




Annual Report 2022/23

The background of the page is a complex, layered artwork in a traditional Indigenous style. It features a large fish at the top, a dragonfly on the right, and a person in traditional dress on the right side. The artwork is composed of various textures and colors, including earthy tones and more vibrant hues like yellow and red. The text is overlaid on this artwork.

**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.**

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The VLGA Story - Who We are

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) supports councils and elected representatives (councillors) to deliver positive outcomes for their local communities through high performance leadership and effective governance. We are member-run and non-partisan.

We offer direct support, training, professional development, events, networks and resources to members and carry out research, policy analysis and advocacy on behalf of local councils.

We are the leading voice for local councils and offer our members the support to realise their true leadership potential and increase their impact.

The VLGA facilitates events for councillor networking and information exchange. We actively engage 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'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.

VLGA Members

- VLGA members are high-performance councillors and councils (we empower them)
- VLGA members demonstrate best-practice governance (we train and support them)
- VLGA members deliver great outcomes for their local communities (we enable them)
- VLGA is a champion for local government (we advocate for and represent them)
- VLGA is an expert in good governance and local government (we listen to and inform them)

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

I am delighted to share with you the Victorian Local Governance Association's 2022-23 Annual Report.

This Report marks a significant milestone in the VLGA's history with the delivery of the organisation's 2018-22 Strategic Plan and the launch of the 2023-27 Strategy in March 2023.

As we moved further away from the disruption of COVID, the VLGA continued to see strong uptake of the organisation's extensive range of councillor professional development programs. Our signature FastTrack Leadership Development workshop held in March had the theme *Leading in Times of Chaos* and was at full capacity as we heard from an expert line up of speakers including former federal MP Julia Banks and the former Victorian Public Sector Commissioner, Adam Fennessy PSM.

Throughout the year we delivered close to 100 episodes of the *VLGA Connect* YouTube and podcast series – including the highly subscribed weekly *The Governance Update* (TGU) and quarterly *VLGA & LGiU Global Executive Panels*. We also launched the *Local Leaders* series which comprises pre-recorded interviews with VLGA member CEOs, Mayors and Deputy Mayors.

It was with great pleasure and anticipation that I launched the VLGA's aspirational and ambitious 2023-27 Strategic Plan following a rigorous process of internal and external stakeholder engagement.

In order to understand how our organisation's next five-year Strategic Plan could best position the VLGA to contribute to member needs, we sought input from our staff and board members, our members, representatives from councils who are not members, allies and critical stakeholders.

I would like to thank all those who took part in our online or in-person opportunities to provide input, which has shaped our plan.

The VLGA's new Strategic Plan will contribute to improved governance awareness and skills among the community and those considering standing for election.

Our Strategic Plan outlines how we will use our seat at the table in Victoria and across borders and indeed oceans, to support and build governance and leadership skills among councillors and those considering becoming councillors.

The Strategic Plan 2023-27 outlines our focus on:

- Building councillor expertise and capability
- Shaping and sharing good governance strategy and practice
- Partnering for impact by working in coalition to educate and inform
- Supporting councils, councillors and communities to address the challenges to good governance

The VLGA understands the value of having a diverse network of community leaders elected to local government who are more connected, informed and capable of providing good governance for the communities they serve.

We know that when communities, economies and the environment are well governed, people feel they belong, can contribute, and thrive. Councils play a key role in delivering on this vision.

Councillors, CEOs and council staff come to the VLGA when they need support and advice, and councils' membership of the VLGA strengthens our ability to provide the best support and advice possible, and continue to deliver programs of a high calibre to members.

In the lead-up to the last Victorian local government elections we reached over 1000 candidates through our:

- General candidate workshops delivered in partnership with over 40 councils
- Our *Local Women Leading Change* program
- *A Seat At the Table* developed for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and;
- *Your Community, Country & Council* program encouraging and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to participate in local government.

We also continue to work with municipalities that are currently operating without elected representatives, such as the City of Whittlesea. Through community and youth leadership programs we work to build the capacity and capability of future elected representatives. These programs work to ensure people considering standing for election are prepared when the council goes back to election. We have done this in other communities in the past including the City of Brimbank and South Gippsland Shire.

Candidate development is an important part of our work. It allows the VLGA to:

- Build awareness in the community about the roles and responsibilities of councils and being a councillor
- Inform voters, and
- Inform and build the capacity of those who wish to stand for election

We provide councillor induction and ongoing professional development for mandatory training requirements, best practice modules and bespoke training programs and thought leadership programs.

Council staff and councillors come to us for our early intervention and support services. We facilitate workshops and discussions that focus on better decision making by respectfully conducting difficult conversations.

Providing advice and support to CEOs, councillors and governance officers on matters relating to transparency, integrity and compliance are other critical planks with which we support councils to continue to improve governance.

The *Local Government Culture Project Insights Report* by PWC from May 2022 (Culture Project) was instructive in shaping our strategic plan.

The key themes from this project included:

- Leadership experience and capability - leadership needs to be taught. The fact that Councillors employ the CEO presents challenges
- Councillor journey - to ensure councillors understand and can execute their role. Provide training pre-candidacy through induction and during their terms; and
- Early intervention and effective dispute resolution - identifies the role of the Municipal Monitor and strengthening resolution processes as opportunities for change

As the only peak body for good governance in local government in Australia, our top three priorities going forward are to:

- Develop a funding proposition and sell it to government; focusing on the VLGA role in supporting councils to change culture, improve conduct, and deliver on good local governance
- Develop and implement the leading candidate development program for the 2024 Victorian local government elections
- Establish and deliver by 2024, a phone helpline and early intervention service for elected officials and executives working in local government

We believe our own research and the Culture Project provide ample evidence of need and we stand ready to support this important level of government to help strengthen Victorian communities.

We know that to educate and support the community and councillors is a shared role and we look forward to working with our members to deliver more diverse, capable and well skilled elected representatives into the future.

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, councils and councillors in achieving the highest standards of governance on behalf of their communities.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow VLGA board members and our staff who continue to contribute to delivery of our important goals.

Cr Denise Massoud
VLGA President



VLGA Strategic Plan 2023-2027

The benefits for councils and communities of good decision-making and culture are driving the Victorian Local Governance Association's (VLGA) Strategic Plan 2023-2027.

The Strategic Plan aims to build and strengthen governance and leadership skills among current and future Victorian councillors.

The four key areas the organisation and its members will focus on include:

1. Building councillor expertise and capability
2. Shaping and sharing good governance strategy and practice
3. Partnering for impact by working in coalition to educate and inform; and
4. Supporting councils, councillors and communities to address the challenges to good governance

These objectives translate to programs and actions needed to support good governance, which is about the processes for making and implementing decisions.

Our vision for local government is to support a diverse and growing network of community leaders elected to local government who are more connected, informed, and capable of providing good governance for the communities they serve.

Significant feedback was collected through a comprehensive engagement process with members, stakeholders, and other key bodies within our sector.

The plan was built on an evidence based approach, with our actions and decisions backed by internal or external research, tested through practical application and continual learning.

The goals within the plan are ambitious and significant to the sector. Designed to maximise value to members and the communities they serve, these goals will guide programs and actions needed to support councils to provide good governance.

We know when communities, economies and the environment are well governed; people feel that they belong, can contribute, and thrive.

We look forward to working with our members and all those passionate in our community around the role of councils, to now bring this plan to life.

You can read the 2023-2027 VLGA Strategic Plan [here](#).



CEO & Operational Report

It has been my great pleasure and privilege to lead the VLGA on a journey that has seen the successful delivery of the organisation's 2018-22 Strategic Plan this year and the development and launch of the 2023-27 Strategy.

As the VLGA has continued its work to support the local government sector in achieving the highest standards of governance on behalf of their communities, the VLGA team and I have been committed to refining and expanding program and service delivery to members.

The VLGA continued to deliver its signature *VLGA Connect* program – in video and podcast form. Over 400 episodes have been delivered to date and 96 of these in this year alone.

To expand and strengthen our support to members, as part of this highly subscribed program we introduced a new series, *Local Leaders* which comprises interviews with VLGA member CEOs, Mayors and Deputy Mayors.

The *VLGA Connect* program family now includes:

- The weekly *The Governance Update* (TGU) with Chris Eddy, Tony Raunic and Julie Reid
- *Local Leaders* series with VLGA member CEOs and Mayors
- *In Conversation* with thought leaders, decision makers and public sector leaders

- Live Panel Forums on key topics of importance and relevance to the sector
- Our *Global Executive Live Panel* series, in partnership with the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU)

I would like to acknowledge and thank Chris Eddy, a local government and media veteran of 40-years, 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 (JLF).

The *Connect* 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.

Throughout the year, the VLGA delivered multiple programs and engaged in many forums to strengthen and support good governance in local government.

Early in the 2022-23 year, we launched the Represent Handbook in partnership with Welcoming Cities – a handbook for culturally diverse Victorians considering running for local government. Its 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.

Over the period, the VLGA provided 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.

The VLGA *Governance and Councillor Advisory Hotline* continued to be used by councillors and officers from member councils seeking confidential support, with usage increasing as word gets around from those who have availed of the service and have recommended it to colleagues in the sector.

In partnership with Hunt & Hunt Lawyers and Justitia Lawyers, the VLGA's quarterly *CEO Network Forum* facilitated a number of thought provoking and

constructive discussions amongst our CEO members, in particular the unpacking of decisions arising from the councillor conduct framework and other relevant sector matters that are front of mind for our CEOs.

The VLGA's *Governance Advisory Network* (GAN) met regularly throughout the period and provided a forum for councillors and senior governance officers to unpack legislative requirements and hear from key sector stakeholders, such as the Ombudsman's Office, the Municipal Inspectorate and Local Government Victoria.

The VLGA proudly continues our support of the informative Local Government (LG) News Roundup podcast. The *Local Government News Roundup* is produced and presented by Chris Eddy and features news and interviews from the local government sector. The program is released twice weekly and includes Victorian, interstate and international roundup segments and now has a global following.

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, 2023-27, which was launched at our fully subscribed signature *FastTrack Leadership Development* program in March 2023.

As part of a VicHealth Local Government Partnership, the VLGA partnered with 36 Councils to deliver community of practice huddles, forums and health promotion leadership training workshops covering a full spectrum of topics across the health promotion landscape throughout the year.

The partnership received support from a great deal of passionate people with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Through the culmination of best practices, real world case-studies, networking sessions and other tools, this program has bolstered the confidence of council officers in delivering and championing health promotion programs.

The VLGA continued its partnership with LaTrobe University and the University of Melbourne as part of an Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage Project, *Women in Local Government: Understanding their Political Trajectories*.

The latest research paper to be released as part of this project was prepared by Professor Andrea Carson (LaTrobe University), Dr Gosia Mikolajczak (The Global Institute for Women's Leadership at the Australian National University), Professor Leah Ruppanner (University of Melbourne) and Emily Foley (LaTrobe University). *From Online Trolls to 'Slut Shaming': Understanding the Role of Incivility and Gender Abuse in Local Government* surveyed more than 200 councillors from all 79 local councils, finding 56% of women councillors who are unwilling to recontest the next election had been subjected to bullying and harassment during their time on council. 27% of men reported the same.

We look forward to the next phase of this important research.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the VLGA President, Cr Denise Massoud and the VLGA board for their guidance, input, and support.

I would like to acknowledge and commend all VLGA staff for their contribution and thank them for their resilience, agility, professionalism and support over the past twelve months, as we moved out of the disruptive time of 'lock downs' and working from home, to deliver our new Strategy.

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

We look forward to working with you next year.



Kathryn Arndt
Chief Executive Officer

VLGA Submissions & External Committees

As one of the three peak bodies party to the Victorian State Local Government Agreement, the VLGA continued to give councils a voice through regular meetings with key state and federal government departments, Ministers for Local Government, portfolio ministers and advisors, and represented our members on several external committees.

External Committees

- 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 & Consultations

- Transfer of Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation Functions
- Guidelines on Payments of Rates and Charges
- Multicultural Framework Review
- Culture Review into Local Government

Programs & Training

As part of the VLGA's commitment to good governance, training and thought leadership, numerous programs, events, forums and professional development opportunities were delivered throughout the year.

Date	Event/Program
8/7/2022	Digital Governance Conference
20/7/2022	Local Government Working Group on Gambling
22/7/2022	Governance Advisory Network
4/8/2022	Represent Launch & Stepping Forward Incubator
5/8/2022	Councillor PD – Better Disagreement, Better Teams
14/9/2022	Local Government Working Group on Gambling
15/9/2022	Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network Meeting
16/9/2022	Governance Advisory Network Meeting
7/10/2022	CEO Forum
11/11/2022	Governance Advisory Network Meeting
16/11/2022	Local Government Working Group on Gambling
24/11/2022	Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network Meeting
2/12/2022	CEO Forum
7/12/2022	Your Community, Country & Council – VLGA Candidate Program
12/12/2022	Your Community, Country & Council – VLGA Candidate Program
15/12/2022	ARC Linkage – A Victorian Women's Charter Event
22/2/2023	Local Government Working Group on Gambling
10/3/2023	International Women's Day lunch
23/3/2023	CEO Forum
30/3/2023	Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network Meeting
31/3/2023	FastTrack – Leading in Times of Chaos
19/4/2023	Local Government Working Group on Gambling
22/6/2023	Child Friendly Cities and Communities Network Meeting

We also provided bespoke training sessions to councils to provide the latest information and best practice in good governance.

VLGA Member Network Groups

Local Government Working Group on Gambling (LGWGOG)

The VLGA's LGWGOG continued to convene bimonthly 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

Speakers have included:

- Jonathan Hallett & Gemma Crawford, Curtin University
- Jo Nosegaard, SGS Economics & Planning
- Bonnie Rosen, Symplan
- Dr Simone McCarthy, Professor Samantha Thomas, Dr Hannah Pitt, Deakin University

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.

Child Friendly Cities and Communities (CFCC)

The Child Friendly Cities and Communities movement works to bring individuals, organisations and communities together to collectively uphold and individually practice the principles of the Victorian Child Friendly Cities and Communities Charter and is underpinned by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The CFCC meets bimonthly, bringing together representatives from 20 Council signatories and 16 other organisational signatories across Victoria.



Professional Development

FastTrack 2023 - Leading in Times of Chaos

Held in March 2023, *FastTrack* was a unique opportunity to once again come together, share knowledge and insights, and collaborate on innovative solutions to the challenges faced in the local government sector.

Participants heard from speakers including:

- Julia Banks, Former Federal MP, author and columnist
- Ali Wastie, CEO Bass Coast Shire and Chair Alpine Resorts Vic

- Adam Fennessy PSM, Dean & CEO, ANZSOG
- Kimbra White, Director, MosaicLab
- Cathy Henderson, CEO, Merri-bek City Council
- Max Hardy, Director, Max Hardy Consultancy
- Peter Singer, Principal, Bond National
- Geoff Paine, Monash University



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.

We partnered with industry stakeholders to present the most up to date information to our networks.

Community Leadership Programs

Working closely with councils and community, the VLGA has undertaken several bespoke *Community Leadership Programs* designed to support and empower community leaders, give them the skills to advocate to council, influence decision making and take the next steps towards representing their community.

Community leaders come from all walks of life, and the diversity of interests, passions and perspectives always create lively and engaging conversations.

Council Training Programs

Working with individual councils, the VLGA has developed and delivered bespoke training programs throughout the year.

These sessions were held virtually and in-person. Session topics were specifically tailored for each council's unique situation and can cover a wide range of topics from planning, harassment to asset management to social media training.

Forums

CEO Forums

Held quarterly, the *CEO Forums* bring together CEOs from councils across Victoria in a round table setting to discuss current challenges and opportunities facing the sector.

Guided by representatives from our partners at Hunt & Hunt Lawyers and Justitia Lawyers & Consultants the forums aim to give CEOs a trusted environment to discuss governance challenges in the sector and share experiences and solutions.

Focus on Diversity & Inclusion

A strong commitment to diversity and inclusion continues to be a feature of our work and offerings.

International Women's Day

This International Women's Day, the VLGA hosted an lunch time event to discuss *Incivility and Gender Abuse in Local Government*.

Guests heard from Professor Andrea Carson, one of three researchers on the ARC Linkage Project which examines the political trajectories of women in local government and VLGA President, Cr Denise Massoud.

Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkages Grant

The VLGA is a proud partner of the ARC Linkage Project looking at *Women in Local Government: Understanding their political trajectories*.

Partnering on this research highlights the important role the VLGA has in delivering programs that provide support and resources to councils and councillors that encourage civil discourse amongst elected representatives. It also highlights the need for robust and effective remedies when discourse breaks down.



Funded Programs

VicHealth - Victorian Local Government Partnership

The VLGA has partnered with 36 Councils as part of a *VicHealth Local Government Partnership* to deliver community of practice huddles, forums and health promotion leadership training workshops covering a full spectrum of topics across the health promotion landscape.

The partnership has been fortunate to receive support from a great deal of passionate people with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. The culmination of best practices, real world case-studies, networking sessions and other tools, have bolstered the confidence of council officers in delivering and championing health promotion programs.

Stepping Forward

The primary aim of the *Stepping Forward* program was to build the community leadership capacity of young people from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Local government, as the level of government closest to the communities in which we live, should reflect the diversity of those who live in these communities. Diversity around and in the council, chamber contributes to robust decision making.

The program successfully built the leadership capacity of young culturally diverse people. Based on survey findings, participants’ skills and knowledge increased by 200% over the course of the program. In addition, the material and resources produced could be utilised by community groups to build campaigns and help influence decision making.

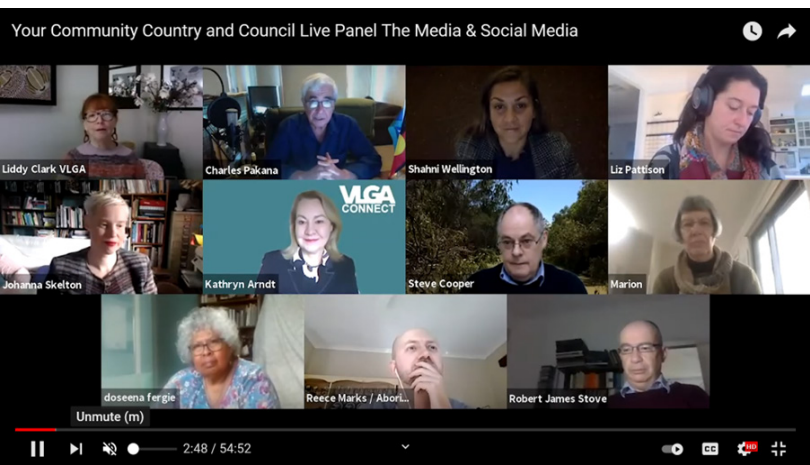


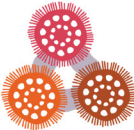
Your Community Country Council (YCCC) Project

The VLGA’s YCCC project aimed to address the under representation of First Nations Peoples in local government.

Led by a project officer from the VLGA, the YCCC was informed by a First Nations Steering Committee in a self-determined pilot program.

The project developed a statewide framework for reaching First Nations People, build knowledge, improve engagement, increase decision making capacity and encourage candidacy in the 2024 local government elections.





YCCC
Your Community,
Country & Council

brought to you by The VLGA


**STANDING AS A
CANDIDATE**

How to represent your community in local government

12 DECEMBER 12.30PM - 1.30PM AEDT

A Q&A panel moderated by Charles Pakana

Panel guests: Cr Ashleigh Vandenberg (Melton City Council),
Cr Greg James (Greater Shepparton City Council), Jeremy Nikora (VEC)



Register at vlga.org.au/events

VLGA Connect

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.

This year, we launched the *Local Leaders* series, interviewing Mayors and CEOs from member councils on the challenges and opportunities faced by their municipality during their time of leadership.

Local Leaders complements the suite of VLGA Connect programs, including In Conversation, interviews with prominent figures connected to local government, *TGU: The Governance Update*, a weekly recap of the latest in local government news, live panels which bring together key industry stakeholders to discuss this important topics affecting councils and, in partnership with LGiU our *Global Executive Panels*.

State Election Series - Live Panel

- Shadow Minister for Local Government and Housing, Richard Riordan, and Shadow Minister for Planning, Ryan Smith
- Minister for Local Government, Melissa Horne
- Cr Mary-Ann Brown, Chair of Rural Councils Victoria
- Cr Andrea Metcalf, Chair of Regional Cities Victoria

In Conversation

- Jonathan Spear, CEO, Infrastructure Victoria
- Kristy McBain, Federal Minister for Regional Development, Local Government and Territories, Keith & Nicole, Mosaic Lab
- Cr Jim Magee, Mayor, Glen Eira City Council
- Dana Fleming, Deputy Commissioner, VEC
- Allan Briggs, Crisis Shield
- Ken Weldin Joint Head of Audit and Assurance, PKF Melbourne
- Andrew Greaves, Victorian Auditor General
- Cr Joseph Haweil, Mayor, Hume City Council
- Kerryn Ellis, CEO, South Gippsland Shire Council

Live Panels

- Electing a Mayor
- Debt - A Financial Resource for Councils to Consider
- Flood Recovery - Reflections and Learnings

VLGA Connect

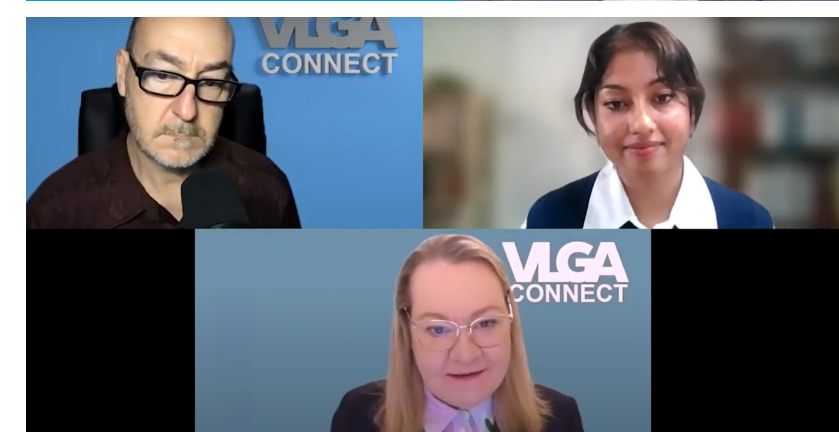
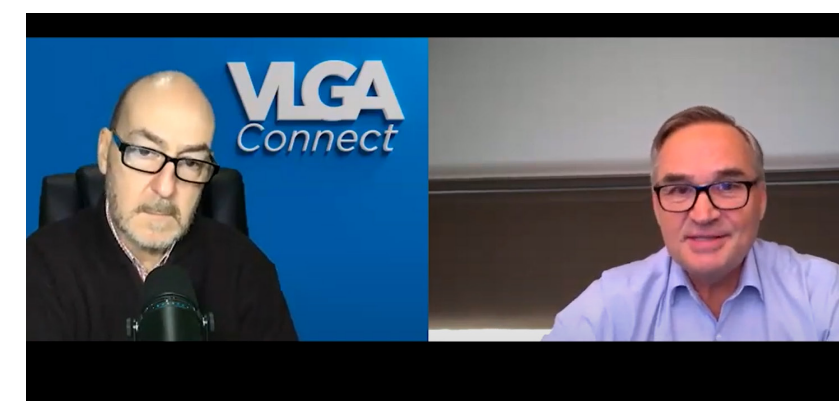
- ARC Linkage Grant Update – Examining the political trajectories of women in local government
- The Missing Women of Australian Politics with Medha Majumdar
- International Women's Day 2022
- Gambling Harm Minimisation with Simon Harrex, VLGA and Jo Noesgaard, SGS Planning & Economics
- FastTrack 2023 - To Consult, or not to Consult
- FastTrack 2023 - Driving Culture to 2024

VLGA & LGiU Global Executive Live Panels

- Biodiversity Planning & Green Spaces
- COP26 – one year on
- Rural and Coastal Councils - challenges and solutions
- Long-Term Financial Sustainability & Stability of Local Governments

Local Leaders

- Cr Ben Ramcharan, Mayor, Nillumbik Shire Council
- Brent McAlister, CEO, Northern Grampians Shire Council
- Cr Julie Williams, Mayor, Darebin City Council



Treasurer's Report

It has been an exciting year for the VLGA, as the organisation, like many others, finally transitioned to a more “business as usual” operating posture post COVID, and we finalised our 2023-27 Strategic Plan.

The key aims for the year were to maintain an efficient and effective service to our membership and stakeholders, whilst taking an inspiring glimpse at the future and planning the VLGA's approach over the coming years to strengthen our support and service to members. Congratulations to the VLGA staff for ensuring that we achieved these aims, despite the challenges presented.

The *VLGA Connect* Program 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 a greater level of in-person engagement, which I know we have all missed.

The year end result for 30 June 2023 reflects our commitment to the aims outlined above. Operating income has increased from 2022 due, mainly, to an increase in program funding associated with new sector support programs, such as the VicHealth partnership. Operating costs increased year on year due to the transition from the virtual to a physical office presence in the Melbourne CBD, and an increase in employee costs as we gear up to execute our strategic aims over the next 4 years.

In summary:

- Operating Income for the year increased by 10.7% to \$1,504,003 due largely to the new partnership and program delivery arrangement with VicHealth; and
- Net Profit for the year was \$198,630, which was in excess of budget expectations.

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.

As stated, we are entering a new strategic phase for the VLGA in a healthy financial position. With that foundation laid, the organisation will commence executing our ambitious and exciting strategic aims, and sharing that journey 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 2023.

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 Annalivia Carli Hannan
- Mr Mike Blake (from 20 April 2023)

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

- Ms Leanne Mulcahy
- Mr Mark Davies (until 31 December 2022)
- Ms Rita Harris (from 1 July 2023)

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 2023	Year Ended 30 June 2022
\$198,630	\$297,210

2022-23 Board Members

Board & Sub-Committee Members*	Board Meetings		Governance & Risk Meetings	
	Eligible to Attend	Attended	Eligible to Attend	Attended
Ms Louise Hill	6	6	4	4
Cr Susanne Newton	6	5	^	-
Mr Andrew Sloman	6	6	4	3
Cr Grace La Vella	6	6	^	-
Cr Denise Massoud	6	6	4	4
Cr Josh Fergeus	6	6	4	4
Cr Steve Holland	6	6	^	-
Cr Annalivia Carli-Hannan	6	5	^	-
Mr Mike Blake (appointed 20 April 2023)	2	2	^	1
Independent Committee Members**				
Ms Leanne Mulcahy	^	-	4	4
Ms Rita Harris (appointed 1 June 2023)	^	-	1	1
Mr Mark Davies (retired 31 December 2022)	^	-	2	2

^ not a member

Sitting Fees (paid per meeting attended)	
President	\$586
Board members	\$448
Sub-Committee	\$448

Footnote:

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

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

VLGA Staff & Partners

Core Staff

- **Kathryn Arndt** – Chief Executive Officer
- **Natalie Walker** – Head of Strategy & Programs
- **Belinda Ryan** – Communication & Engagement Lead
- **Heather Falkiner** – Executive Assistant
- **Steve Cooper** – Chief of Staff (until December 2022)
- **Deborah Wu** – Diversity & Inclusion Program Lead (until August 2022)

Grant Funded Staff

- **Simon Harrex** – Gambling Harm Policy Lead
- **Donna Spiller** – YCCC Project Officer (until May 2023)
- **Davey Wilson** – Stepping Forward Project Officer
- **Chris Mulcahy** – Project Support Officer

Acknowledgment of Partner Organisations

- Child Friendly Cities & Communities (CFCC) Network
- Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
- Justitia Lawyers & Consultants
- Local Government Intelligence Unit (LGiU)
- Local Government Victoria (LGV)
- Scanlon Foundation
- Victorian Responsible Gambling Foundation (VRGF)
- Welcoming Cities
- LGPro Vic
- LG News Roundup

Sponsors & Supporters

- Hunt & Hunt Lawyers
- Justitia Lawyers & Consultants

Our Members





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