

**Councillor Advisory Network Meeting
Friday 31 July 2020
Minutes**

Chair: VLGA President Cr Lambros Tapinos

Attendees:

Kathryn Arndt, CEO VLGA, Steve Cooper Co Chair Charmaine Calis, Mildura Rural City Council, Cr Neil Pankhurst, Campaspe Shire Council, Darryl Hancock, , Greater Shepparton City Council, Cr Bill Bennett, City of Whitehorse, Cr Denise Massoud VLGA board director, Augustine Sheppard, Mount Alexander Shire Council, Tony De Fazio, City of Whitehorse, Terry Callant, , Bayside City Council, Cr Anna Chen, Manningham City Council, Cr Jackie Fristacky, City of Yarra, Lauren Reader, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Emma Christensen, Nillumbik Shire Council, Patrick O'Gorman City of Kingston, Michelle Kain, Mansfield Shire Council, Blaga Naumoski, Nillumbik Shire Council, Cr Harry Westendorp, Mansfield Shire, Katia Croce, Nillumbik Shire Council, Carrie Bruce, Manningham City Council, Christine Aslanidis, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council, Leanne Pentreath, Campaspe Shire Council, Phil DeLosa, City of Kingston, Heather Holt, Nillumbik Shire Council.

1. Welcome by the Chair

Acknowledgement of Country

Cr Tapinos acknowledged the difficult time for councils at this time and acknowledged the role of local government during COVID-19

2. Guest Presentation - Emanuela Savina

Emanuela (a former Moreland staff member) a PhD research student was presenting on her work in community engagement and the requirements of the Local Government Act 2020, and the legislation regarding deliberative engagement.

Her research is focused on the organisational capacities and authorising environments that support and influence how 'deliberative engagement practices' are implemented. She will be researching aspects of types of capacity building and organisational structures that best support community engagement and how councillors or other stakeholder groups engage with the processes.

The aim of her research is to support the local government sector in further developing its capacity for community and deliberative engagement. It is expected that the outcomes of her research will provide useful information for organisations wanting to build their capacity for community engagement, but also provide valuable insights around sector issues and considerations for the implementation of the new legislation.

The VLGA CEO noted that she would circulate a summary of Emanuela's project directly to council CEO's.

3. Local Government Bill (2020) Implementation Update by Stephen Cooper

a. Community Engagement / Deliberative Engagement

The Deliberative Engagement Policy is to be adopted by March 1, 2021, and needs to address:

- what do you mean by deliberative engagement?
- when will you use deliberative engagement?

There are good practice examples posted on the deliberative engagement website.

Cr Massoud referenced a deliberative engagement case study from Yarra Valley Water which had been facilitated and people understood the issues. Cr Massoud is hopeful deliberative engagements across a range of issues will, on balance, lead to more positive outcomes for councils and their communities.

b. Audit & Risk Committees

- The charter is to be adopted on 1 September 2020
- The draft model can be found at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/local-government-act-2020/risk-audit-committee>

TC from Bayside Council said that council has adopted its charter. The cross pollination across councils was very good. The charter would be an ongoing discussion point and part of the workplan.

c. Councillor Induction training / Oath / Affirmation of Office and Standards of Conduct

LGV is anxious to consult with councillors. There will be consultation via the Mayoral Advisory Panel and submissions to Engage website (due by 15 August).

Any comments from councils to the VLGA would be appreciated.

The Minister is keen to work with the sector on the code of conduct and to work with the VLGA on what has not worked in the past and does the Act go far enough to address the issues. The Minister has given a strong indication he will work with the sector on this.

d. Delegated Committees and Community Asset Committees

To be in place by 1 September. The guidelines can be found at:
<https://engage.vic.gov.au/index.php?CID=4148>

The VLGA would be interested to receive feedback on how this element has gone for Councils. Has it created an opportunity for reform (or likely reform)? Is there any further support required through LGV / Minister, or any feedback?

e. Election Regulations and Mandatory Candidate Training

- Regulations are in place.
- Mandatory training links were to be with Councils this week for expected commencement of program next week. (We are still waiting for it to go live, when the updated Safe Campaigning Guidelines are amended to include Stage 4 restrictions)
- It will take about 30-60 minutes for most.
- VEC [candidate handbook](#) is now available
- Local Government Victoria (LGV) will be releasing guidelines for campaigning in a COVID-19 environment. These guidelines have been developed in consultation with the CHO & will be available in the next few days

CEO's are required by the Regulations to ensure access for participants where difficult. Comment around how Councils will be able to do this is welcomed.

f. Campaigning for council elections in October 2020

Guidelines for coronavirus (COVID-19) will help candidates understand how to comply with the directions of the Victorian Chief Health Officer to stay safe while campaigning. This includes advice on permitted campaign activities, safety for campaign teams, basic hygiene and physical distancing. The Guidelines are available at <https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/resilience-and-emergency-management/coronavirus-covid-19-information> (These are being updated)

The VLGA CEO noted as part of the guidelines that candidates attend in person with cash payment and the Minister has advised this will be amended and hope to have the information confirmed on the panel next week.

4. Other Business

Mandatory Planning and Reporting Framework

Step 1 of the co-design is underway.

Invitations to be sent to a selection of council personnel and stakeholders to feedback on a model developed by external consultancy.

5. Issues from members

The VLGA will provide ongoing induction to support new councillors and the complexity of local government.

There is an opportunity to receive a local government update on [VLGA Connect](#) with Chris Eddy, Kathryn Arndt and Steve Cooper each week.

6. Date of next meeting

The next meeting 11 September 2020, 11am to 12.30pm before election nominations.

7. The Chair Cr Lambros Tapinos thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.