



Leading up to the state election on November 24, the VLGA has contacted the Australian Labor Party (ALP), the Liberal party, the Greens and Fiona Patten's Reason party seeking information on policies and initiatives impacting on the local government sector.

Below is a summary of responses.

Australian Labor Party (ALP)

The ALP has provided a summary of election promises include:

- Labor will undertake an inquiry into the council rating system to identify changes that will improve its fairness and equity.
- We will also take the fight to Canberra to ensure Financial Assistance Grants to rural councils are never frozen again. The three-year freeze of these grants by the Abbott-Turnbull-Morrison Government has placed enormous pressure on councils' finances, costing regional councils around \$40 million per year. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/growing-victorias-agriculture-industry?rq=Council>
- A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will permanently tighten controls to better protect Melbourne's green wedges against over development, with the protections enshrined in legislation. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/protecting-melbournes-green-wedges-from-skyscraper-guy?rq=green%20wedge>
- As part of its massive investment in three-year-old kinder, a re-elected Andrews Labor Government will undertake our state's biggest early education build, with almost 1000 new and upgraded kinders across the state.
- Making sure families have peace of mind and our kids are ready for school, Labor will invest more than \$1.68 billion over the next decade, which will see around 785 new kinders built and 170 existing services expanded.
- Already home to around 2400 services providing kindergarten programs, this investment represents a nearly 40 per cent bump in services across our state and is expected to create around 5000 construction jobs.
- In order to kickstart work as soon as possible, a re-elected Labor Government will begin working with councils and communities on their local kinder rollout from day one. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/huge-new-kinder-build-ahead-of-3-year-old-kinder-rollout?rq=Council>

- A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will create new parklands, more than 170 times the size of the Royal Botanic Gardens, to make sure that every Victorian family has a great local park, no matter where they live.
- Labor will invest \$150 million to create more than 6,500 hectares of parkland and new walking and bike trails right across Melbourne, giving families great places to spend a day off.
- As well as creating large new parklands, bike and walking trails across Melbourne's growing outer suburbs, Labor will invest \$35 million to purchase or repurpose land to create 25 new pocket parks in built up areas, where there is a lack of public open space.
- Labor will also invest a further \$10 million to upgrade tired old suburban parks. This new investment will allow councils to revamp these parks and reserves with new playgrounds, landscaping, toilets and picnic facilities, transforming them into better places for locals to enjoy. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/creating-a-ring-of-new-parkland-in-our-growing-suburbs?rq=Council>
- A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will take the stress and expense out of installing kid's car seats, by offering grants to Neighbourhood Houses and community organisations across the state for professional installers to do it for families for free. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/taking-the-stress-and-cost-out-of-installing-child-car-seats?rq=Council>
- A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will make sure every new Victorian primary school comes complete with a kindergarten, making it easier on parents and building for a growing state. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/ditching-the-dreaded-double-drop-off-a-kinder-at-every-new-primary-school?rq=Council>
- A re-elected Andrews Labor Government will make sure Victoria is the best place for exploring the great outdoors, by building new campgrounds, upgrading facilities and tracks, and making family holidays more affordable.
- In addition, Labor will ensure hard-working volunteers can keep caring for the land we love, with \$11.6 million for grants to councils, Committees of Management of Crown Land and conservation groups to maintain and revegetate land for campsites. <https://www.danandrews.com.au/policies/historic-boost-for-camping-in-victorias-great-outdoors?rq=Council>
- A 24-hour phone line for sleep and settling support – an expansion of the MCH line.
- A re-elected Andrew Labor Government will help approximately 7000 vulnerable new parent Victorian families requiring additional sleep and settling support gain parenting skills and confidence with an extra home visit from a Maternal and Child Health Nurse.

- In addition to extra home visits, these families will also receive additional MCHN centre based one-on-one appointments. This extra support will focus on sleep and settling, infant care and changing family dynamics.
- The home visits and extra appointments will add an additional 6 hours of support for these families.
- An additional three sessions (6 hours) run by a qualified MCHN focused specifically on infant sleeping and settling and the transition to parenthood for parents of children aged 0-1 years. This proposal expands the support for parents by almost 40% with more than 35,000 families per year to benefit.

The Liberal Party

The Liberal Party did not provide a summary of their policies, stating *“the final announcements (not necessarily local government related) probably won’t be made until the day before election day. Under those circumstances I am not able to provide a definitive list. The only further suggestion I can make is that you also have a look at the main policy website <https://getbackincontrol.com.au>”*

- Some council related policies can be found here <https://getbackincontrol.com.au/more-vibrant-cities-and-regions/>
- There are additional policies in relation to transport infrastructure here <https://getbackincontrol.com.au/getting-victoria-moving/>

The Victorian Greens

The Victorian Greens have a number of policies that will touch on local government, including:

- Pokies: the Victorian Greens will phase out pokies by 2028 by revoking the 20 year licences, creating a new 6 year licence from 2022 to 2028 with no new licences after 2028. We will be working with councils through this process by giving them the power to choose whether to grant a new licence to pokies operators in their community or to remove pokies from 2022 altogether.
- Planning: we will be changing the planning controls and processes to ensure they are delivering the type of housing our communities want and need. We will reform the VCAT appeals process to stop developers gaming the system. We will implement planning measures to combat the heat island effect involving minimum green areas and minimum building separations. New buildings will be bound by new efficiency standards and buildings above 5 stories will need to provide 50% of their roof space for either solar panels or a green roof. Mandatory height limits and minimum apartment sizes will be implemented. We will protect Melbourne’s green wedges and the urban growth boundary.
- Energy: new regulations will require new buildings to have solar panels or solar hot water if the roof does not allow for solar panels. The Greens plan will see regulations developed under the Residential Tenancies Act that require landlords to upgrade their houses to meet strong new

energy efficiency standards. This will include upgrades such as insulation, lighting, and draught-proofing.

- Renting: we will set minimum standards for rental properties to ensure there is a good standard of water and energy efficiency.
- Waste: local councils will be an important part of our waste transition plan. We will be setting mandatory recycled content target for all state and local government procurement frameworks. We will increase the landfill levy to encourage recycling and waste recovery. We will support local councils to adopt our food waste initiative through measures such as a state wide roll out of the 3-bin collection system with the green bin now accepting food waste as well a garden waste. We will support councils in bin delivery, standardisation of bin colours, additional truck services and the additional costs of regional councils compared to metro councils. Assisting councils to improve their organics recycling so they can process the food waste they will be collecting.
- Disability: tram routes will be upgraded to include level access stops along the entire route. New buildings will be more disability friendly by making universal design a key objective in the Planning and Environment Act. We will update the building codes to require all new homes and businesses to be designed using universal design principals.
- Early learning: we will invest up to \$101 million to support the expansion of community childcare. We will invest \$10 million in Bush Kinder. We will work towards two years of free preschool, giving three- and four-year old's 15 hours a week.
- Protecting nature: Reform the environmental assessment process in Victoria, to build in greater community consultation and genuinely independent environmental assessments.
- Swimmable rivers: we will set a goal to make the Yarra River and others swimmable again. We will create national parks to protect vital riverbanks and catchments and double the current funding to protect riverbanks and protect waterways from pollution.
- Windfall Rezoning Tax: we will implement a tax on land that increases in value after it has been rezoned.
- Energy efficiency: we will increase Victoria's energy efficiency target to 10% by 2030 and change the rules of the program to include insulation as an energy efficiency upgrade. We will also include previously exempt businesses in the Victorian Energy Efficiency Upgrades Program.
- Royal commission into planning: the Victorian Greens will launch a royal commission into planning to investigate the rezoning and all related decisions around Fisherman's Bend and the Ventnor rezoning of land in Phillip Island.
- Apartments: on top of regulating apartment sizes and distances between buildings, we will be regulating apartments that are let out full-time only as short stays. We will require the state government to immediately intervene to pay to fix flammable cladding and reclaim the costs from developers or builders. We will also be capping rent rises at 2.5% each year in line with

inflation.

- Pest species: we will create the Invasive Species Management Authority to develop the Weedy Plants White List and implement other measures to stop the spread of harmful weeds.

There are a range of election platform initiatives available here as well which cover a broader range of issues: <https://victoria.greens.org.au/platform>

Fiona Patten's Reason Party

No formal reply has been received by the VLGA prior to this publication, but Fiona's latest newsletter included reference to the following:

- Liability in outer metro areas: Interface Councils is a collective of 10 local governments that form a ring around greater Melbourne. They all share common challenges with gaps in infrastructure and services, compounded by rapid population growth and ever-increasing commute times. Between them, they represent 1.6 million Melbournians.

I had the pleasure of attending their candidate briefing and I thank them for presenting their sensible and creative solutions to ensure better liveability for their communities. That's exactly why I have policies to:

- Improve traffic management for faster traffic flow and increased capacity
 - Improve planning and access to pharmacies, medical, dental, and allied health services
 - Facilitate access to local employment via local jobs action plans
 - Restrict urban boundaries and urban sprawl
- Climate emergency: I showed my support for a declaration of a climate emergency with Climate Action Moreland. It's incredibly important that politicians look at the science and evidence that are all pointing to one thing ... that we must act NOW! That's why I have policies to:
 - Audit potential impacts of rising sea levels and extreme weather events
 - Facilitate and support efficient recycling and a state-wide war on waste
 - Promote and facilitate policies and opportunities for green roofs and spaces
 - Foster new industries focused on plastic and waste repurposing

A comprehensive list of the Reason Party's policies can be found here <https://reasonvic.org.au/policy/>

ENDS: