

Media Statement

21 June 2022 / Media contact: Deborah Wu (03) 9349 7999



New Leadership Program to Get Casey & Whittlesea Locals 'Stepping Forward'

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are now open for the VLGA's new program, 'Stepping Forward – Council Influence Incubator'.

Specifically designed for young people from culturally diverse backgrounds in the City of Casey and City of Whittlesea, *Stepping Forward* is a unique program for young people who want to be actively involved in local government decision making in their community.

The program is focused on improving leadership capacity and competency, with participants gaining a stronger understanding of civic participation and local government and learning how they can best contribute, or progress the change they want to create, in their community.

Stepping Forward will begin in July 2022 in the City of Casey and City of Whittlesea, two councils that are currently in administration after the dismissal of councillors in 2020.

By supporting the capacity building of young, culturally diverse people in these municipalities, the VLGA aims to equip participants to rebuild community trust and lay out the groundwork for the return to elected representation in 2024.

The program will provide an in-depth immersion for 12 participants from each council into local issues and local government decision making, ensuring that participants leave the program with the ability to apply theory to real life situations. The participants will have access to specialised subject matter experts and local government decision makers throughout the duration of the program.

While learning about core concepts, participants will be supported to undertake a project for change in their municipality, from initial inception to potential council endorsement and implementation.

Stepping Forward was made possible by a generous grant from the Scanlon Foundation.

Expressions of Interest close on the 8 July. Early EOIs are highly encouraged. For more information, click [here](#).

Please attribute to VLGA Chief Executive Officer, Kathryn Arndt:

The VLGA has a long history of working with councils to deliver initiatives that enhance local democracy through capacity building. We are excited to launch this unique program to support young people in the City of Casey and the City of Whittlesea.

As an organisation, the VLGA works to support effective local governance and decision making which includes participation in local democracy that is inclusive and represents the diversity of the community. Stepping Forward will help participants bridge the gap between informal community leadership and formal civic participation through local government election and engagement processes.

The VLGA is grateful for the support of the Scanlon Foundation and Welcoming Cities Australia that has made this program possible. As a pilot in the City of Casey and the City of Whittlesea, we hope to see excellent outcomes that can be transposed to other councils across Victoria.

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