tourism and Employment portfolios.

Melissa has enjoyed a long career at senior levels of government and corporate organisations, where she has overseen projects and policies which have helped change lives for the better. She has played her part in delivering responsible gaming reforms and led efforts to embed community consultation in government decision making.

Melissa moved to Melbourne's western suburbs in the late 1990s where she lives with her partner Alex and two teenage sons.

Melissa is honoured to represent the electorate of Williamstown and humbled to follow the legacy of former MPs such as Joan Kirner, Steve Bracks and Wade Noonan.

FastTrack 2023

Agenda

- 9:30 am *Arrival*
- 9:45 am Introduction and Acknowledgement of Country
- 10:00 am Pre-recorded Minister's Address
- 10:20 am VLGA President Address
- 10:40 am Group Photo
- 10:55 am *Morning Tea*
- 11:15 am Driving Culture to 2024
- **Julia Banks** – Former Federal MP, author & columnist
 - **Ali Wastie** – CEO Bass Coast Shire & Chair Alpine Resorts VIC
 - **Adam Fennessy PSM** – Dean & CEO ANZSOG
- 12:30 pm **Lunch**
- 1.30 pm *To Consult or Not to Consult* – that is the question.
- **Kimbra White** – Director of Mosiac Lab
 - **Cathy Henderson** – CEO Merri-bek City Council
 - **Max Hardy** – Director Max Hardy Consultancy
- 3.00 pm *Afternoon Tea*
- 3:20 pm *How Constructive Interactions can Impact Culture and Decision-making*
- **Peter Singer** – Principal, Bond National
- 4:20 pm Behaviour Works
- **(Cr) Geoff Paine** – Monash University
- 5.20 pm **Kathryn Arndt** VLGA Chief Executive Officer Closing Address
- 5:30 pm *Networking Drinks*

Panel 1

Driving Culture to 2024

Now that we have completed the strategic groundwork, we are entering a critical period where it is essential to oversee the delivery of services and projects until 2024. However, the current environment is chaotic, and many challenges will arise during this time, requiring careful navigation and proactive management. To successfully manage this phase, it is crucial to have a team with the necessary skills and attributes to bring to the forefront.

The cultural aspects of councils are complex, and the role in setting a cultural tone intersects with the CEO's work in building the organisation's culture. A council's culture should reflect its values, priorities, and goals and should be aligned with the needs and expectations of the community it serves. This involves fostering an inclusive and collaborative work environment that encourages innovation, openness, and transparency.

Councils should work to create a collaborative work environment that encourages open communication, teamwork, and respect for different perspectives. This can involve implementing training programs, promoting staff participation in decision-making processes, and recognising and rewarding good performance. Councils should encourage innovation and experimentation by promoting a culture of risk-taking and learning from mistakes.

Overall, driving culture in local government in Australia in 2024 will be shaped by a range of factors, including respect, sustainability, and innovation. Councils must work collaboratively to establish a culture that reflects these priorities and aligns with the communities' needs and expectations.

Today, we have the privilege of listening to three guest speakers, Julia Banks, Ali Wastie and Adam Fennessy PSM, who all possess extensive knowledge and practical experience in fostering and promoting a positive culture in and beyond local government.



Julia Banks is an author, opinion writer, lawyer and consultant with expertise in workplace culture, governance and risk management. Julia has served in Australia's Federal Parliament under Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull as both a government and independent MP and has held senior General Counsel, Executive Director, Company Secretary and Board as well as non-executive director and advisory roles in global companies and Australian organisations.

Julia's bestselling book, *Powerplay: Breaking through Barriers, Bias and Boys' Clubs* was nominated in the 2021 Australian Book Industry Awards longlist.

An established thought leader on leadership - Julia's advocacy and commentary focusses on leadership and safe and respectful and positive workplace cultures: she has worked across both the public and private sectors with organisations in the law manufacturing, construction, professional and finance services, consumer marketing and retail, sport, academia, mining, and all levels of government.

Julia has extensive experience across the private and public sectors, having worked as senior corporate counsel, in executive director roles and as chair and director of various boards of management for global blue-chip companies for over 20 years.

Julia's key areas of expertise and leadership experience are based on her leadership roles such as General Counsel, Executive Director, Company Secretary and Head of Risk & Compliance for some of the world's most recognisable blue-chip companies, including Kraft, GlaxoSmithKline & George Weston Foods. She has chaired multiple crisis & risk management, diversity and inclusion teams and provided compliance & governance training in workplace culture, diversity and inclusion committees and equity, governance and ethics.

During her Parliamentary term, Julia launched and was Chair of several parliamentary groups. These included being Chair of the inaugural committee for Women's Health and Chair of the Social Policy and Legal Affairs Committee, UNICEF, and overseas country groups. During the Banking Inquiry, she was also a Government MP member of the House of Representatives Economics Committee.

Julia Banks graduated in Arts & Law from Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, is a Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and is a Fellow of the Australian Governance Institute.



Adam Fennessy PSM is the Dean and CEO of the Australia and New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG).

Adam has over 25 years of public sector experience at state and federal levels, most recently as the Victorian Public Sector Commissioner. He has served as the Secretary of the Victorian Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning and the Victorian Department of Environment and Primary Industries. Adam has worked in the private sector as a partner with global advisory firm Ernst & Young.

Adam has served on several boards including the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) (Victoria), Infrastructure Victoria, Monash Sustainable Development Institute and Women & Leadership Australia.

Adam is an IPAA National Fellow and a Champions of Change Coalition member. In 2018, he received a Public Service Medal (PSM) for leadership in the Victorian public sector.



Ali Wastie is Chair of Alpine Resorts Victoria, established last year to provide governance and leadership to Victoria's six alpine resorts, Chair of Clinical Governance and Quality Services for South Gippsland Hospital and holds Board Director positions for Bass Coast Country University Centre, Destination Gippsland and Destination Phillip Island.

With degrees in Arts, and Education and a Master of Diplomacy and Trade, Ali has held executive positions within the Victorian Public Service and Local Government. She is the Chief Executive Officer Bass Coast Shire Council, Victorian's fastest-growing regional community.

She is also an accomplished Board Director across the not-for-profit, community, tourism and health sectors. Ali is an accredited executive coach and mediator. An authentic leader, Ali is passionate about developing high-performing teams and creating a workplace culture that is empowered, strategic, outcomes-focused, trusting and fun.

Panel 2

To Consult or Not to Consult - That is the Question

The purpose of this panel is to review the progress made in engagement and consultation to date and provide insights into how to engage with the community effectively for the remainder of this council term. The panel will equip participants with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions about engaging and how to do so confidently.

Additionally, the panel will guide participants in preparing for the next round of engagement and consultation after 2024, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge needed to engage with the community effectively. By the end of this panel, participants should have a deeper understanding of engagement and consultation and feel empowered to confidently engage with their community.

Kimbra White, Cathy Henderson, and Max Hardy are our three guest panel speakers.



Kimbra White is an experienced facilitator who has worked extensively across state, regional and local government engagement projects for over 20 years. She has also worked on many highly emotional and polarising topics, including dogs on beaches, green wedge management, water management and the impact of drug use on local communities.

Kimbra has contributed to the professional association for engagement, spending several years as a board member and president of IAP2 Australasia and as a board member of the IAP2 International Federation.

Kimbra co-founded Mosaic Lab in 2013, an engagement consultancy specialising in deliberative democracy. She has co-facilitated a number of high-profile deliberations including Democracy in Geelong, Nillumbik Green Wedge and Melbourne's Ten-Year Financial Plan. As a result of this work, Kimbra was the lead author of the book *Facilitating Deliberation – A Practical Guide* which was launched in July 2022 and has sold just over 300 copies.

Before consultancy, Kimbra worked in regional economic development (Business East), regional local government (OEMA and WSROC), the NSW Government and Hobart City Council in Tasmania.



Cathy Henderson is the CEO of Merri-bek City Council and has a record of dedicated senior leadership in the local government sector in Victoria and NSW. Across her career, Cathy has held executive positions across diverse portfolios, including governance and corporate services, community services and community strengthening, and open space planning. With a deep commitment to community democracy and engagement. Cathy has a keen interest in how councils can make a difference to people's lives.

Cathy is driven by Merri-bek Council's strong commitments to environmental sustainability, community health and wellbeing, and developing community assets and infrastructure.

Cathy holds a master's degree in public policy and management and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Max Hardy is one of Australia's foremost experts in community engagement and deliberative processes and has designed and facilitated over 55 deliberative panels since 1998.

He regularly delivers workshops and masterclasses on deliberative processes at conferences and for the professional development programs of the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Victorian Local Governance Association, IAP2, and Collaboration for Impact.

Renowned internationally for his skilful design and facilitation of community engagement processes, Max has developed innovative models for collaboration and community engagement, for which he has won numerous national and international awards.

Max Hardy specialises in participatory codesign, appreciative inquiry, strategic questioning, collective impact and designing, facilitating, and evaluating deliberative community engagement processes. He also co-facilitated Australia's first Citizens' Parliament and facilitated a world café session at the Festival of Dangerous Ideas, Sydney.

As a Master Trainer for IAP2 Max co-designed and facilitated two training academies in 2006 and 2008, in Alberta Canada, and Edinburgh, UK respectively.

He has co-authored two books, presented papers at numerous international conferences, and is a regular guest lecturer at The University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney. Recently Max also delivered a Tedx talk titled 'Questions Change Everything'.

Max Hardy (FIAP2, B Soc Science, Ass Dip Soc Wel, Cert Prac NLP) is a Fellow of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) and has co-delivered IAP2 Training Academies in North America and the UK. He is also a co-founder of Authentic Co-design and is an associate of Collaboration for Impact.

Constructive Interactions: Impacts on Culture & Decision Making

Anecdotal evidence suggests that only half of the elected councillors' expectations align with their actual role experience. Contributing factors to this misalignment include perceived bullying, difficulty in exerting influence, and hostility from both internal and external sources. However, the difference between a constructive and a difficult term of service may be narrow and depend on factors such as the awareness of how to maintain productive engagement, the use of tools to overcome entrenched positions, and the availability of frameworks that could improve councillors' experiences.

Constructive interactions can have a significant impact on the culture and decision-making processes of local government in Australia. When people from diverse backgrounds, with different perspectives and experiences, come together to collaborate and communicate constructively, it can lead to more inclusive decision-making processes and a more positive organisational culture.

Effective communication and collaboration among local government officials, employees, and community members can help to build trust, promote transparency, and increase accountability. Constructive interactions also help to foster a culture of respect, empathy, and understanding, which can enhance relationships between different stakeholders and improve the overall effectiveness of local government.

Furthermore, constructive interactions can promote innovation and creativity by encouraging people to think outside the box and share their ideas openly. This can lead to more effective problem-solving, better decision-making, and ultimately, better outcomes for the community.

In summary, constructive interactions can have a transformative effect on the culture and decision-making processes of local government in Australia. By promoting collaboration, inclusivity, and innovation, constructive interactions can help to create more effective, responsive, and accountable local government organisations that serve the needs of the community.



Peter Singer helps executives and their leaders facing conflict develop an awareness of the key approaches that can deliver unexpected, constructive outcomes. Even the slightest change in a leader's awareness of these skills can make a significant impact on many. He believes that conflict handling is the aspect of leadership that is often overlooked yet critically needed.

His professional experience is drawn from diverse industries that include IT Programming and Support, Telecommunication engineering, Recruitment.

Along with his 2 brothers, Peter owned and built a national professional services company employing 100 talented staff. They sold this company to a publicly listed UK company.

Peter sits on several government mediation panels and has been appointed as a Mediation Fellow of the Resolution Institute of Australia.

BehaviourWorks

Based on experience, it is common for organisations to require assistance in clarifying the problem before they can begin to address it. Exploring these issues concentrates on breaking down the problem and establishing a mutual comprehension of it.

We will be taking a deep dive into how to achieve a shared understanding and develop skills on how we can utilise a variety of techniques, including process mapping and influence mapping, to determine the individuals, councils, and organisations implicated in the problem - and who may contribute to its resolution. This stage can expose areas where changing behaviour will have the most significant effect - ideally, with the least effort.

The primary goal of this exercise is to gather information, pinpointing what is already understood - and what remains unclear - regarding the problem and the variables responsible for it. Apart from examining existing literature and practices, we also allocate time to collect data from partner organisations, as this is frequently an overlooked resource that can aid in accurately delineating the problem.

Dissecting problems can generate numerous conceivable behaviours to modify. How can one choose among them? Our Impact-Likelihood Matrix helps to filter the alternatives by plotting the behaviours on a visual prioritisation framework with two essential dimensions:

- 1) the potential effect on the problem
- 2) the probability of adoption (will people actually do it?)

Furthermore, we evaluate current penetration levels, compliance costs, and impediments to adoption.



Geoff Paine began his career playing Dr Clive Gibbons on iconic TV show, Neighbours, in 1986. He went on to appear in The Comedy Company, Blue Heelers, City Homicide, Mal.com and the Dr Blake Mysteries for TV, The X-Fools for radio and stage productions such as Hair, The New Rocky Horror Show, Spontaneous Broadway and Unpack This!

Geoff went on to form a small production company, writing and producing video communications for retail, government and non-profit organisations. He moved to BehaviourWorks Australia (BWA) at Monash University in 2016, becoming Senior Curator with the comms team where he creates live events, video and blog content and shares BWA's research and insights in the most creative and engaging ways he can.

He's also Deputy Mayor at Nillumbik Shire Council and brings together this experience with some tips and tricks from the worlds of improvisation and behavioural science.



The Victorian Local Governance Association provides key information to the local government sector and the Victorian community through our online and podcast interview series *VLGA Connect*, which is hosted by Chris Eddy on behalf of the VLGA.

As the national broadcaster on all things local government, the VLGA brings together key agency leaders to speak to matters relevant to the local government sector and the Victorian community through this online interview series.

The *VLGA Connect* Series which consists of *The Governance Update*, *In Conversation*, *The CEO & Mayoral Mic* and much more, is distributed through our [YouTube channel](#) and is downloaded as a podcast on all major podcasting platforms. It has become a sought-after resource for the sector and the broader community – as is the national [LG News Roundup](#) program proudly sponsored by the VLGA.



Justitia is a multi-award-winning law firm based in Melbourne that has worked with Councils since 2006. With a focus practice in employment law as well as governance, conflict resolution, workplace investigations and training.

Justitia's approach is client-centric, and the team works closely with clients to understand their unique needs and develop tailored solutions that meet their specific goals. The firm values transparency, integrity, and professionalism and strives to maintain open and honest communication with clients at all times.

Managing Partner Melissa Scaddon and Founding Partner Sarah Rey have acted as Arbiter or Mediator on numerous Councillor Code of Conduct disputes and more recently supported many Councils with early resolution of disputes and building effective working relationships. Justitia has a keen interest in early intervention strategies for workplace conflict, along with building the capacity of individuals to effectively engage in difficult conversations.



Hunt & Hunt is a vibrant national law firm that delivers tailored legal advice and do more than help councils with their legal issues – they build genuine partnerships to help achieve the best for communities.

Local government law is at the core of our firm’s practice. Hunt & Hunt have long- standing relationships with many local government clients, acting for more than 35 councils across regional, rural and metropolitan areas in Victoria.

Hunt & Hunt appreciate the changing legal environment in which local government entities operate. Several of their staff have also held senior positions within Councils throughout their careers, giving them a truly insider view of what matters to Councils.

Hunt & Hunt’s extensive industry knowledge and know-how allows them to easily identify legal challenges and critical risks facing councils. With more than 80 years’ experience in the local government sector, there are few legal issues they haven’t seen and successfully resolved.

Stay Connected



www.vlga.org.au



03 9349 7999



32/367 Collins St Melbourne 3000

**Click the links below to
Like, Follow, and Subscribe**

