



Sector Update

VLGA President Cr Lambros Tapinos

These certainly are unprecedented times.

With metropolitan Melbourne in another 6 week lock down it is important that we look out for one another. It is not a time to apportion blame, but a time to come together across all divides to do everything we can to stop the spread of COVID-19.

To my council colleagues and council staff who are at the forefront of support for their communities the VLGA thanks you for your care and work during this time.

To our health care workers, we acknowledge the enormity of the task and the long hours and the work that you are doing in support of our state.

Remember too your mental health and that of others. You may be experiencing feelings of anxiety and stress about the next six weeks. The [Victorian Small Business Commission and Beyond Blue](#) have developed a guide to help you prioritise your health.

Minister for Local Government

On a positive note, along with Kathryn Arndt the Chief Executive Officer of the VLGA, we had a productive meeting with the new Minister for Local Government, the Hon. Shaun Leane, last week. We discussed, amongst a number of topics, the important role that the VLGA plays in the local government sector as the only independent governance organisation that supports councils and councillors in addition to providing programs that link directly to council's community health and wellbeing plans.

October Elections and Campaigning

The Victorian Government has indicated its preference to go ahead with local government elections scheduled for October 2020.

With 76 councils due to hold elections in October, 30 of which are currently subject to Stage 3 'Stay at Home' restrictions until at least 19 August 2020, the VLGA has written to the Chief Health Officer (CHO) to seek clarity from him on what campaign activities are permitted during this period.

We have asked for advice about whether candidates may be permitted to undertake the following campaign activities, and (if appropriate) the conditions in which they may do so:

- Holding a campaign photoshoot in a public place with a professional photographer
- Holding a street stall or listening post at local shops or another public place
- Distributing flyers (person to person) at a train station or another public place
- Conducting letter box drops with flyers or pamphlets (the candidate or a volunteer)
- Door knocking and speaking to residents at the doorstep
- Holding a rally or public meeting

The VLGA has also sought the advice of the CHO on the following:

- Is campaigning for local government election (as the candidate) considered one of the four reasons to leave home – i.e. ‘work’?
- Are candidates permitted to leave home in order to undertake campaigning activities (i.e. posting flyers or public notices) that do not involve direct contact with the community?

As soon as the VLGA receives clarity from the CHO in response to our requests we will update you.

VLGA Board Update

As President of the VLGA I welcome our new board member Cr Denise Massoud from the City of Whitehorse and welcome back Cr Susanne Newton who has been re-elected. Both Susanne and Denise have been elected for 3 years.

They join us at a busy time as the sector prepares for the 2020 Local Government Elections and the implementation of the Local Government Act 2020, which sees all our member councils working diligently to comply with all the governance requirements.

Electoral Regulations and Mandatory Candidate Training

The Electoral Regulations are now available, and it has been confirmed that the prescribed mandatory candidate training will be delivered via an online eLearning module facilitated by Local Government Victoria (LGV).

In addition, the VLGA is conducting Candidate Information sessions, with about 60 sessions booked in. These sessions are ongoing until 17 September 2020. To book a session please contact the [VLGA](#)

The VLGA sessions complement the LGV mandatory training which every candidate must complete prior to nominating. The VLGA sessions offer potential candidates an interactive workshop with a facilitator (unlike the online mandatory training) where they may participate in discussion and ask questions.

VLGA Councillor Advisory Network

The VLGA Councillor Advisory Network (CAN) will be meeting in the next couple of weeks to discuss several topics/issues I will then report back to our members. If you have a topic other than what is mentioned please let me know.

Local Government Bill (2020) Implementation Update – overview; Election Regulations and Mandatory Candidate Training; Audit & Risk Committees; Community Engagement; Councillor Induction training; Delegated Committees and Community Asset Committees

VLGA Connect

To assist councils with their compliance under the Act, the VLGA has been holding several Live Forums as part of our *VLGA Connect* series. The next one on Monday 13 July at 2pm is with Infrastructure Victoria where we discuss Recycling & Resource Recovery. [Bookings are essential.](#)

Otherwise please do keep an eye out for our regular *VLGA Connect* interviews, access can be gained at any time using the [VLGA Connect](#) link.

On behalf of the VLGA I would like to say, thank you, stay strong, stay safe. By working together, we will get through these hard times.