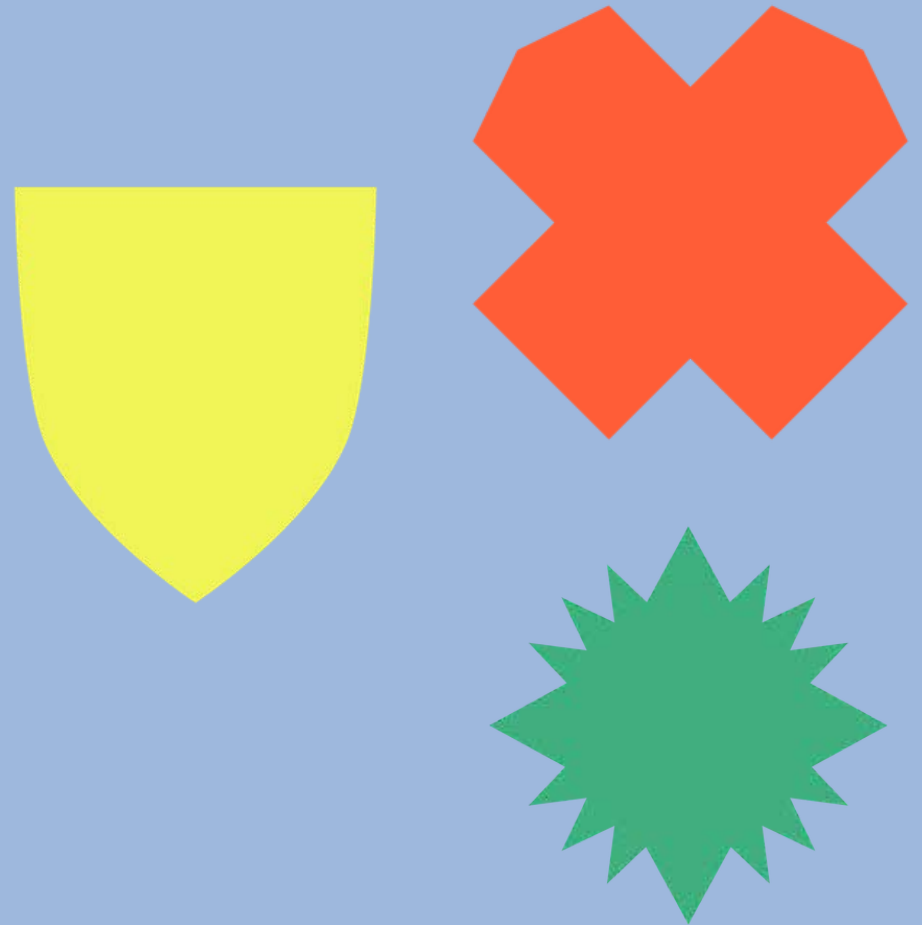


AI Roadmap for Victorian Local Government

OCT 2026

DRAFT FOR FEEDBACK



Acknowledgement of Country

The Municipal Association of Victoria acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and culture. We pay our respects to Elders past and present who carry the stories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples, and who forged the path ahead for emerging leaders.

We support local government's commitment to strengthen relationships with Victoria's Aboriginal communities and for it to encourage greater unity, knowledge, cultural awareness and respect for the first occupants of our land – through its strong community links and local representation.

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A Roadmap for AI Implementation in Local Government in Victoria

Artificial intelligence has the potential to fundamentally reshape how councils plan, deliver services, engage communities, and steward public value. Preparing to lead this transformation responsibly, safely and sustainably has become a key priority for the sector.

The 79 municipalities in Victoria are each navigating this moment in their own way, integrating AI across a wide variety of systems and processes. That diversity is a strength that fuels innovation and surfaces new approaches to longstanding problems. However, a fully individualised approach by each council will miss opportunities for systemic consolidation and standardisation to support high impact transformation, increased efficiency, management of an expanded risk portfolio and the creation of public value.

In August 2025, MAVlab convened a 37 person AI Taskforce from a combination of council staff and sector supporters. This group applied via an open EOI process run through the MAV website. Together they brought a diversity of skills and experience to co-design the AI roadmap through a collaborative effort facilitated by the MAVlab over the period of five months (Aug – Dec 2025). The work by this group has informed the development of the AI Roadmap for Local Government in Victoria (VIC AI Roadmap).

The VIC Local Government AI Roadmap provides a strategic, sector-wide framework to help guide and coordinate a high impact transformation and responsible AI adoption across Victorian local government.

It does not seek to direct or replace the activities of individual councils, rather, it aims to support councils through coordinated leadership and knowledge and resource sharing, to find areas of synthesis and standardisation, shared risk management and identify opportunities for collaboration and shared implementation.

The roadmap's four focus areas coordinate twelve work streams of practical action, grounded in evidence and the experiences of councils delivering this work.

The result is a framework that is both ambitious and practical, distributed, connected and grounded in public value at every step.

It positions Victorian local government to lead nationally in responsible AI adoption, governed by strong ethical foundations, powered by core skills and capabilities, enabled by shared infrastructure, energised by collective imagination, and united by a commitment to transparent, equitable, and community-centred innovation.

1. The Origins

“As councils adopt AI, they must lead with their values: transparency in decision-making, cultural inclusivity, support for professional judgment, and thoughtful stewardship of place and community.”

Work on the roadmap began with the Advancing AI in Statutory Planning project in 2024. This project was led by MAVlab, funded by the Australian Government's National Housing Support Program Stream 1, and delivered in collaboration with the City of Greater Dandenong. This initial program focused specifically on the role AI might play in statutory planning, but many of the insights were relevant for how councils might consider AI more broadly across their operations and service delivery.

The Advancing AI in Statutory Planning project produced a suite of practical procurement tools alongside a report of findings and recommendations. The MAV AI Procurement Guidelines, AI Vendor Requirements framework, and a Register of AI Vendors for Local Government offer councils the means to act with confidence.

More detail and outputs from this work can be found here:

- Reports, documentation and details of the Advancing AI in Local Government work can be found here: [Advancing AI in Local Government](#)
- Details, documentation and practical guides for the AI Procurement Innovation work can be found here: [AI Procurement Innovation](#)
- The AI in Statutory Planning Vendor Register for Local Government - featuring 19 vetted vendors - can be found here: [AI in Statutory Planning Procurement Register](#)

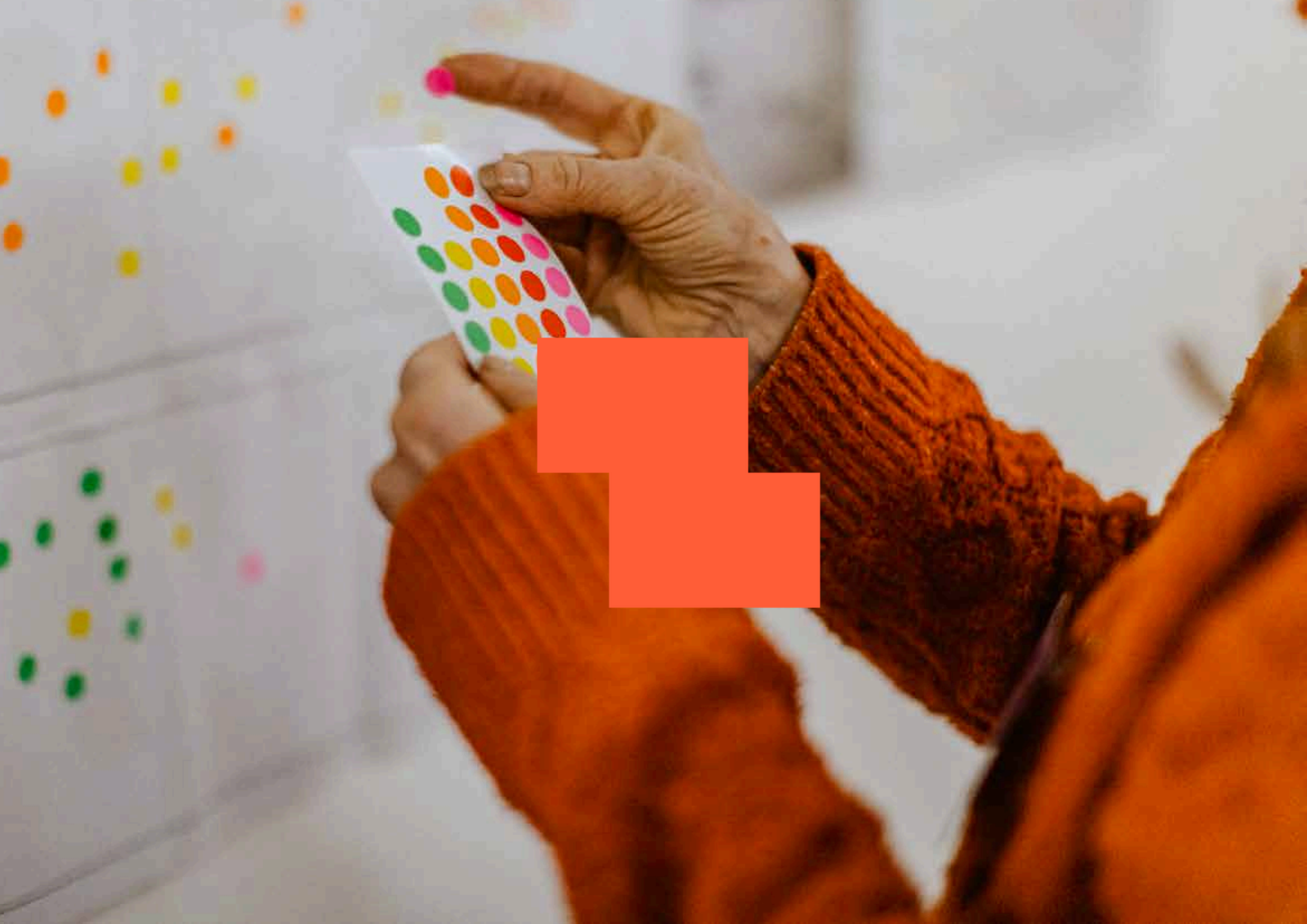
As that work progressed, a strong call emerged from across the sector for strategic leadership and a coordinated, sector-wide approach to AI implementation.

This quote from the report captures this sentiment:

“By approaching AI as a collaborative, iterative practice, rather than a one-off technical upgrade, councils can build resilient systems that learn, adapt, and remain grounded in the principles of public service.”

It is this space that MAVlab stepped into with the development of the AI Roadmap. Since this work began, much has continued to progress across the sector.

Individual councils and collaborative groups of councils have continued to develop groundbreaking work, industry groups such as the LGPro Special Interest Group, Australian Smart Communities Association and Association of Local Government Information Management have convened knowledge sharing and sector development. The Australian Government has established the Prime Minister's Office of AI and MAV has responded to several calls for consultation from Federal government committees to inform emerging AI and data centre policy and regulation. MAV is also chairing the National AI Working Group for Local Government in collaboration with all Australian state and territory associations for local government on behalf of the Australian Local Government Association.



2. Forming MAV's AI Taskforce

Following the call in Advancing AI Innovation report to progress local government sector leadership on AI through formation of a taskforce, MAVlab opened a public expression of interest process for council staff and sector supporters to self nominate to participate.

Thirty-seven members were selected representing a diverse cross-section of Victorian local government: metropolitan, regional, and rural councils at different stages of digital maturity and AI adoption, alongside planning, technology, governance, and community engagement professionals from commercial and academic backgrounds.

Over five months, the taskforce met regularly to translate the sector's shared evidence and collective knowledge into a set of actionable guidance. The taskforce reviewed the evidence base established by the Advancing AI Innovation project, examined emerging national and international practice, identified critical priorities and concerns, and co-designed the specific actions and workstreams that form the roadmap.

The mandate for the taskforce was to produce a strategic, sector-wide roadmap that could guide and coordinate the responsible adoption of AI across Victorian local government.

This document is intentionally a living, shared framework for sector wide collective action and not a prescriptive rulebook.

Taskforce Members:

Local Government

- Prasana Balasooriya - Merri-bek City Council
- Brendan Ball - City of Port Phillip
- Justin Daly - Mornington Peninsula Shire Council
- Simon Dean - South Gippsland Shire Council
- Manohar Esarapu - City of Port Phillip
- Stefan Grun - Merri-bek City Council
- Kate Harris - City of Greater Dandenong
- Lisa Ippolito - Whitehorse City Council
- Sally Johnson - Nillumbik Shire Council
- Pearl Li Ng - City of Casey
- Eliza McDonald - City of Melbourne
- Nick Muscat - Maribyrnong City Council
- Ketan Patil - Darebin City Council
- John Petrakos - Latrobe City Council
- Suman Sengupta - Frankston City Council
- Durga A. Viswanathan - Yarra Ranges Council
- Tim Wakeham - Banyule City Council

MAVlab Team

- Bonnie Shaw, Chief Innovator, MAVlab
- Sahar Farzanfar, Housing Innovation Program Manager, MAVlab

Sector Supporters

- Amir Aryani - Swinburne University
- Adam Barty - Revium
- Tim Bearup - Propelled Solutions
- Claire Daniel - Planning Institute of Australia / University of Sydney
- Matt Duckham - RMIT University
- Luca Ferella - Microsoft
- Dan Ferguson - Communiti Labs
- Jennifer George - Strategic Commercialisation Australia
- Sarah Kaur - Portable
- Kate Kendall - Macedon Ranges Shire Council
- Dave King - Move 37
- Len Luxford - Matter
- Scott Matheson - myLot
- Stuart Outhred - Transport Accident Commission (TAC)
- Aaron Pittaway - Australian Computing Society
- Justine Resta - ALGIM
- Harman Singh - GHD
- Jan Spinder - Converge IQ
- Marcus Wigan - Senior Independent Advisor



3. AI Roadmap: A shared path for the sector

The VIC Local Government AI Roadmap is organised into four focus areas, suggesting a set of workstreams that address critical areas that the sector will need to navigate to enable responsible AI transformation.

Focus Area 1. Foundations for Responsible & Trusted AI The guardrails that make AI use in local government legitimate and safe. The first focus area describes the foundational underpinning of AI governance and policy, safety, security and privacy standards, community engagement and transparency mechanisms, and environmental impact considerations. It highlights that getting the foundations right is not a preliminary step to be completed before the real work begins. It is the work. It is the precondition for public trust, professional integrity, and sustainable AI adoption in local government. 1.1 AI Governance 1.2 Safety, Security & Privacy 1.3 Community Engagement, Trust & Transparency 1.4 Environmental Impact	Focus Area 2. Capability & Sector Readiness The enablers that support adoption. These workstreams contribute to the development of a skilled workforce, establish shared data and workflow standards, develop consistent sector-wide procurement practices, and create a central coordination function that keeps distributed efforts aligned. Together, they strengthen the sector's practical and collective ability to implement AI at scale and ensure that councils of all sizes can participate confidently and consistently. 2.1 Skills & Capability Development 2.2 AI Standards 2.3 Procurement 2.4 Coordination Hub	Focus Area 3. Delivery, Scaling & Evidence of Public Value Moving from pilot to scale, implementation and impact. These work streams help councils identify, test, scale, and measure AI applications that improve service efficiency, support infrastructure management, and deliver tangible benefits for communities - together Through shared metrics, benchmarking, and transparent reporting, this focus area builds an evidence base that justifies investment and demonstrates the public value of AI adoption. 3.1 Acceleration of High-Impact Use Cases 3.2 Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation	Focus Area 4. Learning, Collaboration & Future Preparedness Looking beyond immediate implementation to long-term transformation. The work streams in this area strengthen the culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic foresight needed to navigate rapid technological change. They create space for divergent thinking, bold ideas, and cross-council relationships to help the sector anticipate emerging risks, explore new possibilities, and continually evolve its engagement with AI. 4.1 Collective Intelligence & Storytelling 4.2 Imagination & Adaptive Futures
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Focus 1. Foundations for Responsible & Trusted AI

The first focus area establishes the guardrails that make AI use in local government legitimate and safe. It covers AI governance frameworks, safety, security and privacy standards, community engagement and transparency mechanisms, and environmental impact considerations.

This focus area highlights that getting the foundations right is not a preliminary step to be completed before the real work begins. It is the work. These foundations are the precondition for public trust, professional integrity, and sustainable adoption.

The workstreams ensure that councils uphold their responsibilities as public institutions; protecting rights, respecting cultural sovereignty, safeguarding data, ensuring transparency, and aligning AI with sustainability commitments.

They form the ethical, compliance, and trust-building foundations upon which all other innovation depends.

1.1 AI Governance

Vision: *To provide access to adaptable governance tools and supports that enable consistent, ethical, transparent and compliant AI use across all councils, ensuring that local government use of AI is explainable and aligned with community values.*

Actions:

1.1.1 AI Governance Framework: A clear, adaptable AI governance framework for councils, including ethical principles, governance structures, and responsibilities.

1.1.2 AI Policy, Standards and Templates Library: Model AI policy, procurement standards, and governance-ready position descriptions supporting efficiency and consistency across 79 councils. Includes plain-language guides and explainers on risks, limits, use-cases, and responsibilities, aligned to local government context.

1.1.3 Sector-Wide AI Risk Assessment Toolkit: Tiered risk assessment templates for low, medium, and high-risk AI tools covering transparency, fairness, hallucination, privacy, and vendor risks.

1.1.4 AI Ethics and Fairness Working Group: Co-develops fairness metrics, bias mitigation techniques, and governance checklists for all AI tool decisions, embedding lived-experience perspectives.

Focus 1. Foundations for Responsible & Trusted AI

1.2 Safety, Security and Privacy

Vision: *To ensure all AI deployed in local government is safe, secure, privacy-preserving, legally compliant, and governed by strong human oversight, ensuring that councils retain control over sensitive data and minimise legal, operational, and reputational risk.*

Actions:

1.2.1 Sector-Wide Privacy, Security & Safety Framework: Comprehensive privacy, security and safety standards for AI tools, aligned with the Privacy and Data Protection Act and OAIC obligations.

1.2.2 AI-Specific Data Privacy Policy: Download-and-adapt policy addressing the current APPs maturity gap, ensuring compliance with all IPPs.

1.2.3 LLM Hallucination Risk Protocol: Human verification requirements for all AI-generated content, including accuracy checklists and error mitigation processes.

1.2.4 Long-Term Record-Keeping Protocols: Processes for managing long-term data retention requirements, including metadata and audit trail standards.

1.3 Community Engagement, Trust and Transparency

Vision: *To work with community to ensure that councils build and maintain the social licence for AI use through transparency, cultural safety, clear communication, and deep public engagement, ensuring that the use of AI strengthens, rather than weakens, community trust and democratic legitimacy.*

Actions:

1.3.1 Community Reference Group: Terms of reference and guidance for ongoing community oversight, supporting participatory governance.

1.3.2 First Nations Cultural Safety and Data Sovereignty Protocols: Co-designed with First Nations partners to embed cultural safety across all AI systems.

1.3.3 Public Education Toolkit: Fact sheets, videos, and community sessions explaining how AI is used, building public understanding and confidence.

1.3.4 Transparency and Public Communication Framework: Outlining when and how councils must disclose AI use, including plain-language explanations for planning, customer service, and regulatory interactions.

1.3.4 Public-Facing AI Register: A clear, accessible register showing all AI tools in use, their purpose, approval levels, and human oversight mechanisms.

Focus 1. Foundations for Responsible & Trusted AI

1.4 Environmental Impact

Vision: *To embed environmental stewardship into every stage of AI adoption, ensuring AI reduces ecological harm, supports climate resilience, and aligns with community expectations for sustainability.*

Actions:

1.4.1 ESG-Aligned Environmental Impact Frameworks: Assessment tool covering energy, carbon, water, e-waste, equity, and governance.

1.4.2 Green AI Procurement Standards: Requirements for energy-efficient models, sustainable hardware, and transparent reporting.

1.4.3 Environmental Impact Dashboard: Tracks AI's ecological footprint across councils, supporting benchmarking and reporting.

1.4.4 Low-Impact Model Selection Guidance: Encourages use of efficient, lower-compute models where appropriate, reducing carbon intensity.

1.4.5 Data Centre Environmental Impact Planning: Establishes measures to understand and plan for the environmental impacts of data centres. Including training and documentation for councils to support best practice and circular development for data centre infrastructure.

Note on 1.4.5. *Since the initial development of the AI Roadmap MAV, in collaboration with CASBE have continued to progress work related to the planning controls and regulation of Data Centres in Victoria. See more here: [MAV Sector Submission Senate Enquiry into AI and Data Centres](#)*



Focus 2. Capability & Sector Readiness

The second focus area addresses the enablers that make adoption possible.

These workstreams contribute to the development of a skilled workforce, establish shared data and workflow standards, develop consistent sector-wide procurement practices, and create a central coordination function that keeps distributed efforts aligned.

Together, they strengthen the sector's practical ability to implement AI at scale and ensure that councils of all sizes can participate confidently and consistently.

2.1 Skills and Capability Development

Vision: *To build a confident, AI-literate local government workforce where staff at all levels understand, evaluate, and apply AI safely, ethically, and creatively, supported by shared sector-wide tools and adaptable policy foundations that strengthen organisational culture and ensure AI enhances community outcomes.*

Actions:

2.1.1 Sector-Wide AI Literacy Baseline Assessment: Evaluate current literacy levels across roles and councils. Identify capability gaps and priority groups for targeted upskilling.

2.1.2 Role-Specific Training Pathways: Custom learning for planners, customer service teams, IT, procurement, executives, and councillors. Includes safety, ethics, privacy, risk, and practical tool usage.

2.1.3 Foundational AI Bootcamp: Hands-on training tailored specifically to local government contexts. Includes workflow mapping, safe experimentation, and LLM literacy.

2.1.4 Sector Coaching Network: Mobilise experienced staff from AI-mature councils to support peers on implementation, change management, governance, and vendor evaluation. Builds sustainable, internal public-sector capability.

Focus 2. Capability & Sector Readiness

2.1 Skills and Capability Development (cont.)

2.1.4. Local Government AI Community of Practice: A formal, ongoing network for practitioners across councils to share insights, challenges, and solutions, building peer-to-peer learning pathways. Regular Lunch-and-Learn sessions, problem-solving circles, and peer exchange forums. Supports cross-council mentorship and culture change.

2.1.5 AI Champions Program: Identify and train internal champions at each council who can evaluate and safely promote AI tools. Champions act as local educators and experiment leads.

2.2 AI Standards

Vision: *To create a shared, sector-wide anchor point of data standards, workflow mapping conventions, and guard-railed calibration practices that give local government full control over its information, intellectual property, and service processes, now and into the future.*

Actions:

2.2.1 Sector-Wide Data Standards: Development of common, machine-readable data formats for core council functions. Ensures consistent data inputs for AI and preserves council control over information assets.

2.2.2 Standardised Workflow Mapping & Process Models: Shared conventions for describing workflows targeted for AI augmentation. Includes process maps, guardrails, decision points, and human oversight controls.

2.2.3 Guard-Railed AI Calibration Protocols: Sector-wide rules for calibrating, validating, and updating AI models using council data. Ensures councils maintain ownership of calibration logic and avoid vendor lock-in.

2.2.4 Standardised Documentation Templates: Templates for notices, assessments, reports, and decision records used across councils. Reduces variation and enhances AI interpretability and consistency.

Focus 2. Capability & Sector Readiness

2.2 AI Standards (cont.)

2.2.5 Shared Testing & Sandbox Environments: Secure cross-council environments using sanitised or synthetic data for testing AI applications, including guidance on evaluation, ethics, and data safety. Reduces risk and accelerates safe innovation.

2.2.6 Shared Data Governance & IP Ownership Standards: Clear rules on data ownership, algorithmic IP, and the rights of councils in co-developed AI tools. Ensures long-term autonomy and avoids vendor dependency.

2.2.7 Advocacy for State-Level Enabling Infrastructure: Advocate for common APIs, shared data services, and centralised platforms at the State level. Supports truly scalable, interoperable AI across the sector.

2.3 Procurement

Vision: *To establish a trusted, secure, and standardised procurement ecosystem across Victorian councils that uses procurement as a strategic lever for AI innovation, enabling collaborative purchasing, ethical vendor partnerships, and measurable public value. This workstream ensures councils can adopt AI confidently while maintaining strong safeguards around transparency, accountability, data privacy, and community safety.*

Actions:

2.3.1 Sector-Wide AI Procurement Framework: A unified procurement framework aligned with public sector values and AI governance standards. Embeds transparency, explainability, privacy, and cybersecurity requirements into all AI acquisitions.

2.3.2 Standardised AI Contract Templates & Clauses: Download-and-adapt templates defining: vendor liability and accountability, data ownership and IP rights, data sovereignty and privacy requirements, and audit rights for councils.

2.3.4 Sector AI Vendor Register: A maintained register of vetted AI vendors, tools, and contracts. Includes assessments of vendor performance, compliance, and suitability for local government.

Focus 2. Capability & Sector Readiness

2.3 Procurement (Cont.)

2.3.5 Collective Buying Power Initiatives: Joint procurement processes for common AI solutions. Reduces cost, accelerates deployment, and shapes the market toward scalable cross-council products.

2.3.6 AI Procurement Community of Practice: Regular gatherings for procurement, ICT, legal, and commercial leaders. Focus on vendor management, negotiation, risk mitigation, and shared learning.

2.3.7. Co-Design & Partnership Engagement Program: Workshops, pilot partnerships, and innovation labs with vendors. Supports co-creation of AI solutions that reflect service needs of councils, community values and long term, shared value creation.

1.3.8 IP Innovation: Develop guidance and contract templates for councils and vendors for shared IP agreements.

2.4 Coordination Hub

Vision: *To establish a central core that guides, connects, and sustains the delivery of the Local Government AI Roadmap, a dedicated sector-wide capability that councils can rely on for expert guidance, shared tools, governance support, and ongoing coordination. While the roadmap will be delivered collaboratively and distributed across councils, the Coordination Hub ensures this distributed work remains aligned, integrated, and mutually reinforcing so the whole program becomes far greater than the sum of its parts.*

Actions:

2.4.1 Establish the Local Government AI Coordination Hub: Creation of a centralised team and knowledge bank responsible for supporting AI implementation across the sector. Provides a single front door for councils seeking advice, support, or escalation pathways.

2.4.2 Sector-Wide Vendor & Market Scanning: Continuous scanning of emerging technologies, best-in-class tools, risks, and opportunities. Keeps councils future-ready and aligned with global best practice.

Focus 2. Capability & Sector Readiness

2.4 Coordination Hub (Cont.)

2.4.3 Sector Engagement & Advocacy: Advocate for coordinated enabling infrastructure such as common APIs, shared data services, and co-regulatory frameworks. Supports scalable planning and service transformation. Includes representing local government's interests in the state and federal policy on data centres, ensuring the sector has a voice in decisions on development pathways and environmental safeguards.

2.4.4 AI Roadmap Delivery Coordination: Ensures consistency, sequencing, and integration of initiatives. Tracks milestones and resolves cross-stream dependencies.

2.4.5 Cross-Council Alignment Working Group: Representatives from ICT, governance, planning, procurement, and transformation teams. Ensures local knowledge feeds into sector-wide standards and vice versa.

8.vi. Sector-Wide AI Audit & Maturity Assessment: Regular evaluation of governance maturity, delivery progress, and implementation across the roadmap. Tracks how well the sector is adopting AI responsibly and where coordination effort is needed.

Note on 2.4.3 Since the initial development of the AI Roadmap MAV, in collaboration with ALGA and the state and territory Local Government Associations, have established the National AI Working Group for Local Government to establish a shared agenda for AI capability development across the sector. More here: [National AI Working Group](#) for Local Government



Focus 3. Delivery, Scaling & Evidence of Public Value

The third focus area moves from preparation to action and concentrates on implementation and impact.

The work streams help councils identify, test, scale, and measure AI applications that improve service efficiency, enhance planning accessibility, support infrastructure management, and deliver tangible benefits for communities.

Through shared metrics, benchmarking, and transparent reporting, this focus area builds an evidence base that justifies investment, guides decision-making, and demonstrates the public value of AI adoption.

3.1 Skills and Capability Development

Vision: *To identify, test, scale, and continuously improve AI use cases across councils, turning early pilots into sector-wide, reusable solutions that deliver rapid and measurable public value.*

Actions:

3.1.1 Sector-Wide AI Use Case Pipeline: Process for identifying, evaluating, and prioritising new high-impact AI opportunities. e.g. Business Concierge.

3.1.2 Scalable Implementation Kits: Ready-to-deploy packages for a specific proven use case. Technical specifications, governance requirements, and step-by-step deployment guides that let a council stand up that solution quickly.

3.1.4 Multi-Council "Scale-Out" Pilots: Expand proven use cases across multiple councils. Reduces duplication and accelerates adoption.

3.1.5 High Impact Industry Accelerator: Cross-sector partnerships (State/Industry/University). Joint innovation initiatives leveraging government, commercial, and academic partners.

3.1.6 Accredited Reusable AI Library: A browsable catalogue of vetted, safe, repeatable use cases and components that councils can draw from to find proven solutions.

Focus 3. Delivery, Scaling & Evidence of Public Value

3.2 Strategic Monitoring & Evaluation

Vision: *To build a confident, evidence-driven sector that speaks a shared language of impact, using transparent measurement, dynamic evaluation frameworks, and community-informed metrics to ensure AI delivers meaningful public value.*

Actions:

3.2.1 Shared Measurement Framework: Common metrics and dashboards for all councils. Tracks efficiency, quality, workforce impact, equity, and privacy.

3.2.2 Annual Sector Benchmarking & Public Impact Reporting: Sector-wide performance dataset comparing AI impact across councils, published annually as a transparent public report on AI use, outcomes, and risks.

3.2.3 Dynamic Evaluation Toolkit: Tools for ethics scoring, balanced scorecards, ROI analysis, and model performance testing.

3.2.4 AI Usage Heat Maps: Maps which teams, roles, and workflows are using AI. Supports transparency and governance.

3.2.5 Community Reference Group for Accountability: Ensures evaluation is grounded in community expectations and values.

3.2.6 "Failures & Learnings" Safe Sharing Spaces: Forums for honest reflection across councils. Normalises safe experimentation.



Focus 4. Learning, Collaboration & Future Preparedness

The fourth focus area takes a longer view and looks beyond immediate implementation to the long-term capability of the sector.

The work streams in this area strengthen the culture of collaboration, knowledge sharing, and strategic foresight needed to navigate rapid technological change.

They create space for divergent thinking, bold ideas, and cross-council relationships to build the muscles to help the sector anticipate emerging risks, explore new possibilities, and continually evolve its approach to AI.

4.1 Collective Intelligence & Storytelling

Vision: *To build the shared wisdom, relational infrastructure, and collaborative culture that local government needs to innovate confidently and take calculated risks together. This workstream aims to harnesses collective experience through storytelling, knowledge exchange, co-design, and open case-study sharing to accelerate learning across the sector, strengthen relationships, and transform 79 isolated journeys into a unified, dynamic system of collective intelligence.*

Actions:

4.1.1 Central Knowledge Repository & Best-Practice Library: Houses case studies, lessons learned, policy templates, standards, data models, and implementation guides. Real-world LG examples and guided learning tasks. Focus on "learning by doing". Enables councils to avoid repeated mistakes and rapidly adopt proven practices.

4.1.2 Establish a Sector-Wide Community of Practice (CoP): A local government forum for storytelling, knowledge exchange, and case-study sharing to accelerate learning.

4.1.3 Co-Design Workshops with Vendors, Planners & Technical Experts: Structured forums where councils and technology partners collaboratively define needs, shape features, test prototypes, and conduct shared-risk pilots. Shifts vendor relationships from transactional to genuine partnership.

Focus 4. Learning, Collaboration & Future Preparedness

4.1 Collective Intelligence & Storytelling (Cont.)

4.1.4 Cross-Sector Knowledge Exchange Forums: Regular gatherings bringing together councils, state government, academia, private sector partners, and community organisations for sharing new tools, ideas, failures, risks and lessons learned. Ensures broad, diverse input into sector innovation and shared understanding of emerging challenges and continuous flow of knowledge despite geographic and resource disparities

4.1.5 AI Awards Program: Celebrates councils, teams, and vendors demonstrating excellence in responsible AI adoption, collaboration, and innovation. Builds pride, visibility, and sector-wide incentives for shared achievement.

4.1.6 Inter-Council Collaboration Agreements: Frameworks that make it easier for councils to share resources, staff, and tools. Encourages joint pilots and reduces duplication of effort.

4.2 Imagination & Adaptive Futures

Vision: *To cultivate bold imagination, disciplined foresight, and creative systems thinking across local government so councils can not only anticipate the future but actively shape it. This workstream ensures that AI is understood not as a bolt-on efficiency tool but as a transformational force, one capable of reshaping the structures, roles, and relational foundations of local government itself. Through speculative design, long-range thinking, and risk-aware exploration, this stream empowers councils to imagine ambitious futures, identify emerging risks early, and build the adaptive capacity needed to navigate complexity with confidence, courage, and public purpose..*

Actions:

4.2.1 Strategic Foresight & Scenario Planning Cycles for AI in Local

Government: Creative exploration, systems mapping, speculative design, and long-range thinking through regular cycles of scenario development, horizon scanning, trend synthesis, and weak-signal detection. Ensures councils identify emerging threats, disruptions, and opportunities early, and integrates sustainability and long-term community outcomes so foresight work guards against the erosion of long-term environmental, cultural, or social goals in the pursuit of short-term efficiency.

Focus 4. Learning, Collaboration & Future Preparedness

4.2 Imagination & Adaptive Futures (Cont.)

4.2.2 Convene Red Teams & Risk Labs: Facilitated sessions where diverse participants stress-test emerging AI approaches, reveal blind spots, and surface systemic risks before implementation. Includes ethical risk audits, cultural safety checks, and long-term sustainability considerations.

4.2.3 Host "Bold Futures" Hackathons & Design Sprints: Rapid experimentation environments that bring together multidisciplinary teams to prototype radically better future services, governance models, or community experiences enabled by AI.

4.2.4 Pilot Machine-Readable Rules & Automation-Ready Processes: Explore where simplification, reframing, or redesign of rules and processes could prepare the system for safe automation in the future. Ensures AI enhances, not accelerates, the limitations of outdated workflows.

4.2.5 Create an Early Warning System for Systemic Risks: Monitor signals related to community trust erosion, environmental impacts, equity and inclusion risks, workforce disruption, and sustainability goal erosion. Ensures risks are recognised before they manifest as crises.

4.2.6 Develop Adaptive Governance Models: New policy and decision frameworks that update over time, incorporate community feedback loops, evolve with technological change, and protect transparency and public value even in uncertainty. Enables responsive, learning-based systems rather than rigid compliance models.

4.2.7 Partner with First Nations & Cultural Knowledge Holders: Embed relational, place-based, culturally grounded perspectives into long-range planning. Ensures futures work is not technocratic but rooted in Country, culture and community wellbeing.

4.2.8 Create Speculative Case Studies & Future Service Blueprints: Vivid narratives and prototypes that show what local government could look like under different futures. Helps councillors, executives, and staff visualise and debate bold pathways.

4.2.9 Map Opportunities for Systemic Reform: Identify areas where the legal, procedural, and regulatory architecture may need to be reimaged for an AI-enabled era. Ensures councils are not simply automating broken systems.



5. A Shared Path Forward

The VIC Local Government AI Roadmap is not a plan that belongs to any one organisation. The challenges it addresses are not challenges any single council, peak body, or technology provider can solve on their own.

They are sector-wide challenges, and they require a sector-wide response.

The way the roadmap is structured and presented reflects a deliberate philosophy of collaboration, collective action and shared governance. The actions and workstreams are mapped in ways that invite every part of the sector – individual councils, peak bodies, state and federal government, vendors, universities, professional associations, and others – to identify their role, contribution, and their stake in the outcome and share knowledge, practice, tools and policy for better outcomes for all.

This is why the roadmap is being released as a work in progress - a living strategic framework that is intended to be taken up, refined, funded, and delivered through a collective governance model.

Across all four focus areas, a set of non-negotiable principles holds:

- AI must serve community values.
- It must enhance, not replace, human judgment.
- It must be deployed in ways that are culturally inclusive, environmentally responsible, and that build rather than erode community trust.

Many of the actions described in the four focus areas are already underway in local governments, Associations and industry support networks.

Collectively, they describe a set of activities that can underpin responsible AI adoption that leverages the collective intelligence and capabilities of the whole sector.

Coordination, collaboration and communication is needed to uncover and find the great work that contributes to the delivery of actions in this roadmap to get it into the hands of those who need it most. With shared governance, the work of delivery can be distributed to leverage the strengths and share the cost and risk of developing these capabilities, policies and tools to support the local government sector to adopt AI responsibly and efficiently together.

Victorian local government has shown, through the engagement that produced the AAI report and through the work of AI taskforce that produced this roadmap, that it has the collective will to lead responsibly on AI.

This roadmap is the invitation to continue to work together.

The moment to act is now – with optimism for AI's potential and the collective wisdom to navigate its challenges responsibly.

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