MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

STATE COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

23 October 2026

Contents

Strategic to the MAV **9**

MAV Board Motion **10**

Active Local Democracy **12**

Motion 1. Strengthening Integrity, Accountability and Independent Oversight in Victorian Local Government 12

Darebin City Council 12

Motion 2. Expediting recommendations from the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services 13

Bass Coast Shire Council 13

Climate and Regenerative Design **14**

Motion 3. Climate Adaptation Requirements and Growth Area Delivery 14

Latrobe City Council 14

Motion 4. Stronger planning framework for battery energy storage systems 16

Cardinia Shire Council 16

Connected Places **18**

Consolidated Motion C1 - Development Facilitation Program 18

C1.1 *Planning Transparency and Community Participation* 19

Maribyrnong City Council 19

C1.2 *Development Facilitation Program Review* 21

Boroondara City Council 21

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion **23**

Consolidated Motion C2- Strengthening Community Safety, Visible Policing and Crime Prevention 23

C2.1 *Strengthening community safety and visible policing in activity centres* 24

Port Phillip City Council 24

C2.2 *Community Crime Prevention* 25

Hume City Council 25

First Peoples local government relations **26**

Consolidated Motion C3 - Funding and Resources for Local Government and First Peoples Partnerships 26

C3.1 *First Peoples Local Government Relations* 27

Campaspe Shire Council 27

C3.2 *Funding to Traditional Owner Groups to employ Local Government Engagement Officer* 29

Greater Bendigo City Council 29

C3.3 *Reconciliation Action Plan - Infrastructure Funding* 30

Golden Plains Shire Council 30

Future Gen **31**

Motion 5. Shared digital platforms and technology standards for local government 31

Manningham City Council 31

Health and Wellbeing **32**

Consolidated Motion C4- Strengthening State-Local Partnership and Place-Based Responses to Homelessness 32

C4.1 *Strengthening state-local partnership to address homelessness* 33

Glen Eira City Council 33

C4.2 *Integrated Place-Based Response Model for People Experiencing Homelessness with Complex and Intersecting Needs* 35

Maribyrnong City Council 35

Motion 6. Fair funding for Maternal and Child Health and immunisation services 36

Glen Eira City Council 36

Motion 7. Access to Swimming and Water Safety Education for Every Child 38

Banyule City Council 38

Consolidated Motion C5 - A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model 40

C5.1 *Rural Mental Health & Wellbeing Local and Satellite Network in the Wimmera Southern Mallee* 41

Hindmarsh Shire Council 41

Supported by: Northern Grampians Shire Council; Buloke Shire Council; Yarriambiack Shire Council; Horsham Rural City Council 41

C5.2 *A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model* 43

Horsham Rural City Council 43

Intergenerational Infrastructure **46**

Consolidated Motion C6 - Infrastructure Funding Formulae 46

C6.1 *Reinstatement of an untied Country Roads and Bridges Program* 47

Moyne Shire Council 47

C6.2 *Ongoing Flexible Local Infrastructure Funding* 48

Moyne Shire Council 48

Consolidated Motion C7 - Renewing Victoria's Public Pools and Aquatic Facilities 49

C7.1 *Sustainable Funding for Community Swimming Pool Infrastructure* 50

Moyne Shire Council 50

C7.2 *Pool condition audit* 51

Southern Grampians Shire Council 51

C7.3 *Dedicated funding for Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centres* 52

Bass Coast Shire Council 52

Motion 8. Local Sports Infrastructure Fund 53

Greater Geelong City Council 53
Motion C8.4 Data centres in the green wedge 55
Kingston City Council 55
Consolidated Motion C8 – Regulating the social, economic and environmental impacts of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure 56
C8.1 Support for Coordinated State Approach to Data Centre Development 58
Greater Geelong City Council 58
C8.2 AI infrastructure and data centres 59
Melbourne City Council 59
C8.3 Planning, sustainability and community oversight of AI and Data Centre Infrastructure 61
Port Phillip City Council 61
Consolidated Motion C9 – Data Centres Moratorium 63
C9.1 Statewide Moratorium and Community Benefit Framework for Hyperscale Data Centres 64
Maribyrnong City Council 64
C9.2 Data Centres Moratorium 66
Brimbank City Council 66
C9.3 Data Centres 68
Hume City Council 68
C9.4 Data Centres and protection of local interests 70
Melton City Council 70
Resilience and Recovery 71
Motion 9. Communications Network Resilience During Emergencies 71
Horsham Rural City Council 71
Motion 10. Disaster and Emergency Funding to be provided by the State Government “Up-Front” on an annual basis to regional, rural and interface Councils in bushfire, flood, drought and severe storm areas (based on previous natural disaster events). 74
Colac Otway Shire Council 74
Sustainable Economy 75
Motion 11. Sustainable investment in independent arts and creative organisations 75
Port Phillip City Council 75
Consolidated Motion C10 – Non-Mandatory Glass Bin Requirements 76
C10.1 Glass Bin Kerbside Standards 77
Southern Grampians Shire Council 77
C10.2 Suspending mandatory Kerbside Glass Recycling 78
Bass Coast Shire Council 78

Significant to the Sector 79

Consolidated Motion C11 - A Sustainable Approach to Animal Management: Pounds, Pets Owners in Hardship and Cat Management 80

C11.1 Pound Services 81

Greater Geelong City Council 81

C11.2 Keeping pets and people together during hardship 82

Port Phillip City Council 82

C11.3 Improving Cat Management 83

Boroondara City Council 83

Consolidated Motion C12 - Modernising the rating system 84

C12.1 Modernising Victoria's Differential Rating Framework 85

Frankston City Council 85

C12.2 Fair Rating and Valuation of Emerging Industrial Infrastructure 86

Latrobe City Council 86

C12.3 Reform of Statutory Rate Exemptions to Improve Fairness and Financial Sustainability 87

Boroondara City Council 87

Motion C13.2 Strengthening food relief and food security 88

Port Phillip City Council 88

Consolidated Motion C13 - Securing Victoria's food system: from paddock to plate 89

C13.1 Protecting Food Security Through Integrated Water, Climate and Agricultural Policy 90

Campaspe Shire Council 90

C13.3 Protecting Agricultural Land 92

South Gippsland Shire Council 92

Consolidated Motion C14 - State Government Infrastructure Impacts 94

C14.1 Fair Funding for Local Infrastructure Supporting State Government Assets and Services 95

Greater Bendigo City Council 95

C14.2 Integrated State and Local Government growth planning 96

Mitchell Shire Council 96

Consolidated Motion C15 - Visit Victoria: Investing in Places, Events and Regional Communities 97

C15.1 Funding for maintenance and repair of nature-based tourism assets 98

Surf Coast Shire Council 98

C15.2 Visitor Economy Partnership Funding 99

Corangamite Shire Council 99

Supported by: Surf Coast Shire Council 99

C15.3 *Economic Transition for Regional Communities impacted by the Loss of Major Events* 100
Bass Coast Shire Council 100
Consolidated Motion C16 – Fair Jobs, Fair Say 101
C16.1 *Proposed local government Fair Jobs Code and regulator* 102
Manningham City Council 102
C16.2 *Meaningful engagement on Fair Jobs Code and Planning Reform* 103
Bass Coast Shire Council 103
Consolidated Motion C17 – Planning and funding for equitable access to open space 104
C17.1 *Levelling the Playing Field for Build-to-Rent Open Space Contributions* 105
Yarra City Council 105
C17.2 *State Government Support for Green Open Space in Urban Areas* 106
Banyule City Council 106
Motion 12. Accessible Sustainability Fund pathways for major circular economy infrastructure 108
Latrobe City Council 108
Motion 13. Waste to Energy 109
Kingston City Council 109
Motion 14. Waste to Energy Developments 110
Hume City Council 110
Motion 15. Melbourne's Air Quality Management Framework Motion 111
Hobsons Bay City Council 111
Motion 16. Improving Clarity and Consistency in Contaminated Land Assessment Processes Motion 113
Hobsons Bay City Council 113
Motion 17. Support for our neighbourhood houses 115
Wyndham City Council 115
Motion 18. Strengthening Accountability and Awareness of the role of Councils and Municipal Building Surveyors 116
Wyndham City Council 116
Motion 19. Strengthening laws around illegally modified motorised vehicles 117
Wyndham City Council 117
Motion 20. Illegal removal of vegetation and increasing fines and restitution 118
Frankston City Council 118
Motion 21. Taxation Reform to Encourage Infill and Brownfield Development 120
Latrobe City Council 120
Motion 22. Green Wedge Zones and Places of Worship 121
Cardinia Shire Council 121

Motion 23. Local Government Inclusion and Support in Treaty Implementation 123
Loddon Shire Council 123
Motion 24. Statewide River and Waterway Restoration Program 124
Maribyrnong City Council 124
Motion 25. Strengthening the Integrity and Application of Significant Landscape Overlays and Environmental Significant Overlays 126
Maribyrnong City Council 126
Motion 26. Promoting Healthy Food Environments through Victorian Planning Provisions 128
Maribyrnong City Council 128
Motion 27. Request for State Government Review of Flood Planning and Emergency Management Framework 130
Melbourne City Council 130
Motion 28. Increase Living Libraries funding 132
Merri-bek City Council 132
Motion 29. Road condition data 134
Southern Grampians Shire Council 134
Motion 30. Tiered Category Mandatory Regulatory Requirements 135
Strathbogie Shire Council 135
Motion 31. Youth Belonging and Resilience Initiative 138
Banyule City Council 138
Motion 32. Strengthening strata governance in higher-density housing 139
Port Phillip City Council 139
Motion 33. Strengthening wildlife protection and responsible recreational fishing education 140
Port Phillip City Council 140
Motion 34. Improving Legislative Protections for Council Assets Affected by Utility and Third-Party Works 141
Boroondara City Council 141
Motion 35. Sustainable Funding for the School Crossing Supervisor Program 142
Latrobe City Council 142
Motion 36. Gambling Harm Minimisation 144
Casey City Council 144
Motion 37. Reliability of Water Supply for Recreational Lakes 147
Horsham Rural City Council 147
Motion 38. Increased Government Funding for Integrated Water Management (IWM) Implementation 150
Horsham Rural City Council 150
Motion 39. State Emergency Service Funding 153
Kingston City Council 153

Motion 40. Changing places bathrooms 154
Kingston City Council 154
Motion 41. Kangaroo Management Plans 155
Hume City Council 155
Motion 42. EPA Name and Shame Communications Campaign 156
Hume City Council 156
Motion 43. Implement the National Anti-Racism Framework 157
Melbourne City Council 157
Motion 44. Deer Management 159
Nillumbik Shire Council 159
Motion 45. DEECA Crown Reserves Funding 160
Southern Grampians Shire Council 160
Motion 46. Consistent public reporting of significant council expenditure 161
Darebin City Council 161
Motion 47. Safe and cohesive communities 163
Manningham City Council 163

Strategic to the MAV

MAV Board Motion

Retain Infrastructure Victoria

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government and Parliament for the retention of Infrastructure Victoria as an independent statutory authority, to safeguard its functions of providing independent, evidence-based advice on Victoria's long-term infrastructure needs, priorities and investment.

MAV rationale:

On 28 August 2026, the Premier announced that Infrastructure Victoria would be wound up and its functions consolidated into relevant departments, consistent with recommendations of the Silver Review. This varied the Government's previous position in December 2025. Infrastructure Victoria is an independent statutory authority established under the Infrastructure Victoria Act 2015 and governed by an independent board. Its abolition will require legislation and is therefore a matter for Parliament.

Infrastructure Victoria provides independent, evidence-based advice on Victoria's current and future infrastructure needs and priorities. This function is particularly important to Local Government: councils plan for and deliver communities whose success depends on coordinated state and local infrastructure. Infrastructure Victoria provides a long-term evidence base for aligning infrastructure investment with population and housing growth, transport, economic development and changing community needs, beyond individual budget and electoral cycles.

Local Government has enjoyed an open and collaborative relationship with Infrastructure Victoria since its establishment. In 2016, the MAV successfully sought a local government reference group to inform Infrastructure Victoria's first 30-year infrastructure strategy. That relationship has enabled a degree of open engagement on long-term policy development that has not generally been available through the closed policy-development processes of government departments, particularly the Department of Transport and Planning, while Infrastructure Victoria's independent scrutiny has provided an important safeguard against unfunded mandates on Local Government.

Infrastructure Victoria's work has also closely intersected with longstanding local government priorities. Since 2016, MAV State Council has repeatedly supported recommendations contained in its 30-year infrastructure strategies and other publications, including on social and affordable housing, road safety, active transport, bus network reform and an integrated transport plan for Victoria.

Victoria now faces substantial infrastructure pressures from population and housing growth, transport, water and social infrastructure needs, climate change and constrained public finances. These conditions strengthen, rather than diminish, the case for independent, transparent and long-term infrastructure advice. Infrastructure Victoria provides an important safeguard against fragmented and short-term

decision-making and helps ensure scarce public resources are directed to the infrastructure of greatest long-term value.

The retention of Infrastructure Victoria as an independent statutory authority is therefore directly in the interests of Local Government and local communities across Victoria.

Active Local Democracy

Motion 1. Strengthening Integrity, Accountability and Independent Oversight in Victorian Local Government

Darebin City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Commission an independent review of Victoria's local government integrity framework. The review must examine the powers, jurisdiction, resourcing, coordination, accessibility and practical effectiveness of IBAC, the Local Government Inspectorate and other relevant oversight bodies, with explicit comparison to the frameworks in New South Wales, Queensland and other Australian jurisdictions.

2. Align the Victorian framework with contemporary best practice so that oversight bodies have equivalent powers and scope to those in leading jurisdictions. This must preserve procedural fairness, natural justice and public confidence, and ensure councillors and the public have clear, timely pathways for independent investigation of allegations of corruption, misconduct or serious governance failure.

Submitting council rationale:

Strong public confidence in Victorian local government depends on an effective, independent and transparent integrity framework.

Councillors need appropriate access to information and confidence that allegations of corruption, misconduct or serious governance failures can be independently investigated. Recent high-profile investigations and governance failures have highlighted limitations in the current system relative to other states.

This motion seeks a statewide assessment of whether the existing framework remains fit for purpose and, where it does not, practical alignment with stronger models elsewhere.

Motion 2. Expediting recommendations from the Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services

Bass Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the Inquiry into Local Government funding and services and publish a clear implementation plan and timeframe for delivering those recommendations.

Submitting council rationale:

Expediting these findings and provide a clear timetable will provide certainty to the sector

Climate and Regenerative Design

Motion 3. Climate Adaptation Requirements and Growth Area Delivery

Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review the application of climate adaptation requirements within the Victorian planning system to ensure they appropriately balance community safety, housing delivery, industrial land supply, economic development and the financial capacity of councils and development proponents. The review should consider:

a. the cumulative cost impacts of climate adaptation requirements on strategic growth areas;

b. the practicality and proportionality of mitigation measures required to facilitate development;

c. opportunities for State Government funding support where adaptation measures are required;

d. mechanisms to support the timely delivery of housing and employment land identified in local and regional growth strategies; and

e. the role of effective vegetation, noxious weed and invasive plant species management on State-managed land in improving climate resilience and reducing risks to surrounding communities.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils support responsible planning for climate change and the need to protect communities and future development from increasing climate risks. However, concerns are emerging about the cumulative cost, practicality and proportionality of some climate adaptation requirements applied through the Victorian planning system, particularly where significant mitigation measures are required in response to projected impacts many decades into the future.

These requirements can increase the cost and complexity of delivering housing, employment land and strategic growth areas. For example, within Latrobe City, climate adaptation requirements are affecting the planning and future development of strategic employment land such as the Gippsland Logistics and Manufacturing Precinct (GLaMP). Similar issues are likely to affect councils across Victoria as they seek to meet housing and economic development objectives while responding to changing climate risks.

Previous MAV State Council resolutions have recognised councils as critical partners in climate adaptation and called for greater State funding. Motion 19 adopted in May 2026 specifically recognised that councils are experiencing increasing adaptation responsibilities while existing funding is largely short-term and project-based. This

motion builds on that advocacy by addressing how adaptation requirements are applied through the planning system, including their cumulative costs, proportionality and impact on development feasibility.

MAV advocacy would add value by bringing together the experience of councils across Victoria and seeking a consistent State Government approach that balances community safety and climate resilience with housing delivery, employment growth and council financial capacity. The motion also recognises the State Government's responsibility to effectively manage vegetation, noxious weeds and invasive plant species on State-managed land where these contribute to climate and community risks.

Motion 4. Stronger planning framework for battery energy storage systems

Cardinia Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government working in partnership with local government to develop a strong, transparent, and integrated statewide strategic framework for the location and development of Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS).

The framework should:

1. Balance the need for essential energy infrastructure with critical planning priorities, including protection of green wedges, high-value agricultural land, and significant landscapes; consideration of cumulative impacts; bushfire protections; community safety and local amenity; appropriate separation from townships and rural living areas and demonstrable benefits for host communities;
2. Identify suitable locations including directing proposals to renewable energy zones and industrial precincts ensuring meaningful engagement with councils and local communities in site selection;
3. Provide communities, proponents and councils with clear, transparent, and consistent planning guidance, greater certainty in decision-making, and a consistent basis for assessing proposals across Victoria.

Submitting council rationale:

This issue is of significant importance to the Victorian local government sector because Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) proposals are increasingly being considered across metropolitan, peri-urban and rural municipalities as Victoria accelerates its renewable energy transition. While some councils are already receiving applications, the expansion of renewable energy zones and associated infrastructure means a growing number of Victorian councils are likely to be affected in coming years. A lack of consistent statewide planning guidance creates uncertainty for councils, communities and proponents, resulting in inconsistent assessment approaches and increased pressure on local planning authorities.

The motion directly relates to current Victorian Government priorities to deliver renewable energy infrastructure, strengthen energy security and support the transition to a net-zero emissions economy. The rapid emergence of large-scale BESS developments has highlighted gaps in the strategic planning framework, particularly regarding appropriate siting, cumulative impacts, community safety, land use conflicts and the protection of agricultural land and significant landscapes. A statewide framework developed in partnership with local government would help ensure these competing objectives are balanced consistently across Victoria.

This issue cannot be effectively resolved by individual councils or regional groupings acting alone. BESS developments form part of Victoria's broader energy network and

are driven by state-level energy policy, infrastructure planning and market investment decisions that extend beyond municipal boundaries. Without a coordinated statewide approach, councils are left to assess complex proposals on a case-by-case basis, often without clear strategic direction or consistency with neighbouring municipalities.

MAV advocacy is therefore required to achieve systems-level change by securing a Victorian Government commitment to develop a transparent and integrated statewide framework for BESS planning. Such a framework would provide councils with consistent assessment criteria, greater certainty in decision-making, improved community confidence, and a clear basis for directing development to the most suitable locations while supporting Victoria's renewable energy objectives. This would deliver benefits across the entire local government sector rather than relying on fragmented local responses to an increasingly statewide issue.

Connected Places

Consolidated Motion C1 - Development Facilitation Program

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to pause, review and reform the Development Facilitation Program to bring about:

1. Greater community consultation and transparency in decisions, including:

a. publishing clear assessment criteria, decision-making processes and reasons for decisions relating to projects considered through the Development Facilitation Program and any successor arrangements; and

b. requiring agencies and authorities to demonstrate how council and community feedback has been considered and incorporated into decision-making.

2. Fair compensation for councils when requested to consider applications and permit conditions and enforce permits, e.g. by way of a fee for formal referral or a share of fee income.

3. Higher quality and improved outcomes which meet local planning expectations, including great urban design and high standards of Environmentally Sustainable Development.

4. The delivery of affordable housing within the site (for the residential development with affordable housing pathway).

5. Permit decisions that are consistent with and do not undermine the underlying built form controls.

6. Transparent and accountable annual public reporting on:

a. Number of applications assessed;

b. Decision outcomes and approval timeframes;

c. Council submissions received and considered;

d. Community engagement undertaken; and

e. The extent to which decisions align with the underlying controls and policies.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Planning Transparency and Community Participation	Maribyrnong City Council
Development Facilitation Program Review	Boroondara City Council

C1.1 Planning Transparency and Community Participation

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to strengthen transparency, accountability and community participation in Victoria's planning system by:

1. *Ensuring all planning reform initiatives, including the Future Directions pathway and the Development Facilitation Program, maintain meaningful opportunities for local government and community participation in planning decision-making.*
2. *Requiring public notification and consultation for all major development proposals unless there are exceptional and clearly defined circumstances that justify an alternative process.*
3. *Publishing clear assessment criteria, decision-making processes and reasons for decisions relating to projects considered through the Development Facilitation Program and any successor arrangements.*
4. *Ensuring councils have adequate opportunity to provide submissions and technical advice prior to decisions being made on significant developments within their municipalities.*
5. *Requiring agencies and authorities to demonstrate how council and community feedback has been considered and incorporated into decision-making.*
6. *Maintaining appropriate rights for communities, councils and stakeholders to participate in planning processes affecting their neighbourhoods and local environments.*
7. *Requiring annual public reporting on:*

- *Applications assessed through the Development Facilitation Program;*
- *Decision outcomes and approval timeframes;*
- *Council submissions received and considered;*
- *Community engagement undertaken; and*
- *The extent to which decisions align with local planning policy and strategic objectives.*

8. *Working collaboratively with local government to ensure planning system reforms improve efficiency without reducing transparency, accountability or public confidence in planning decisions*

Submitting council rationale:

Local governments have a detailed understanding of their communities, strategic planning objectives, infrastructure capacity and local environmental considerations.

Councils play an essential role in providing technical advice and identifying place-based impacts that may not be apparent through broader state-level assessments. Ensuring councils have adequate opportunities to contribute to the assessment of major developments leads to more informed and better-quality planning outcomes.

Similarly, community consultation remains a cornerstone of good planning practice. Residents and stakeholders have a legitimate interest in decisions that affect their neighbourhoods, amenity, environment and access to infrastructure. Maintaining meaningful opportunities for consultation helps build trust in planning processes and improves the quality of decision-making by incorporating local knowledge and perspectives.

Transparency is particularly important where developments are assessed through alternative or accelerated pathways, including the Development Facilitation Program and any successor arrangements. Clear assessment criteria, publicly available reasons for decisions and regular reporting on outcomes will strengthen accountability and improve public understanding of how planning decisions are reached.

This motion does not seek to impede development or reduce planning efficiency. Rather, it seeks to ensure that planning system reforms maintain the principles of openness, accountability and community participation that underpin public confidence in Victoria's planning framework. By working collaboratively with local government, the Victorian Government can deliver planning reforms that support investment and growth while preserving the transparency and democratic integrity of the planning system.

C1.2 Development Facilitation Program Review

Boroondara City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government to seek an immediate pause to the Development Facilitation Program and a review of the program including:

1. *Greater community consultation and transparency in decisions;*
2. *Allocation of an appropriate fee (and proportion of fee income) to Councils for their referral comments and role in managing subsequent approvals;*
3. *Higher quality and improved outcomes which meet with local planning expectations including great urban design and high standards of Environmental Sustainable Development;*
4. *Ensuring that affordable housing is delivered within the project for housing development proposals; and*
5. *Ensuring Development Facilitation Program proposals on sites that have received new planning controls under the State Government Activity Centre program do not go beyond the planning controls that have been introduced without support of Council.*

Submitting council rationale:

The State Government's Development Facilitation Program has been in place in various forma for more than 6 years, with a significant increase in it's use across that State in the last 18 months and last 6 months in particular. There are now three key planning application pathways where applicants can lodge with the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) instead of lodging at Council.

For the period from September 2023 to 31 July 2026, 269 applications have been considered under the program across the State. DFP outcomes are published on the Ministerial Permits Register. An examination of the register indicates that every one of these applications has been approved. Information amongst Councils also indicates that Councils have not been able to influence positive improvements to the outcomes approved and there are considerable concerns with the quality of decisions and planning assessment process.

The removal of third-party appeal rights and ability for the Minister to ignore planning scheme mandatory requirements, in particular, has contributed to the DFP pathway being a preferred substitute for applicants to the normal planning process in many situations.

There are two key aspects of the DFP pathway that have contributed to this becoming the preferred substitute for applicants to the normal planning process in many situations. Firstly, the ability for DFP to "bend the rules" by approving developments that would otherwise be prohibited by the Planning Scheme. Applicants can also avoid Victorian Civil and Administrative Appeals processes as

residents have no third party appeal rights, but this isn't the case for applications lodged at Councils. DFP are therefore able to offer a pathway that Council has no power to offer, even if Council is supportive of a proposal.

In September 2023, the Victorian Government released its Housing Statement which foreshadowed key initiatives and planning reforms, including expansion of the Development Facilitation Program. The new pathways included:

- *Significant Economic Development (Clause 53.22): Intended to speed up permits for major job-creating sectors, retail, tourism and renewable energy projects (1 MW or greater) by removing third-party VCAT appeals.*
- *Significant Residential Development (Clause 53.23): Targets medium to high-density housing and build-to-rent projects worth at least $50 million in Melbourne or $15 million regionally, provided they include a minimum of 10% affordable housing.*
- *Great Design Fast Track (Clause 53.25): Offers a streamlined assessment process specifically for apartment and townhouse developments that meet high standards for architectural design and sustainability.*

Eleven applications for significant developments in Boroondara have been lodged to date through these pathways. A recent review of outcomes in Boroondara to date outlines a number of concerns in relation to the process and also the proposals approved by the DTP including:

- *Approval of building heights greater than those recently introduced in the Built Form Overlay*
- *Approval of building heights greater than the mandatory heights in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone*
- *Failing to assess proposals against appropriate planning objectives and controls*
- *Limited or no changes to proposals to address concerns raised by Council and the community*
- *Removal of third-party appeal rights (review at VCAT)*
- *Development Plan requirements being ignored*
- *Deferral of issues to subsequent approval processes*
- *Constraints on transparency of process due to confidentiality requirements*
- *Cost shifting to Council*
- *The Great Design Fast Track criteria not facilitating great designs*

These concerns are similar to those expressed by many other Councils.

Councils are best placed to be the Responsible Authority for significant development applications in their jurisdictions so that there can be a balanced consideration of issues, transparency of decision processes and genuine community involvement.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Consolidated Motion C2- Strengthening Community Safety, Visible Policing and Crime Prevention

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to strengthen community safety across Victoria by:

1. Increasing frontline police resources and operational presence based on demonstrated need, including a visible police presence in activity centres, shopping precincts and public places to support community confidence, deter criminal and anti-social behaviour and improve perceptions of safety.
2. Investing in neighbourhood policing approaches, targeted road safety enforcement and Victoria Police-led community engagement that strengthen relationships between Victoria Police, local government, businesses and local communities.
3. Supporting culturally appropriate policing responses, including dedicated engagement and liaison approaches for First Nations peoples and diverse communities.
4. Increasing investment in early intervention, youth diversion and family support programs so that young people receive help before problems escalate and crime is prevented before it occurs.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Strengthening community safety and visible policing in activity centres	Port Phillip City Council
Community Crime Prevention	Hume City Council

C2.1 Strengthening community safety and visible policing in activity centres

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Increase frontline police resources and operational presence in municipalities experiencing community safety concerns.*
2. *Increase visible police presence in activity centres, shopping precincts and public places to support community confidence, deter criminal and anti-social behaviour, and improve perceptions of safety.*
3. *Invest in neighbourhood policing approaches, targeted road safety enforcement and community-based policing initiatives that strengthen engagement between Victoria Police, local government, businesses and local communities.*
4. *Support culturally appropriate policing responses, including dedicated engagement and liaison approaches for First Nations peoples and diverse communities.*

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria's activity centres and shopping precincts are critical hubs for local economic activity, community connection and civic life. However, many councils are reporting community concerns regarding anti-social behaviour, public safety, road safety offences, hooning and emerging transport modes, alongside a desire for more visible neighbourhood policing.

Perceptions of safety play an important role in the success of local high streets and activity centres. When residents, workers and visitors feel unsafe, participation in community life can decline, affecting local businesses, visitation and broader economic activity.

Community safety is also closely linked to health and wellbeing. Persistent concerns about personal safety can contribute to stress, social isolation and reduced community participation, particularly among vulnerable community members, older residents and small business operators.

While councils continue to invest in place activation, community safety initiatives and public realm improvements, responsibility for frontline policing rests with the Victorian Government. Increased police visibility, strengthened neighbourhood policing models and targeted enforcement in public spaces can play an important role in improving community confidence, supporting local economies and ensuring activity centres remain safe and welcoming places for all Victorians.

C2.2 Community Crime Prevention

Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to increase investment in early intervention, youth diversion and family support programs and Victoria Police-led community engagement to prevent crime, improve safety and ensure young people receive help before problems escalate.

Submitting council rationale:

Preventing harm early strengthens community wellbeing, improves outcomes for young people and supports a safer future for everyone.

First Peoples local government relations

Consolidated Motion C3 - Funding and Resources for Local Government and First Peoples Partnerships

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to establish dedicated funding and resources to strengthen partnerships between Victorian councils, Traditional Owner Groups and Registered Aboriginal Parties, including by:

a) Dedicating ongoing funding to Traditional Owner Groups across Victoria to employ Local Government Engagement Officers, recognising their critical role in supporting effective engagement with councils, facilitating input into key council strategies, projects and plans, and strengthening partnerships between local government and Traditional Owners on strategic planning, infrastructure, land use, heritage and community development matters.

b) Establishing a dedicated funding stream to support councils and their relevant Registered Aboriginal Party(s) to work in partnership on infrastructure projects that advance council objectives, including projects identified through council plans, strategies and Reconciliation Action Plans; and

c) Establishing a dedicated funding program and sector-wide framework, co-designed with Registered Aboriginal Parties and local government, to support councils in managing the unexpected discovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage during construction projects, including costs associated with heritage assessment and management, compliance obligations, project impact mitigation, and engagement with Registered Aboriginal Parties.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
First Peoples Local Government Relations	Campaspe Shire Council
Funding to Traditional Owner Groups to employ Local Government Engagement Officer	Greater Bendigo City Council
Reconciliation Action Plan - Infrastructure Funding	Golden Plains Shire Council

C3.1 First Peoples Local Government Relations

Campaspe Shire Council

Motion

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

- *Establish a dedicated funding program to assist councils and public infrastructure providers when Aboriginal cultural heritage, including ancestral remains, is discovered during approved construction projects.*
- *Provide financial assistance for the recovery, protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage discovered after works have commenced.*
- *Fund or co-fund the preparation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans and associated investigations required as a result of an unexpected discovery.*
- *Support councils with the additional costs arising from project delays, redesign, contractor impacts and compliance requirements resulting from such discoveries.*
- *Work with Registered Aboriginal Parties and local government to develop a consistent and transparent framework for managing unexpected cultural heritage discoveries while protecting cultural values and minimising unnecessary delays to community infrastructure projects.*

Submitting council rationale:

Councils strongly support the protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage and recognise the importance of working respectfully with Traditional Owners and Registered Aboriginal Parties when cultural heritage is identified.

However, circumstances can arise where Aboriginal cultural heritage or ancestral remains are discovered during construction despite councils having undertaken appropriate due diligence, obtained required approvals and complied with existing legislative requirements.

When such discoveries occur, projects can be delayed for extended periods while investigations, recovery works, cultural heritage assessments and statutory processes are completed. These activities can impose significant additional costs on councils that were not anticipated when projects were planned, funded or approved.

The financial impacts can include the recovery and management of ancestral remains, preparation of Cultural Heritage Management Plans, specialist cultural heritage advice, site management, contractor claims, project redesign and construction delays. In some instances, these costs can amount to millions of dollars and place at risk the delivery of important community infrastructure.

Where councils have acted in good faith and complied with legislative requirements, it is unreasonable for local communities alone to bear the full cost of managing

outcomes that arise from the broader operation of the State's Aboriginal cultural heritage framework.

This motion seeks a partnership approach whereby the State Government provides practical financial and technical support to help councils protect Aboriginal cultural heritage, work constructively with Traditional Owners and continue delivering important community infrastructure outcomes.

Protecting Aboriginal cultural heritage is a responsibility shared by all Victorians. The cost of managing unexpected discoveries should be shared accordingly, rather than falling solely on local communities and ratepayers.

C3.2 Funding to Traditional Owner Groups to employ Local Government Engagement Officer

Greater Bendigo City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to State Government to provide funding to Traditional Owner Groups, to allow them to employ a staff member as a Local Government Engagement Officer to provide input on key Council strategies, projects and plans.

Submitting council rationale:

Traditional Owner Groups are asked to provide feedback to Local Governments on numerous occasions on strategies, projects and plans, across multiple LGAs during a Council term. This isn't work Traditional Owner Groups are necessarily funded for.

This funded position would increase Traditional Owner engagement with Local Government on matters including the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006 and Land Use Activity Agreements. It also would improve staff understanding of each organisation and their ways of working.

This funding request aligns with the State Government's commitments under Recognition and Settlement agreements to support ongoing partnerships between Local Government and Traditional Owners – including, in particular, the State's Local Government Engagement Strategy (Schedule 5) and the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy 2021-2026 (Strategic Pillar Seven: Resourcing and Funding).

The challenges Local Governments face in being able to fund this position is the level of diversity amongst the Local Governments on Traditional Owner Country with significant variations in land mass, population size and rate payer base and the impact of Council Allowance categories.

With 12 Registered Aboriginal Parties representing Traditional Owners across Victoria, and 79 local government areas intersecting Traditional Owner Country, councils face challenges in providing equitable financial support. Differences in council size, population and revenue capacity can result in varying levels of support for Traditional Owner organisations.

These roles have been funded by the State Government in the past, but funding has now ceased even though the sector recognised the significant benefits a Local Government Engagement Officer provided. We ask that this be reinstated for all Traditional Owner Groups across Victoria.

C3.3 Reconciliation Action Plan - Infrastructure Funding

Golden Plains Shire Council

Motion:

The Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to establish a dedicated funding stream enabling and supporting all Victorian Councils - if they wish to do so - to work in partnership with their relevant Registered Aboriginal Party or Parties on infrastructure projects that support the objectives of the Council's Reconciliation Action Plan.

Submitting council rationale:

Whilst Registered Aboriginal Parties are able to access funding and grants to engage in projects, local governments have no external funding support to work in partnership with Traditional Owners on infrastructure projects;

A dedicated grant or funding stream as proposed, for local governments, would help facilitate new infrastructure such as memorials, signage, community buildings etc in line with state government Treaty, reconciliation objectives and councils' Reconciliation Action Plan;

A new and dedicated funding stream as proposed recognises the reality that most local governments currently have little to no capacity (particularly rural councils) to support RAPS infrastructure projects; however,

A state government external funding stream would significantly increase the capability and willingness of local government councils to work in partnership with local RAPs on infrastructure projects by negating the legitimate concerns of "where is the money going to come from?"

Future Gen

Motion 5. Shared digital platforms and technology standards for local government

Manningham City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:

- invest in the development of core digital platforms and technology services that can be accessed by all Victorian councils.
- work collaboratively with the MAV and councils to develop common standards for technology architecture, cyber security, data governance and interoperability to enable councils to collaborate more effectively.

Submitting council rationale:

Like all sectors in our community, councils are responding to increasing community expectations for accessible, secure and digitally enabled services. However, many councils are investing independently in similar technologies, often undertaking separate procurement processes, implementation programs and support arrangements for systems that perform the same functions.

This duplication creates inefficiencies, increases costs and limits opportunities to leverage collective buying power across the local government sector. Smaller and regional councils are particularly challenged in attracting specialist digital resources and maintaining increasingly complex technology environments.

A statewide shared services approach would enable councils to modernise critical technology platforms, strengthen cyber resilience, enable emerging technologies to be leveraged, and accelerate innovation while reducing costs and implementation risks. Similar collaborative models have successfully delivered benefits across other government sectors through consolidated procurement, shared capability and common technology governance standards.

This motion seeks State Government support to enable councils to collaborate on common technology challenges and deliver more efficient, secure, and consistent services for local communities.

Health and Wellbeing

Consolidated Motion C4- Strengthening State-Local Partnership and Place-Based Responses to Homelessness

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria recognises that homelessness is increasing across Victoria, while homelessness service delivery is a Victorian Government responsibility, councils are often the first point of contact for people in crisis and play a coordination and advocacy role without dedicated funding, formal partnership arrangements or clear escalation pathways; and calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Establish a dedicated funding stream and partnership framework that supports local government coordination and advocacy, including investment in local coordination capability, and provide additional resourcing, not a reallocation of existing funding, to frontline community organisations delivering homelessness and related services, without transferring core service delivery responsibility to councils.
2. Develop and invest in a statewide model for integrated, place-based responses for people experiencing persistent homelessness with complex and intersecting needs, bringing together homelessness, housing, health, mental health, alcohol and other drug, family violence, disability, justice, financial support and local government services under shared governance, coordinated case planning, improved data sharing and clear accountability, and supporting earlier intervention through stronger links between these services.
3. Improve consistency and accessibility of entry points into the homelessness system, including clearer referral pathways and escalation processes, and strengthen responses to rough sleeping through coordinated outreach models that connect people to housing and support quickly.
4. Improve the use and oversight of public and community housing by reviewing vacant public housing stock across Victoria, including a centralised, transparent database of availability, occupancy and dwellings requiring maintenance or repair, and by strengthening transparency and accountability in the auditing, compliance and performance monitoring of Victorian Government-funded housing providers, with outcomes shared with the sector.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Strengthening state-local partnership to address homelessness	Glen Eira City Council
Integrated Place-Based Response Model for People Experiencing Homelessness with Complex and Intersecting Needs	Maribyrnong City Council

C4.1 Strengthening state-local partnership to address homelessness

Glen Eira City Council

Motion:

That State Council notes that:

- *homelessness is increasing across Victoria, with growing complexity driven by housing affordability, family violence, mental health challenges and economic pressure, and disproportionately impacts women, particularly women aged over 55, who are one of the fastest-growing cohorts experiencing homelessness*
- *homelessness is often hidden, with many people in insecure or temporary accommodation, while rough sleeping represents a smaller but more visible form of disadvantage*
- *councils are often the first point of contact for people in crisis, particularly those experiencing rough sleeping in public places*
- *homelessness service delivery is a Victorian Government responsibility, delivered through community sector organisations, while local government plays a coordination and advocacy role*
- *stronger state–local partnership is required to support place-based responses, early intervention and better access to services.*

and calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. *establish a dedicated funding stream and partnership framework that supports local government coordination and advocacy, without transferring core service delivery responsibility to councils*
2. *provide additional resourcing, not a reallocation of existing funding, to strengthen frontline community organisations delivering homelessness and related services*
3. *improve integration across housing, health and community services, including better data sharing, accountability and place-based planning*
4. *improve consistency and accessibility of entry points into the homelessness system, including clearer referral pathways and escalation processes*
5. *strengthen responses to rough sleeping through coordinated outreach models that connect people to housing and support quickly*
6. *support earlier intervention through stronger links between homelessness, family violence, mental health and financial support services*
7. *recognise that these measures enable councils to play a strategic coordination role without shifting service delivery responsibility from the state.*

Submitting council rationale:

Homelessness is an increasing and complex challenge affecting communities across Victoria. While homelessness service delivery is a Victorian Government responsibility, councils are often the first point of contact for people experiencing crisis, particularly those sleeping rough in public places. Across the sector, councils are playing an increasing coordination and advocacy role without dedicated funding, formal partnership arrangements or clear escalation pathways. This issue is relevant to councils across Victoria because it intersects with local government responsibilities relating to community safety, public health, wellbeing and social inclusion. Homelessness is also a significant gender equality issue. Older women, particularly women aged over 55, are one of the fastest-growing cohorts experiencing homelessness, with many entering homelessness for the first time later in life due to family violence, relationship breakdown, caring responsibilities, lower lifetime earnings and housing insecurity. While previous MAV advocacy has focused on homelessness funding, housing supply and broader system reform, there has been less emphasis on how services are coordinated at a local level. This motion responds to that gap by strengthening local coordination and improving connections between homelessness, housing, health and community support services. MAV advocacy would add value by providing a coordinated sector-wide voice to advocate for reforms that cannot be achieved by individual councils acting alone. By focusing on partnership, clarity of roles and better resourcing for coordination, the motion aligns with MAV's broader priorities around integrated service delivery, stronger state–local collaboration and improved outcomes for vulnerable communities across Victoria. It builds on broader sector advocacy relating to housing, homelessness and community wellbeing by focusing on the coordination mechanisms and partnership arrangements needed to support effective place-based responses.

C4.2 Integrated Place-Based Response Model for People Experiencing Homelessness with Complex and Intersecting Needs

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to develop and invest in a statewide model for integrated, place-based responses for people experiencing homelessness with complex and intersecting needs by:

1. *Establishing multidisciplinary, place-based responses that bring together homelessness, health, mental health, alcohol and other drug, family violence, disability, justice and local government services.*
2. *Supporting shared governance, coordinated case planning and clear accountability across agencies.*
3. *Investing in local coordination capability to enable timely, integrated responses for people experiencing persistent homelessness.*
4. *Undertaking a comprehensive review of vacant public housing stock across Victoria, including the development of a centralised, transparent database that identifies housing availability, occupancy status, and dwellings requiring maintenance, upgrade or repair to better inform housing allocation and investment decisions.*
5. *Reviewing the auditing, compliance and performance monitoring processes for Victorian Government-funded housing providers, reporting the findings and recommendations back to the sector to strengthen transparency, accountability and service outcomes.*

Submitting council rationale:

While integrated, multidisciplinary models are well established in areas such as family violence, early years and child and family services, there is no equivalent statewide framework to coordinate responses for people experiencing persistent homelessness.

Place-based models bring together the organisations within a local community to provide coordinated, multidisciplinary responses centred on the needs of the individual. Rather than relying on disconnected services operating independently, they enable agencies to share responsibility, jointly plan responses, identify service gaps and improve the effectiveness of the local service system.

A consistent statewide framework for place-based coordination would strengthen collaboration across service systems, reduce fragmentation and improve outcomes for people experiencing persistent homelessness with multiple and complex needs.

Motion 6. Fair funding for Maternal and Child Health and immunisation services

Glen Eira City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria:

1. recognises Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and immunisation services as essential preventative primary healthcare services that improve health, wellbeing and developmental outcomes for children and families and help reduce demand for more intensive health and social services later in life
2. advocates to the Victorian Government to increase and sustain investment in MCH services to reflect the contemporary scope, complexity and demand of the service, including restoring a fair and equitable state-local government funding partnership
3. advocates for investment in MCH building infrastructure, workforce capability and service capacity to ensure services remain accessible, fit for purpose and responsive to community need
4. advocates for increased and sustainable state funding for council-delivered immunisation services that reflects the full cost of delivery, including:

- equitable funding for the National Immunisation Program that supports access across all eligible cohorts, with parity in funding arrangements between councils, general practitioners and pharmacies delivering the same services
- improved access to immunisation data, reporting and analytics to enable better identification of areas with low vaccination coverage, support targeted outreach programs and improve population health outcomes
- funding for outreach, catch-up programs and priority communities
- investment in workforce capability and cross-sector collaboration
- increased public education and awareness campaigns to improve uptake of vaccines under the National Immunisation Program.

Submitting council rationale:

Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and immunisation services are essential preventative health services delivered by councils across Victoria. These services support children and families during the critical early years of life, improve health and developmental outcomes, and help reduce demand for more intensive health and social services later in life. However, funding arrangements have not kept pace with increasing service complexity, growing community expectations and the rising cost of delivery, resulting in councils carrying a growing share of service costs.

This issue is relevant to councils across Victoria because MCH and immunisation services are a core part of local government's contribution to community health and

wellbeing. While there has been ongoing sector advocacy regarding council financial sustainability and cost shifting, increasing pressure on preventative health services highlights the need for renewed focus on sustainable funding, infrastructure investment and workforce capability. The motion responds to these challenges by seeking fairer funding arrangements and stronger support for council-delivered services.

MAV advocacy would add value by providing a coordinated sector-wide voice to advocate for reforms that cannot be achieved by individual councils acting alone. By focusing on funding sustainability, equitable cost-sharing, stronger data and reporting capabilities, and support for preventative health services, the motion aligns with broader sector priorities around health and wellbeing and integrated service delivery. It builds on existing advocacy for fair funding and financial sustainability by seeking a stronger and more sustainable partnership between state and local government to support the long-term viability of MCH and immunisation services across Victoria.

Motion 7. Access to Swimming and Water Safety Education for Every Child

Banyule City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV):

1. Advocate to the Victorian Government to recognise swimming and water safety education as an essential life skill for every Victorian child.
2. Work with the Victorian Government to establish an initiative such as a 'Victorian Every Child can Swim Initiative', supported by dedicated funding, with the objective that every child in Victoria has access to a minimum level of swimming and water safety education before completing primary school, regardless of their socio-economic circumstances or place of residence. This could include enhancing the Victorian school based and the creation of a community swimming and water safety program, to ensure children are not excluded due to financial hardship, disability, cultural barriers or geographic disadvantage.
3. Work with Royal Life Saving Australia, Life Saving Victoria (LSV) , Aquatics Recreation Victoria (ARV), local government, the education sector and the aquatic industry more broadly to advocate for a statewide strategy that supports universal access to swimming and water safety education.
4. Advocate for targeted funding and support to increase participation among cohorts who experience lower participation rates in swimming and water safety education, including children from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, children with disability and those living in disadvantaged communities.
5. Advocate for partnerships between local government, schools, aquatic facilities and water safety organisations to improve access to swimming and water safety education across Victoria.

Submitting council rationale:

Like other municipalities, Banyule has experienced a recent decline in learn to swim enrolments across its leisure centres largely associated with the current cost of living pressures that families are experiencing. Swimming and water safety are essential life skills in Victoria. Despite the importance of these skills, many children face barriers to participating in swimming and water safety programs due to cost, cultural factors, disability, geographic location and limited access to aquatic facilities.

Drowning remains a significant and preventable cause of death in Victoria. Recent data from Life Saving Victoria shows concerning increases in drowning fatalities among young Victorians and culturally diverse communities. In 2023–24, there were 10 drowning deaths among people aged 15–24 years, double the long-term average for that age group, while 17 people aged 25–44 years drowned, the highest number

recorded for that cohort in two decades. Additionally, 21 people from multicultural communities drowned, the highest number recorded since reporting commenced.

The Australian Water Safety Strategy 2030 identifies swimming and water safety skills as a critical drowning prevention measure and recognises the importance of local government in building water-safe communities. The Strategy's 2026 Midpoint Update identifies "Swimming and Water Safety Skills for All" and "Localising Water Safety Efforts" as national imperatives, highlighting the need for coordinated action between governments, local communities and water safety organisations.

Councils play a vital role through the provision of aquatic facilities, community education and partnerships with schools and community organisations. However, achieving universal access to swimming and water safety education requires stronger Victorian Government leadership and investment to ensure no child is left behind.

Local governments play a critical role in supporting community health and wellbeing through the provision of aquatic facilities and recreation opportunities. However, ensuring equitable access to swimming and water safety education for all Victorian children requires coordinated policy leadership and investment from the Victorian Government.

As Victoria continues to grow and diversify, there is an opportunity to strengthen water safety outcomes, reduce drowning risks, improve community wellbeing and ensure all children have the opportunity to develop basic swimming and water safety skills regardless of their background or circumstances.

Consolidated Motion C5 - A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria call on the Victorian Government, in delivering the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, to fund a complete, tiered rural and regional mental health and wellbeing model that builds outward from the most local level of care, and to:

1. Establish Rural Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals in key rural towns as the primary community access point for people with emerging, moderate or complex mental health needs, each supported by a network of satellite service locations, integrated outreach programs, crisis assessment and early intervention capability, after-hours and in-person crisis response, youth mental health services, mental health literacy and community education, rural workforce development hubs, and planning for future Step Up/Step Down subacute facilities.
2. Establish psychology and psychiatry services in identified gap towns alongside existing GP, social work and counselling services, and expand counselling and social work capacity through public health services and not-for-profit providers.
3. Guarantee ongoing funding for mobile clinical outreach and counselling services to remote communities and farmers.
4. Fund new acute psychiatric bed capacity at regional health services currently without local acute mental health care, consistent with Recommendation 11 of the Royal Commission.
5. Give priority to a Rural Mental Health and Wellbeing Local and satellite network as a scalable and replicable template on a need-based funding model, with an initial targeted allocation prioritising the Wimmera Southern Mallee region.
6. Recognise that statewide phone and online mental health services are a valuable backstop but no substitute for local, face-to-face capacity in rural and regional communities.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Rural Mental Health & Wellbeing Local and Satellite Network in the Wimmera Southern Mallee	Hindmarsh Shire Council
A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model	Horsham Rural City Council

C5.1 Rural Mental Health & Wellbeing Local and Satellite Network in the Wimmera Southern Mallee

Hindmarsh Shire Council

Supported by: Northern Grampians Shire Council; Buloke Shire Council; Yarriambiack Shire Council; Horsham Rural City Council

Motion:

The motion is seeking MAV advocacy to the Victorian Government for the establishment of a Rural Mental Health and Wellbeing Local, supported by a network of satellite services and outreach programs across the Wimmera region. It responds to significant disparities in access to mental health services experienced by rural communities.

Mental health service provision across the Wimmera remains significantly below that available in metropolitan and larger regional centres. The motion identifies several critical service gaps, including the absence of Local Mental Health & Wellbeing Services, acute and subacute mental health beds, youth mental health services, crisis response capability, after hours support, psychiatrists and psychologists within local communities. Rural communities across the Wimmera Southern Mallee region experience the highest mental-health inequity in Victoria with:

- *Limited local mental health and wellbeing services;*
- *No acute or subacute beds;*
- *Limited youth mental-health services;*
- *No local crisis response or in person after-hours support;*
- *No psychologists or psychiatrists locally;*
- *Rising suicide rates and emergency-department presentations; and*
- *Significant travel distances for basic care.*

Submitting council rationale:

Evidence shows severe and persistent mental health inequities across Hindmarsh, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack, Buloke, Northern Grampians and parts of Horsham Rural City. The Wimmera Southern Mallee region suicide rates are 80-100% higher than the Victorian average (Victorian Suicide Register 2019-2024), there have been 20-40% increases in mental health emergency department presentations, up to 500 patient transfers from Grampians Health in the Wimmera to larger regional centres, workforce shortages, and the absence of local crisis and youth mental health services. These challenges place additional pressure on police, ambulance services, and emergency departments that often become the default responders to mental health crises.

The motion has been developed collaboratively through the Wimmera Southern Mallee Council Alliance and is supported by West Wimmera Shire Council, Yarriambiack Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Buloke Shire Council

and Horsham Rural City Council. The regional approach demonstrates a united advocacy position across the Wimmera and strengthens the case for MAV support and Victorian Government investment.

This motion addresses a challenge shared by many rural councils being limited access to timely mental health services, workforce shortages, long travel distances and increasing pressure on local health, emergency and community services. A coordinated regional model would improve equity of access for rural communities while supporting better health, wellbeing and social outcomes across multiple municipalities in the Wimmera, Southern Mallee and beyond.

MAV advocacy provides a united local government voice to the Victorian Government, elevating an issue that extends beyond a single municipality and demonstrating statewide relevance. MAV's ability to coordinate councils, align advocacy priorities and progress State Council resolutions strengthens the likelihood of policy consideration, investment, and long-term reform.

The motion is supported by existing regional advocacy and collaboration across the Wimmera Southern Mallee and aligns with multiple MAV priorities, including Health & Wellbeing, Connected Places, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and Resilience and Recovery. The proposed model has been identified as scalable and replicable across rural Victoria, creating an opportunity for broader sector-wide reform and stronger partnerships between councils, health services, and government.

C5.2 A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model

Horsham Rural City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to fund a complete rural and regional mental health and wellbeing model, comprising:

a. *Rural Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals established in key rural towns as the primary community access point for people experiencing emerging, moderate or complex mental health needs, backed by satellite service locations, integrated outreach programs, crisis assessment and early intervention capability, mental health literacy and community education initiatives, rural workforce development hubs, and planning for future Step Up/Step Down subacute facilities.*

b. *Psychology services established in identified gap towns, alongside existing GP, social work and counselling services.*

c. *Expanded counselling and social work capacity delivered through public health services and not-for-profit providers.*

d. *Guaranteed, ongoing funding for mobile clinical outreach and counselling services to remote communities and farmers.*

e. *New acute psychiatric bed capacity at regional health services currently without local acute mental health care, in line with Recommendation 11 of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System.*

f. *Recognition that statewide phone and online mental health services remain a valuable backstop, but are no substitute for local, face-to-face capacity in rural and regional communities.*

Submitting council rationale:

Rural and regional Victorians continue to experience poorer mental health outcomes and significantly greater barriers to accessing care than their metropolitan counterparts. Distance, workforce shortages, limited service availability and increasing demand mean many communities are unable to access timely mental health support close to home.

The challenge is not simply a shortage of acute mental health beds, though Victoria's mental health bed base sits 34 per cent below the national average, the lowest of any state. Across rural Victoria, many residents struggle to access psychology services, counselling, social work support, outreach programs and early intervention services before reaching crisis point. This has contributed to growing pressure on emergency departments, ambulance services and police, which increasingly serve as the default entry point into the mental health system.

The proposed motion reflects these findings and advocates for a complete rural and regional mental health and wellbeing model. Rather than relying primarily on hospital-

based responses after a crisis has occurred, the model strengthens the full continuum of care through Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, psychology services, counselling and social work capacity, outreach services, workforce development initiatives and local acute care where required. Recent investment such as the Youth Prevention and Recovery Centre (YPARC) at Newington is welcome, but does not resolve access disparities for outlying communities. Families from towns such as Nhill still face a three-hour one-way drive to reach it, underscoring that regional hub investment alone is insufficient without a tiered model that builds outward from the most localised level of care.

The motion also acknowledges that while virtual and telephone-based services play an important role in the mental health system, they cannot replace accessible, face-to-face support delivered within local communities.

While informed by the experience of the Wimmera Southern Mallee (LGAs of Buloke, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack), the challenges identified are common across rural and regional Victoria. The proposed model is therefore scalable and capable of supporting broader mental health reform across the State.

Why State Government Action Is Required

The Victorian Government holds central responsibility for:

- *Designing and funding integrated mental health service models that support prevention, early intervention and recovery.*
- *Funding and commissioning acute and subacute mental health services across Victoria.*
- *Delivering the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System, including Recommendation 11 relating to acute bed-based capacity.*
- *Funding Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals and associated community-based service models.*
- *Investing in psychology, counselling, social work and outreach services delivered through public health services, community health organisations and not-for-profit providers.*
- *Leading mental health workforce planning, attraction and retention initiatives for rural and regional Victoria.*

Local government has no direct responsibility for commissioning clinical mental health services, workforce deployment or mental health infrastructure investment. Without sustained State investment in a coordinated and tiered service model, rural and regional communities will continue to experience mental health care that is fragmented, distant and crisis-driven rather than local, coordinated and preventative.

Financial and Governance Impacts on Councils

While local government does not fund or deliver clinical mental health services, councils across rural and regional Victoria bear significant downstream impacts from persistent service gaps, including:

- *Increased demand on council delivered community health, family and youth support services, as residents seek help through the points of contact available to them locally.*
- *Increased reliance on police, ambulance and emergency departments as default responders to mental health crises.*
- *Workforce attraction and retention challenges, with access to health services increasingly influencing the liveability and attractiveness of rural communities.*
- *Increased advocacy demands placed on councils, which are often the first point of contact for residents seeking assistance when government service systems are unable to meet local needs.*

As mental health challenges continue to grow, councils are increasingly required to respond to the social, economic and community impacts of mental ill-health despite having no authority or funding responsibility for mental health service delivery.

Without a coordinated State-led response, local government will continue to bear the consequences of service gaps that sit beyond its legislative remit and financial capacity to address.

Alignment with MAV Strategic Priorities

This motion aligns directly with multiple MAV enabling priorities:

- *Priority 1: Active Local Democracy - by amplifying rural community voices and enabling councils to shape service models that reflect local needs.*
- *Priority 2: Connected Places - by reducing distance barriers and ensuring access to care across dispersed rural and regional communities.*
- *Priority 3: Health & Wellbeing - by advocating for a complete continuum of mental health care encompassing prevention, early intervention, community-based support, outreach, crisis response and acute services.*
- *Priority 8: Diversity, Equity & Inclusion - by addressing the disproportionate impact of service gaps on Aboriginal communities, CALD communities, young people, older residents and other priority cohorts..*
- *Priority 9: Resilience & Recovery - by strengthening local crisis response capability and reducing reliance on emergency services as the primary response to mental health challenges.*
- *Priority 10: Intergenerational Infrastructure - by supporting long-term investment in Mental Health and Wellbeing Locals, workforce development, outreach capability and future step-up and step-down service infrastructure.*

The proposed model provides a practical and scalable framework for addressing long-standing mental health inequities across rural and regional Victoria while supporting the broader objectives of the Royal Commission and ongoing mental health system reform.

Intergenerational Infrastructure

Consolidated Motion C6 - Infrastructure Funding Formulae

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria:

1. Advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments for the establishment of ongoing, formula-based infrastructure funding programs that provide flexible capital funding to local government for the delivery, renewal and upgrade of local roads, bridges and community infrastructure.

2. Advocate to the Victorian Government for the reinstatement of a dedicated, untied, multi-year Country Roads and Bridges Program that provides formula-based capital funding directly to rural and regional councils for locally determined road, bridge, culvert and drainage priorities; is indexed to construction costs; is committed on a rolling four-year basis to support long-term financial planning; and is delivered in addition to existing State and Commonwealth road funding.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Reinstatement of an untied Country Roads and Bridges Program	Moyne Shire Council
Ongoing Flexible Local Infrastructure Funding	Moyne Shire Council

C6.1 Reinstatement of an untied Country Roads and Bridges Program

Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government for the reinstatement of a dedicated, untied, multi-year Country Roads and Bridges Program that provides formula-based capital funding directly to rural and regional councils for locally determined road, bridge, culvert and drainage priorities; is indexed to construction costs; is committed on a rolling four-year basis to support long-term financial planning; and is delivered in addition to existing State and Commonwealth road funding.

Submitting council rationale:

Between 2011 and 2015 the Country Roads and Bridges Program delivered approximately $1 million a year to each of Victoria's 40 country councils; $160 million untied over four years, additional to VicRoads budget; letting councils fix the roads and bridges they identified as priorities. Since it ended in 2015 it hasn't been replaced in kind. No untied, guaranteed, multi-year program currently exists for rural councils.

The gap is well documented: the 2024 Legislative Council inquiry into local government funding explicitly recommended reintroducing a CRBP-style untied program, and regional council alliances are campaigning for it ahead of the 2026 state election.

For Moyne, the case is stark; more than 2,600 km of local roads, a combined annual renewal gap above $3.5 million, and bridges as our highest-risk asset class. Even investing at 156% of depreciation, we can't close the gap on own-source revenue. An untied, indexed, four-year program would give the whole rural cohort predictable capital to plan against, reduce grant-chasing overheads, and target funds where networks are actually failing. It complements, rather than duplicates, a needs-based per-km model by focusing on council discretion and low administrative burden.

C6.2 Ongoing Flexible Local Infrastructure Funding

Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments for the establishment of ongoing, formula-based infrastructure funding programs that provide flexible capital funding to local government for the delivery, renewal and upgrade of local roads, bridges and community infrastructure.

Submitting council rationale:

The discontinuation of the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program has removed one of the most effective and efficient infrastructure funding mechanisms available to councils.

Unlike competitive grants programs, formula-based funding allows councils to deliver projects based on demonstrated community need and long-term strategic planning rather than shifting funding opportunities. Ongoing flexible infrastructure funding would improve asset management outcomes, reduce red tape, support local jobs and economic activity, and provide councils with the certainty required to address growing infrastructure renewal backlogs.

It would also align with ALGA's national advocacy position, which seeks permanent, legislated and formula-based funding arrangements to support local government infrastructure delivery across Australia

Consolidated Motion C7 - Renewing Victoria's Public Pools and Aquatic Facilities

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government, the Opposition and the cross bench to recognise municipal pools and aquatic facilities as critical public safety and community infrastructure, supporting swimming competency, drowning prevention, emergency resilience, health and wellbeing, and equitable access to recreation, and call on the Victorian Government to:

1. Fund and undertake a statewide condition audit of all public pools in Victoria, so that renewal costs are understood, incorporated into councils' long-term financial plans, and used to direct funding to where it is needed rather than leaving pools to close in an ad hoc way.
2. Increase dedicated, long-term capital funding for the renewal of ageing aquatic and leisure infrastructure, informed by the audit and prioritising regional, rural and rapidly growing peri-urban communities.
3. Work with local government to develop a sustainable funding model for the operation and renewal of aquatic facilities that reflects rising construction and operating costs.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Sustainable Funding for Community Swimming Pool Infrastructure	Moyne Shire Council
Pool condition audit	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Dedicated funding for Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centres	Bass Coast Shire Council

C7.1 Sustainable Funding for Community Swimming Pool Infrastructure

Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments for: A dedicated, ongoing funding program to support renewal, upgrade and operation of public swimming pools, recognising them as essential community safety, health and climate resilience infrastructure.

Submitting council rationale:

Public swimming pools are essential community infrastructure that support drowning prevention, water safety education, public health, social inclusion and climate resilience. However, ageing assets, escalating construction and operating costs, and increasing sustainability requirements are creating funding pressures beyond the capacity of local government.

With nearly 500 public pools nationally approaching end-of-life and an estimated $8 billion renewal task ahead, dedicated state and federal investment is required to ensure equitable access to safe, modern and financially sustainable aquatic facilities.

C7.2 Pool condition audit

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the State Government, Opposition and Cross Benchers requesting the State Government to fund and undertake a statewide condition audit of all public pools in Victoria, with this data used to inform funding programs to where appropriate renew these important community assets

Submitting council rationale:

This motion follows a successful motion submitted by Southern Grampians Shire Council in October 2025 calling for dedicated funding streams to assist Councils to fund the renewal of aging swimming pools across the State.

The aging nature and declining condition of Victoria's public pools is a statewide issue, beyond the capacity of any one Council. Southern Grampians Shire Council like Councils across the State has ageing aquatic infrastructure that is reaching the end of its lifecycle. The Shire has six outdoor pools and one indoor aquatic facility which will require significant capital investment over the next five to ten years to support our community to be active, connected and to participate in community. Royal Life Saving Australia outlined in the 'The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia – Rebuilding our Aging Public Swimming Pools' report advises that the average public pool was built in 1968 and that 40% are at the end of their lifespan this decade.

It estimates that $8 billion is needed to renew those pools with that amount expected to be much higher now given the increases seen across the sector to complete works to these important community assets. The report further advises that local government are bearing the cost of renewing aquatic facilities with little to no opportunity to seek funding from the State Government. With increasing financial pressure, local governments are struggling to afford to maintain pools and increasingly Councils are considering closing their pools.

Regional and remote communities are most at risk of missing out on updated or new facilities. This is a statewide issue concerning assets that are important to community health and wellbeing, as well as safety. We are asking the state Government to take a leadership position in solving this issue. We are currently at risk of pools closing in an ad hoc manner, rather than a data driven strategic approach.

With there being over 550 public swimming pools across Victoria, this motion calls on the MAV to advocate to the State Government to complete detailed condition audits on public swimming pools to allow Councils to more accurately understand the cost of renewing these assets as they reach end of life so that planning around the funding of their renewal can be completed and incorporated into long term financial plans.

C7.3 Dedicated funding for Regional Aquatic and Leisure Centres

Bass Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

a. *Increase the amount of dedicated, long-term capital funding available for regional aquatic and leisure centres that recognises their critical role in public health, emergency resilience and community wellbeing;*

b. *Recognise municipal aquatic facilities as critical public safety infrastructure that supports swimming competency, drowning prevention, community health and equitable access to recreation;*

c. *Prioritise investment in the renewal of ageing aquatic infrastructure serving rapidly growing regional and peri-urban communities; and*

d. *Work with local government to develop a sustainable funding model for the operation and renewal of aquatic facilities that reflects increasing construction and operational costs.*

Submitting council rationale:

Across Australia, approximately 77% of aquatic facilities in regional areas are publicly owned, primarily by local government councils. Victoria has over 300 council-owned pools, and these are heavily concentrated in regional shires and cities. MAV advocacy on this issue would help highlight this issue and present a unified position to present to government.

Motion 8. Local Sports Infrastructure Fund

Greater Geelong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government for a significant increase in funding for the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSIF), including;

1. Establishment of a long-term, indexed funding program that reflects contemporary construction costs and community demand.

- Victorian councils are increasingly responsible for delivering and renewing community sport and recreation infrastructure that supports participation, health, wellbeing and social connection. While demand for facilities continues to increase due to population growth, changing participation patterns and ageing assets, the relative value and availability of State Government sport infrastructure funding has reduced over time.
- As a result, local government is being required to contribute a growing proportion of capital investment for community sporting infrastructure, creating financial pressure on councils and limiting the ability to renew, expand and modernise facilities that serve current and future generations.

2. Strengthen investment in the LSIF and develop a sustainable, long-term funding framework to ensure councils can continue to provide accessible, equitable and resilient sport and recreation infrastructure that supports community participation and delivers intergenerational benefits across Victoria.

Submitting council rationale:

Community sport and recreation infrastructure is essential social infrastructure that delivers significant health, wellbeing, economic and community connection outcomes.

Facilities such as sporting pavilions, courts, playing fields, aquatic facilities and community recreation spaces are fundamental to participation in community life and remain critical assets for current and future generations.

Across Victoria, councils own and manage the majority of community sport infrastructure and are facing increasing pressure to fund major upgrades, renewals and new facilities. Construction and project delivery costs have risen significantly, while the purchasing power and scale of State Government grant programs have not kept pace with growing demand and asset replacement requirements.

The Local Sports Infrastructure Fund remains an important contributor to community infrastructure delivery; however, funding pools have reduced over time relative to the infrastructure needs of Victorian communities. This has resulted in an increasing transfer of financial responsibility to local government, requiring councils to fund a larger proportion of projects through rates and borrowing.

This issue affects councils across metropolitan, regional and rural Victoria and cannot be resolved by individual municipalities acting alone. The challenge is systemic and relates directly to State Government priorities regarding active communities, preventative health, participation, gender equity in sport, population growth and liveability.

This motion addresses a state-wide issue affecting virtually all Victorian councils, as local governments are responsible for the delivery, renewal and expansion of community sport and recreation infrastructure in the face of growing populations, ageing assets and increasing community expectations. The financial challenge is widespread, with councils increasingly required to contribute a larger share of project costs as the relative value and availability of State Government funding has not kept pace with contemporary construction costs and demand.

The issue directly relates to State Government funding policy, specifically the Local Sports Infrastructure Fund (LSIF), which remains one of the primary funding mechanisms supporting local sporting infrastructure. The motion seeks a long-term, indexed funding framework that better reflects the cost of delivering modern community facilities and supports the Victorian Government's objectives relating to participation, health, wellbeing and active communities.

This challenge cannot be resolved by a single council or regional grouping because escalating construction costs and declining funding leverage are being experienced consistently across Victoria. A statewide advocacy response through the MAV is required to secure increased and sustainable State Government investment, ensuring councils can continue to provide equitable, accessible and resilient sport and recreation infrastructure that delivers social, health and economic benefits to communities across the state

Additional and sustained investment through the LSIF would support councils to renew ageing assets, address participation growth, improve accessibility and inclusion outcomes, and deliver infrastructure that remains fit for purpose over multiple generations.

Motion C8.4 Data centres in the green wedge

Kingston City Council

Motion:

That MAV State Council: Calls on the Victorian Government to modify Victoria's planning provision to prevent the construction of data centres in Green Wedge areas, and specifically:

- At Clause 51.02-2 (Metropolitan Green Wedge Land: Core Planning Provisions) to include 'Data centre' as defined under Clause 73.03 of the Victorian Planning Provisions as a prohibited Use of Land.
- The Green Wedge and Green Wedge A Zone specifically list 'Data centre' as a Section 3 – Prohibited land use.

Submitting council rationale:

Current planning provisions allow certain land uses in green wedge areas, such as churches and utilities. This theoretically permits data centres. However, given the massive electricity and water usage of these centres, they are incompatible with the rationale of green wedges as a location for environmentally sustainable, low-impact development.

Consolidated Motion C8 – Regulating the social, economic and environmental impacts of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria, in recognising data centres and AI-related infrastructure as critical infrastructure for innovation and Victoria's digital economy, calls on the Victorian Government, with the Australian Government, to establish a Taskforce of state and local governments, to develop and implement a comprehensive planning, environment and infrastructure assessment framework for data centres and AI-related infrastructure, with relevant stakeholders to agree on:

1. clear land use definitions, assessment criteria, best-practice place-based sustainability and resource-efficiency standards and guidance for the siting, assessment, approval and operation of data centres and AI-related infrastructure with regard to:

a. local and regional infrastructure capacity, especially electricity and energy use, water supply and catchment health, telecommunications and roads

b. land use compatibility and clustering, especially with agricultural, Green Wedge, employment land as well as housing supply opportunities

c. emergency management, climate resilience, biodiversity and ecosystems

d. community and neighbourhood amenity impacts through design and benefits sharing

e. locations where they will be prohibited

2. monitoring and transparent reporting frameworks for best-practice energy consumption, water use, emissions, renewable energy sourcing and cumulative impacts, consistent with other state and national reporting frameworks

3. forecasting and local and regional infrastructure capacity and its security impacted by the growth of data centres and AI-related infrastructure

4. how major data centre developments must demonstrate tangible and measurable net benefits to host communities, partnerships with Traditional Owners through the Treaty process, supported by a statewide Community Benefit Sharing Framework for contributions towards:

a) local infrastructure and public realm improvements

b) renewable energy, climate resilience and circular economy initiatives

c) local employment, apprenticeships, skills and workforce development

d) environmental and neighbourhood enhancement projects

e) requires meaningful and transparent consultation with host councils and communities, including neighbouring municipalities where proposals have cross-boundary impacts

f) council capacity to assess and manage the local impacts of data centre developments;

5. ensuring councils are appropriately consulted and equipped to assess and manage the local impacts of data centre and AI infrastructure developments

6. removing data centre applications from State Government-led facilitation pathways that avoid standard notice, referral and transparency mechanisms to enable a comprehensive planning assessment

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Support for Coordinated State Approach to Data Centre Development	Greater Geelong City Council
AI infrastructure and data centres	Melbourne City Council
Planning, sustainability and community oversight of AI and Data Centre Infrastructure	Port Phillip City Council

C8.1 Support for Coordinated State Approach to Data Centre Development

Greater Geelong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Develop a state-wide planning framework for data centres that provides clear policy direction regarding their preferred location, assessment and infrastructure requirements.*
2. *Require meaningful consultation with affected local governments during the planning and assessment of data centre proposals.*
3. *Ensure data centre development is planned and coordinated in a manner that does not adversely impact housing supply, residential growth opportunities, employment land availability or the timely provision of essential infrastructure.*
4. *Undertake strategic planning and infrastructure coordination to manage the cumulative impacts of data centres on electricity, water, transport and telecommunications networks across Victoria.*
5. *Data centres should seek to use efficient cooling technologies, and apply circular water opportunities to ensure potable water, and class A recycled water, is reserved for local community use including key industries such as agriculture.*

Submitting council rationale:

Data centres represent a rapidly growing land use that is increasingly competing for access to strategically important land and infrastructure across Victoria. While these facilities are important for the digital economy, their scale and infrastructure demands have the potential to influence broader planning outcomes, including housing delivery, industrial land supply and infrastructure availability.

Many councils are experiencing population growth and are planning for significant new housing and employment areas. The allocation of limited electricity, water and transport capacity to large-scale data centre developments may affect the timing and feasibility of residential and industrial development needed to support growing communities.

This issue extends beyond individual municipalities and requires a coordinated state-wide response. A consistent planning framework would provide greater certainty for industry, councils and communities while ensuring data centres are located in appropriate areas and supported by adequate infrastructure.

C8.2 AI infrastructure and data centres

Melbourne City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments to:

1. *Recognise data centres and AI infrastructure as critical digital infrastructure requiring coordinated planning, environmental and infrastructure policy responses.*
2. *Develop a dedicated planning and regulatory framework for data centres and AI infrastructure, including:*

2.1. *clear land use definitions and classifications;*

2.2. *fit-for-purpose assessment criteria;*

2.3. *performance-based standards for energy use, water use, emissions, amenity and urban design; and*

2.4. *strategic guidance identifying suitable locations for large-scale facilities.*

3. *Establish consistent state and national monitoring, transparency and reporting requirements, including public reporting on energy consumption, water use, emissions and cumulative impacts.*
4. *Ensure planning and regulatory frameworks include mechanisms to deliver tangible benefits to host communities through local employment, community infrastructure, environmental initiatives and other community benefit outcomes.*
5. *Support long term forecasting and coordinated infrastructure planning to ensure growth in data centres and AI infrastructure does not compromise energy security, water resources, liveability or broader community outcomes.*
6. *Work with local government to ensure councils are appropriately consulted and equipped to assess and manage the local impacts of data centre and AI infrastructure developments.*

Submitting council rationale:

Data centres and AI infrastructure are increasingly recognised as essential digital infrastructure supporting cloud computing, artificial intelligence, data storage and economic growth. However, the rapid expansion of these facilities is outpacing existing planning and regulatory frameworks, creating challenges for local governments in managing land use, environmental impacts, infrastructure demands and community expectations. Current planning systems lack dedicated definitions, assessment standards, environmental performance requirements and coordinated approaches for the location of data centres and AI infrastructure.

In June 2026, the Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly adopted a City of Melbourne motion calling for stronger national policy responses to

the opportunities and impacts associated with data centres and AI infrastructure. This motion seeks to complement that national advocacy by encouraging a coordinated Victorian response to planning, environmental and community impact issues.

Victoria is experiencing strong growth in proposals for hyperscale data centres and AI infrastructure, driven by increasing demand for cloud computing, artificial intelligence and digital services. Industry forecasts indicate a national investment pipeline exceeding $155 billion, while AI-related sectors are expected to support significant employment and economic growth across Melbourne.

At the same time, communities are raising concerns about energy consumption, water use, emissions, infrastructure capacity and local amenity impacts. Local governments require clearer planning tools and stronger regulatory frameworks to balance economic opportunities with environmental sustainability and community wellbeing.

C8.3 Planning, sustainability and community oversight of AI and Data Centre Infrastructure

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Develop a statewide planning framework for data centres and emerging AI-related infrastructure that is aligned with nationally consistent planning and sustainability principles and includes formal local government input.*
2. *Require mandatory consultation with host and affected councils, including neighbouring municipalities where proposals may have cross-boundary impacts on infrastructure, services or communities.*
3. *Require assessment of cumulative and precinct-level impacts, including impacts on electricity networks, water infrastructure, transport systems, emergency management, climate resilience and community amenity.*
4. *Ensure data centre developments are located in appropriate areas that balance infrastructure capacity, land use priorities, housing needs, employment outcomes and community impacts.*
5. *Require transparent reporting and best-practice performance standards for energy use, water consumption, emissions, cooling technologies, waste heat management and renewable energy procurement.*
6. *Oppose the use of fast-track planning and development facilitation pathways for data centre developments and ensure proposals are subject to full planning assessment, community consultation and place-based consideration of local impacts.*

Submitting council rationale:

Current planning and regulatory frameworks were not designed to manage the scale, complexity and cumulative impacts of AI-driven digital infrastructure. Responsibilities are often fragmented across planning authorities, utilities, environmental regulators and other agencies, creating gaps in accountability and limiting opportunities for local government and community input.

Local governments have a unique dual role as both users of data-centre enabled services and representatives of communities affected by major infrastructure development. Councils are increasingly required to manage impacts relating to land use, amenity, infrastructure capacity, climate resilience, emergency management, energy demand and water consumption, yet may have limited involvement in planning approvals and decision-making processes.

A stronger planning and governance framework is needed to ensure data centre growth is transparent, sustainable and aligned with broader public interests. This includes meaningful engagement with affected councils, robust assessment of

cumulative and cross-boundary impacts, alignment with emissions reduction objectives, responsible management of energy and water resources, and clear demonstration of net community benefit.

Consolidated Motion C9 – Data Centres Moratorium

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to impose a moratorium on approvals for new or expanded data centres until such time as a comprehensive planning, environmental and infrastructure assessment framework for data centres and AI-related infrastructure is in place.

The development of this framework should follow the completion of a robust, accountable and broad-based Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Statewide Moratorium and Community Benefit Framework for Hyperscale Data Centres	Maribyrnong City Council
Data Centres Moratorium †	Brimbank City Council
Data Centres	Hume City Council
Data Centres and protection of local interests	Melton City Council

C9.1 Statewide Moratorium and Community Benefit Framework for Hyperscale Data Centres

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. *Implement a immediate moratorium on the approval of new hyperscale data centres until a Victorian Data Centre Planning and Sustainability Framework is developed and enacted.*
2. *Develop a Statewide Data Centre Community Benefit Framework requiring major data centre developments to deliver measurable benefits to host communities.*
3. *Establish a dedicated Victorian planning policy for data centres that includes:*

- *Preferred locations based on infrastructure capacity, renewable energy availability and land use compatibility;*
- *Assessment of cumulative impacts on energy, water, transport and community infrastructure;*
- *Minimum sustainability and resource-efficiency standards; and*
- *Public reporting on energy consumption, water use, emissions and renewable energy sourcing.*

4. *Require proponents of major data centre developments to enter into Community Benefit Agreements that may include investment in:*

- *Local infrastructure and public realm improvements;*
- *Renewable energy, climate resilience and circular economy initiatives;*
- *Local employment, apprenticeships and workforce development programs; and*
- *Environmental and neighbourhood enhancement projects.*

5. *Establish transparent consultation requirements to ensure councils and local communities are meaningfully engaged in the assessment of major data centre proposals.*
6. *Ensure local government representation in the development of the Victorian framework and any future state-led assessment or approval processes.*

Submitting council rationale:

The rapid growth of hyperscale data centres across Victoria is being driven by increasing demand for cloud computing, artificial intelligence, digital services and data storage.

While these facilities play an important role in the digital economy, their scale and resource requirements can have significant impacts on local communities, infrastructure networks and the environment if not appropriately planned and managed.

Victoria currently lacks a dedicated planning and policy framework specifically addressing the cumulative impacts of large-scale data centre development.

The motion seeks a coordinated statewide approach to ensure future development is sustainable, transparent and delivers equitable outcomes.

C9.2 Data Centres Moratorium

Brimbank City Council

Motion:

The MAV calls on the Victorian Government to introduce a moratorium on approvals for new data centres and data centre expansions until:

1. *The conduction of a Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Data Centres, including extensive public hearings where scientific experts, community organisations, local residents and industry representatives can consider the cumulative environmental and social impacts, as well as a proper assessment of the true economic and employment benefits, particularly post-construction.*
2. *The establishment of a joint local and state government taskforce to develop an appropriate planning amendment for broad consultation and implementation via regulation and/or legislation.*
3. *The release of the State Government's Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan.*
4. *Partnerships are established with Traditional Owners to contribute to social licence expectations and ensure compliance with all Treaty obligations.*
5. *Councils have had sufficient time to assess that the council rates applied to data centre operators are commensurate with their corporate social responsibility.*

Submitting council rationale:

Data centres are critical infrastructure that power digital systems we rely on daily. They support essential services such as internet, cloud services, emergency response, transport and healthcare. With Victoria being one of Australia's largest data centre hubs, the state will play an increasingly important role as demand for digital services, artificial intelligence and data storage continues to grow.

Data centres require massive computing power and contain computer infrastructure such as servers and storage systems, which are used to process, store, and manage digital data. As a result, they place considerable demands on the electricity grid, water resources and land, and can generate noise, electronic waste and other environmental impacts. Their location and design can also influence local amenity, biodiversity, infrastructure capacity and community wellbeing.

While data centres bring significant infrastructure investment, the long-term economic and employment benefits require a comprehensive assessment, particularly post-construction, when their benefits are likely to be significantly reduced. As data centres require a vast land area, the employment density is relatively low.

The Victorian Government's current planning and regulatory controls are insufficient to manage long-term environmental and community impacts. Councils need clear, practical direction that can confidently support sustainable growth, including the

reinstatement of council input and stronger planning controls around data centres, ensuring our communities benefit directly.

A clearer planning framework, developed with local government, would support stronger and more effective coordination between state and local government in the planning and development of data centres.

C9.3 Data Centres

Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to:

(i) Introduce a moratorium on approvals for new data centres and expansions of existing data centres until a Victorian Parliamentary Joint Select Committee Inquiry into Data Centres has been completed. The Inquiry should include comprehensive public hearings and invite evidence from scientific experts, community organisations, Traditional Owners, local residents, local governments, industry representatives and relevant government agencies to consider the cumulative environmental, social and economic impacts of data centres and recommend an appropriate regulatory framework and other initiatives identified through the inquiry process.

(ii) Actively participate in the Australian Government's development of national standards, regulatory frameworks and policy settings relating to artificial intelligence and associated digital infrastructure, ensuring alignment between national and Victorian regulatory responses.

(iii) Establish a joint State and Local Government Taskforce to develop planning, environmental and infrastructure policy responses for the siting and operation of data centres, including the preparation of planning scheme amendments for public consultation and implementation through regulation and/or legislation following completion of the proposed Parliamentary Inquiry.

(iv) Ensure the work of the Taskforce includes consideration of:

a. Cumulative and place-based strategic assessments; electricity network capacity and energy demand; water supply, water security and catchment health; biodiversity and ecosystem impacts; land use planning and agricultural land protection;

b. clustering and precinct-based development; community amenity and social impacts; economic benefits, including local jobs and skills development; and any additional matters identified through research, consultation and stakeholder engagement.

(v) Immediately release the Victorian Government's Sustainable Data Centre Action Plan and all supporting research informing its development.

Submitting council rationale:

Data centres are a core part of the digital economy and considered critical infrastructure. They support both existing and emerging industries by providing essential infrastructure for online services, cloud computing, and more recently, artificial intelligence (AI).

The need to balance state important infrastructure with local community expectations and concerns is paramount. This is how the Victorian Government can play its part.

C9.4 Data Centres and protection of local interests

Melton City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to introduce a moratorium on new data centres and data centre expansions pending:

1. *the urgent development of a coordinated framework in collaboration with all levels of government to guide assessment, approval and delivery of data centre developments and that embeds meaningful engagement of local authorities and communities in the planning process.*
2. *minimum state-wide sustainability standards be introduced for large-scale data centres; and*
3. *that major projects demonstrate net benefits to local communities before approval.*

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria is experiencing a rapid increase in proposals for large-scale data centres. These facilities can require significant amounts of electricity, water and supporting infrastructure, while often creating relatively few ongoing local jobs once operational.

There are significant community concerns that some proposals are being considered through State planning pathways that reduce the role of local councils and communities in decision-making. Future data centre proposals must deliver genuine economic and community benefits while protecting local infrastructure, environmental values and residential amenity and provide for meaningful local government and community input.

Currently planning processes do not provide for a transparent, evidence-based approval process nor for meaningful opportunities for community engagement. There is a need to develop clear planning policy at a Federal and State level to guide assessment of data centre development and provide greater certainty for local communities.

Resilience and Recovery

Motion 9. Communications Network Resilience During Emergencies

Horsham Rural City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government to:

a. Implement, as a matter of priority, Recommendation 37 of the Inquiry into the 2026 Summer Fires across Victoria, and work with telecommunications providers, energy distribution providers and the Commonwealth Government to develop a communications network disaster resilience plan that improves resilience in disaster-prone areas, ensuring communities with a demonstrated history of communications failure during fire events are treated as priority locations under that plan.

b. Advocate to the Commonwealth Government, in line with Recommendation 38, for telecommunications to be declared an essential service, recognising that state-level programs alone cannot resolve resilience gaps stemming from a lack of Commonwealth-level obligations on carriers.

c. Advocate to the Commonwealth Government, in line with Recommendation 39, for the introduction of mandatory resilience standards requiring mobile towers in disaster-prone areas to operate without mains power for a minimum of 48 hours.

d. Support the expanded rollout of satellite communications technologies, including low earth orbit systems, for firefighting purposes as identified under Recommendation 37, and consider extending this rollout to broader community resilience use in regional and disaster-prone areas following the conclusion of the current trial.

Submitting council rationale:

The Inquiry into the 2026 Summer Fires across Victoria, tabled in Parliament on 28 July 2026, examined the resilience of telecommunications infrastructure during the January 2026 fires and made three specific recommendations directed at improving communications network resilience:

- Recommendation 37 - a communications network disaster resilience plan, developed with telecommunications providers, energy distributors and the Commonwealth Government;
- Recommendation 38 - Victorian Government advocacy to the Commonwealth for telecommunications to be declared an essential service; and
- Recommendation 39 - Victorian Government advocacy to the Commonwealth for mandatory resilience standards requiring mobile towers in disaster-prone areas to operate without mains power for a minimum of 48 hours.

The Inquiry's evidence base for these recommendations is substantial. NBN Co advised the Committee that most telecommunications disruption during emergencies stems from loss of mains power rather than direct damage to infrastructure, underscoring the importance of backup power standards. Telstra confirmed to the Inquiry that no real-time system currently exists at state or Commonwealth level to identify communities at risk of losing connectivity during an emergency. The Committee found that current voluntary industry engagement "falls short of establishing clear or enforceable obligations on telecommunications providers to improve the reliability and resilience of services, particularly in rural and regional areas."

This motion supports the timely implementation of Recommendations 37 and 39, and further calls for two specific strengthening measures beyond the Inquiry's recommendations: that communities with a demonstrated history of communications failure during fire events be treated as priority locations under any resulting disaster resilience plan and tower compliance schedule, and that the expanded satellite rollout contemplated for firefighting purposes under Recommendation 37 be extended, following the conclusion of the current trial, to general community resilience use in regional and disaster-prone communities.

Why State Government Action Is Required

The Victorian Government holds central responsibility for:

- Leading development of the communications network disaster resilience plan called for under Recommendation 37, in partnership with telecommunications providers, energy distributors and the Commonwealth Government;
- Advocacy to the Commonwealth Government, as recommended under Recommendations 38 and 39, given telecommunications regulation is a Commonwealth responsibility that the State cannot unilaterally resolve;
- Coordinating emergency management planning and resourcing, including through Emergency Management Victoria, which the Inquiry heard is already engaging with the Commonwealth on infrastructure hardening and coverage gap programs; and
- Determining the scope and continuation of state-funded satellite communications trials, including decisions on expanded rollout following the current trial's conclusion.

While telecommunications carriers and the Commonwealth hold primary regulatory responsibility for network resilience standards, the Inquiry found that voluntary industry commitments alone are insufficient. The Victorian Government's role as convenor, advocate and co-investor as set out in Recommendations 37 to 39 is the mechanism through which meaningful, enforceable resilience improvements can be achieved for Victorian communities. Local government has no jurisdiction over telecommunications regulation, carrier obligations or Commonwealth policy settings; these are levers only the State and Commonwealth Governments hold.

Financial and Governance Impacts on Councils

Unresolved telecommunications resilience gaps have direct consequences for councils, particularly in fire-prone rural and regional areas, including:

- Increased burden on councils and municipal emergency management committees to coordinate local emergency communications when primary telecommunications infrastructure fails during a fire event;
- Councils bearing reputational and community pressure to advocate on communications resilience issues that sit outside their statutory authority or funding capacity to resolve directly;
- Continued reliance on ad hoc, temporary carrier responses (such as deployable communications units) rather than planned, funded resilience infrastructure, creating uncertainty for municipal emergency planning; and
- Councils are, in effect, left managing the local consequences of a regulatory and infrastructure gap that sits entirely within Commonwealth and State jurisdiction, without the authority or resourcing to resolve it themselves.

Alignment with MAV Strategic Priorities

This motion aligns with MAV's enabling priorities relating to:

- Resilience & Recovery - directly implementing recommendations from an official government inquiry into disaster response and communications resilience;
- Connected Places - ensuring communities retain access to essential communications infrastructure during and after emergencies;
- Active Local Democracy - amplifying the evidence and experience of rural and regional communities heard directly by the Inquiry; and
- Climate & Regenerative Design - strengthening infrastructure resilience against increasingly severe and frequent bushfire events under a changing climate.

Motion 10. Disaster and Emergency Funding to be provided by the State Government "Up-Front" on an annual basis to regional, rural and interface Councils in bushfire, flood, drought and severe storm areas (based on previous natural disaster events).

Colac Otway Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV:

1. Notes that regional, rural and interface Councils do not have the financial capacity to properly prepare for emergency/disaster events each financial year. This includes (but not limited to) upgrade of plant, e.g., fire protection compliant, backup power and communication sources, increased frequency of roadside and land slashing and clearing in the lead up to the summer season, the training of staff and provision of appropriate equipment if called upon to assist during events.

2. Notes that regional, rural and interface Councils that have been impacted by these disaster/emergency events have been "out of pocket" even after disaster funding from State and Federal governments have been received. This is due to costs relating to community support, recovery (short and long term), asset deterioration after the event (not known at the time) and preparation for the next events. This severely effects Councils' ability to delivery budget priorities, strategic projects, and asset renewal programs.

3. Calls on the Victorian Government for the establishment of an Up-Front Emergency Response Fund allocated to regional, rural and interface Councils prone to experience regular emergency events to support training and preparedness of staff and local communities. These funds are to be allocated per annum and are expended by the Council applicable to their situation and risk assessments of future needs in disaster management.

Submitting council rationale:

Why: Climate adaptation, resilience and disaster recovery are policies/strategies of the MAV and State Government.

How: Advocate for "up-front" funding for preparation to affectively mitigate severity of disasters on our communities and save costs in the aftermath of events.

Prior: Submissions to the recent Bushfire enquiry, presentations at the ALGA Canberra Conference and numerous ESVF motions and advocacies

Sustainable Economy

Motion 11. Sustainable investment in independent arts and creative organisations

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Increase investment in independent artists and small-to-medium arts organisations through sustainable, long-term funding programs that provide greater certainty and stability for the creative sector.
2. Strengthen partnerships between State and local government to support creative workers, cultural organisations, venues and place-based creative initiatives.
3. Improve coordination and alignment between State, local and Commonwealth funding and policy settings to support the long-term sustainability of the creative sector and reduce duplication and funding gaps.
4. Recognise the contribution of arts and culture to economic development, tourism, community wellbeing, social cohesion and the vitality of activity centres across Victoria.

Submitting council rationale:

Independent artists, creatives and small-to-medium arts organisations are critical contributors to Victoria's economic, cultural and social life. They create employment, attract visitors, activate public spaces, support local businesses and strengthen community identity through cultural participation and creative expression.

This is a particularly important issue for councils as arts and cultural organisations face increasing financial pressures from rising operating costs, declining funding certainty and changing economic conditions. In some communities, long-standing independent arts organisations and venues are now facing the prospect of closure due to funding constraints, placing at risk important cultural infrastructure and pathways for creative development.

While there is strong alignment between local, state and national cultural policy frameworks, including shared objectives around supporting creative workers, increasing participation and strengthening sector sustainability, challenges remain in how support is delivered in practice. Funding arrangements are often fragmented, short-term and program-based, making it difficult for organisations to plan, collaborate, retain staff and sustain long-term community outcomes.

These pressures increasingly flow through to local government. Councils are regularly called upon to fill funding gaps, provide subsidised spaces, support cultural programming and maintain local creative ecosystems, creating additional pressure on municipal budgets and resources. A stronger and more coordinated approach to arts funding would provide greater certainty for artists and organisations.

Consolidated Motion C10 – Non-Mandatory Glass Bin Requirements

That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to:

- Commission an independent review of the draft Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards 2024 and draft Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) (Mandatory Service Provision and Other Matters) Regulations 2024
- Design revised service standards and regulations in partnership with the sector, to ensure that councils can deliver services responsive to their communities' needs, including consideration of both physical constraints and projected volumes and presentation rates
- Ensure that there is sufficient lead time between the publication of any final service standard and regulations and their commencement for councils to plan and implement service changes
- Increase investment in the Container Deposit Scheme and expand the scope of containers it collects

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Glass Bin Kerbside Standards	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Suspending mandatory Kerbside Glass Recycling	Bass Coast Shire Council

C10.1 Glass Bin Kerbside Standards

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Ministers for the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to:

1. *Ensure the mandated standarised four bin system provides flexibility for Council's to decide what service levels are appropriate for their community.*
2. *Call on the Victorian Government to provide greater investment for the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) to increase the accepted glass type of material.*
3. *Call on Victorian Government to increase recycling glass separation targets at the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) across the State.*

Submitting council rationale:

Victorian councils continue to face significant financial pressures resulting from increasing service delivery costs, infrastructure demands and rate-capping constraints.

The introduction of a separate household glass bin service imposes substantial additional capital and operational costs on councils and their communities. These costs arise at a time when the Victorian Container Deposit Scheme already provides an alternative pathway for the recovery of glass material.

In excess of 50 Victorian councils have expressed concerns that the mandatory implementation of a fourth kerbside bin may deliver diminishing environmental returns where existing recycling systems, CDS participation and alternative glass recovery options already achieve satisfactory outcomes.

Local government is best placed to determine the most effective waste and recycling services for its communities. A one-size-fits-all approach does not adequately recognise the differing needs of rural, regional and metropolitan municipalities. Councils should retain the flexibility to adopt locally appropriate and cost-effective glass recovery solutions without being compelled to introduce an additional kerbside bin.

C10.2 Suspending mandatory Kerbside Glass Recycling

Bass Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:

a. *Suspend the mandatory requirement for Victorian councils to introduce a separate kerbside glass collection service by 1 July 2027 until the final Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards and associated regulations have been published and councils have had sufficient time to plan and implement any required changes;*

b. *Undertake an independent review of the mandatory separate kerbside glass collection requirement, including a cost-benefit analysis that considers:*

- *the financial impacts on councils and ratepayers;*
- *the environmental and circular economy outcomes of separate kerbside glass collection compared with alternative recovery models;*
- *the operational impacts on councils and communities; and*
- *opportunities to achieve equivalent or improved glass recovery through expansion of Victoria's Container Deposit Scheme to include additional glass beverage containers, including wine and spirit bottles.*

c. *Amend the Circular Economy (Waste Reduction and Recycling) framework where necessary to provide councils with flexibility to adopt the most effective and efficient glass recovery solution for their communities, provided equivalent or better recycling and circular economy outcomes can be demonstrated; and*

d. *Ensure that councils are not subject to compliance penalties while final regulations and service standards remain outstanding or while any review of the mandatory glass service is undertaken.*

Submitting council rationale:

39 Councils in Victoria are currently advocating to the state government to oppose the introduction of a separate kerbside glass collection service. MAV's support for this position would further strengthen our collective position.

Significant to the Sector

Consolidated Motion C11 - A Sustainable Approach to Animal Management: Pounds, Pets Owners in Hardship and Cat Management

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to recognise the growing financial and operational pressure on councils delivering legislated animal management services under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, and the role companion animals play in community wellbeing, mental health and social connection, and to:

1. Work with local government and the animal welfare sector to develop a sustainable statewide approach to pound and shelter services that addresses rising demand, limited market capacity and escalating costs, supported by dedicated funding for the renewal, upgrade and expansion of pound and shelter infrastructure and recurrent funding to councils and contracted not-for-profit providers for animal management, care, compliance and welfare obligations.
2. Review the impact of the State animal registration levy on council animal management services and ensure levy revenue is reinvested in programs and infrastructure that directly support councils' statutory responsibilities.
3. Establish a dedicated funding stream and statewide initiatives that keep pets and people together during hardship, supporting partnerships between councils, animal welfare organisations and community service providers to improve access to veterinary care, temporary accommodation and emergency assistance, and to prevent surrender by people experiencing homelessness, family violence, illness, disability or economic disadvantage.
4. Amend the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and associated regulations to give councils the power and option to implement trap, desex and return programs for unregistered and feral cats, returning cats to the general location of capture, as one of a wider range of cat management tools.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Pound Services	Greater Geelong City Council
Keeping pets and people together during hardship	Port Phillip City Council
Improving Cat Management	Boroondara City Council

C11.1 Pound Services

Greater Geelong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Recognise the significant financial and operational pressures facing councils in delivering legislated pound services under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.*
2. *Require meaningful consultation and work with local government and the animal welfare sector to develop a sustainable, statewide approach to pound and shelter service delivery that addresses growing demand, limited market capacity and escalating operating costs.*
3. *Establish dedicated and ongoing funding programs to support the renewal, upgrade and expansion of pound and animal shelter infrastructure to ensure facilities meet contemporary animal welfare, compliance and community expectations.*
4. *Provide recurrent funding to councils and contracted not-for-profit service providers to assist with the delivery of pound services and the increasing costs associated with animal management, care, compliance and welfare obligations.*
5. *Review the impact of the State animal registration levy on local government animal management services and ensure levy revenue is reinvested in programs and infrastructure that directly support councils' statutory responsibilities.*

Submitting council rationale:

Without State investment in pound and shelter services, councils will continue to absorb increasing service costs, limiting the ability to deliver plans and programs that support responsible pet ownership and best practice animal management.

Under the Domestic Animals Act 1994, all councils are required to have a pound service for the management of lost, stray, and surrendered cats and dogs. These services are either delivered directly by Councils or contracted to Not for Profits.

Legislative requirements and community expectation regarding animal welfare standards have changed significantly, resulting in services and infrastructure that are no longer fit for purpose.

Cost increases have put significant pressure on the industry and costs to councils are increasing beyond sustainable levels. Councils are being forced to consider service delivery models that ensure compliance and animal welfare standards are met, in an industry with limited market options.

C11.2 Keeping pets and people together during hardship

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Establish a dedicated funding stream to support programs that assist people experiencing financial hardship to retain and care for their companion animals.*
2. *Support partnerships between local governments, animal welfare organisations and community service providers that prevent pet surrender and improve access to veterinary care, temporary accommodation and emergency assistance.*
3. *Recognise the role companion animals play in supporting community wellbeing, mental health and social connection, particularly for people experiencing homelessness, family violence, illness, disability or economic disadvantage.*
4. *Invest in statewide initiatives that keep pets and people together during periods of crisis, reducing unnecessary pet surrenders and pressure on municipal animal shelter and welfare services.*

Submitting council rationale:

For many Victorians experiencing hardship, a pet is not a luxury but a valued companion, family member and important source of emotional support.

Rising cost-of-living pressures are placing these relationships under increasing strain. A recent Lost Dogs' Home Vet Pet Survey received 713 responses, with 61 per cent of respondents living below the Australian poverty line and 58 per cent reporting they had used credit to pay veterinary bills. Behind these figures are people choosing between paying rent and paying veterinary costs, delaying treatment for their pets, or taking on debt to keep a companion animal healthy.

The Lost Dogs' Home's Home Together Program, for instance, supports people experiencing hardship, including homelessness and family violence, by providing assistance with veterinary costs, pound release fees and connections to crisis support services. The program is also expanding its support for people escaping family violence, entering temporary accommodation, being hospitalised or accessing respite care.

Over the past two years, the Home Together Program has prevented 356 pet surrenders. With additional funding, it is estimated that a further 1,200 pet surrenders could be prevented over the next three years. Targeted government investment in programs that keep pets and people together would improve animal welfare outcomes, support vulnerable community members and reduce pressure on municipal animal shelter and welfare services.

C11.3 Improving Cat Management

Boroondara City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government to amend the Domestic Animal Act, 1994 and any associated regulations to provide councils with the power and option of implementing cat capture, desexing and release programs back to the general location that they were captured as part of managing the unregistered and feral cat populations.

Submitting council rationale:

Current approaches to managing unregistered and feral cat populations rely on the trapping of cats and their transfer to a pound where they will either be reclaimed, made available for adoption or euthanised. Given the rapid rate of cat reproduction, the space opened up by the removal of trapped cats is rapidly filled by new unregistered or feral cats fighting for survival. As a result, Councils are dedicating ever increasing resources to cat management to meet community expectations that cat populations should be managed to reduce their impact on native wildlife and community well-Being. Yet these efforts are having no practical impact on the cat population. In addition, many councils require the support of animal welfare agencies who provide the pound services. These agencies are coming under increasing pressure due to the number of cats being trapped or surrendered, particularly in the current cost of living crisis.

Experiences overseas have demonstrated that a program of trapping, desexing and returning cats relies on the cats' natural territorial behaviours to maintain a stable, reduced population that is not reproducing. Cats in these programs are less likely to spread disease and are less aggressive than cats where no intervention has occurred.

Presently, due to the requirements of the Domestic Animal Act, 1994 that requires all cats to be registered, there is no opportunity to explore whether such programs would work in the Australian context.

This motion seeks MAV advocacy to the State Government to change the legislation to enable Victorian councils to explore a wider range of cat management options.

Consolidated Motion C12 - Modernising the rating system

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review Victoria's rating system, with particular focus on:

- Changes needed to ensure the rating system can appropriately apply to emerging industrial land uses such as data centres and large-scale battery storage, to ensure fair and equitable outcomes for communities
- Allowing councils to better utilise differential rating as a policy tool, prioritising community consultation, transparency, equity, and evidence-based local decision making
- Ensure that statutory exemptions from the rate cap balance reducing the burden on land uses with a clear and direct public benefit, with the impact of overly broad exemptions on other ratepayers and council resources.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Modernising Victoria's Differential Rating Framework	Frankston City Council
Fair Rating and Valuation of Emerging Industrial Infrastructure	Latrobe City Council
Reform of Statutory Rate Exemptions to Improve Fairness and Financial Sustainability	Boroondara City Council

C12.1 Modernising Victoria's Differential Rating Framework

Frankston City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Undertake a review of Victoria's differential rating framework, including the Ministerial Guidelines for Differential Rating.*
2. *Amend the legislative, regulatory and policy framework to provide councils with greater flexibility to establish locally appropriate differential rating categories based on objectively identifiable property characteristics and land use.*
3. *Enable councils, following appropriate community consultation, to consider additional property characteristics when determining differential rating categories, including:*

a. *owner occupied and non-owner occupied residential properties*

b. *long term residential rental properties and commercial short stay accommodation*

c. *vacant, underutilised and actively developed land*

d. *different forms of commercial, industrial and accommodation uses*

e. *other locally relevant property characteristics that can be objectively identified and consistently applied.*

4. *Ensure any expanded council discretion is supported by principles of transparency, equity, evidence based decision making and community consultation.*
5. *Work with the Municipal Association of Victoria and Victorian councils to develop updated guidelines and model rating categories that provide consistency while preserving genuine local decision making.*

Submitting council rationale:

This motion addresses a sector-wide issue because the current differential rating framework affects all Victorian councils and limits their ability to respond to emerging challenges such as short-stay accommodation, housing pressures and changing land use patterns.

Reform is required at the State Government level, as the framework is governed by legislation and Ministerial Guidelines, making this an issue that cannot be resolved by individual councils alone. MAV advocacy would provide a coordinated sector-wide voice to modernise the framework and support fairer, more locally responsive rating outcomes.

C12.2 Fair Rating and Valuation of Emerging Industrial Infrastructure

Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review the rating and valuation framework for emerging industrial infrastructure, including data centres and battery energy storage systems, to ensure host communities receive a fair and equitable return from nationally significant developments.

This review should consider whether the Capital Improved Value methodology appropriately captures the full value of these assets, including high-value infrastructure, plant and non-fixed equipment where appropriate, while providing certainty for councils, industry and investors.

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria is experiencing significant investment in new forms of industrial infrastructure, including data centres and battery energy storage systems. These developments can represent investments of hundreds of millions or billions of dollars and contain substantial high-value infrastructure, plant and equipment that may not fit neatly within valuation approaches developed around more traditional forms of industrial development.

Communities hosting these developments provide the land, infrastructure, services and broader environment that enable investment and should receive a fair and enduring share of the benefits. This requires confidence that the rating and valuation framework appropriately reflects the scale and nature of contemporary industrial assets, including consideration of whether Capital Improved Value adequately recognises high-value infrastructure, plant and non-fixed equipment where appropriate.

This is an emerging issue for councils across Victoria as investment in digital infrastructure, renewable energy and energy storage accelerates. A council-by-council response would risk inconsistent treatment and uncertainty for both local government and industry.

MAV advocacy could bring councils, the Victorian Government, valuation authorities and industry together to establish a consistent statewide approach that balances fair outcomes for host communities with certainty for investment.

The motion also builds on the principle recognised at the May 2026 State Council through Motion 16 concerning offshore wind communities hosting nationally significant infrastructure should have appropriate mechanisms to share in its benefits.

C12.3 Reform of Statutory Rate Exemptions to Improve Fairness and Financial Sustainability

Boroondara City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government for a review and reform of statutory exemptions from council rates under the Local Government Act 1989 and related rating and valuation legislation with the objective of improving fairness, transparency and financial sustainability across the local government sector. The review should consider the continued appropriateness of existing exemption categories, the impact of exemptions on councils and ratepayers and options to ensure that land and organisations that benefit from local infrastructure and services make an appropriate contribution to their cost unless a clear and contemporary public benefit justification exists.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils rely heavily on rates to fund the local infrastructure, services and community facilities used by residents, businesses, visitors and institutions across each municipality. While all land is generally rateable, Victorian legislation excludes a range of land from rates, including certain Crown, public, charitable, religious, mining and other exempt categories. In practice, this means that many properties benefit from council services and infrastructure without contributing through the rating system. The cost is effectively borne by the remaining ratepayers, placing additional pressure on households and businesses at a time when councils are operating under rate capping, rising service costs and significant infrastructure renewal demands. A contemporary review is needed to determine whether existing exemptions remain fair, transparent and aligned with current community expectations.

Motion C13.2 Strengthening food relief and food security

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian and Australian Governments to:

1. Develop a coordinated statewide and national response to food insecurity, recognising rising cost-of-living pressures and increasing demand for emergency food assistance.
2. Provide ongoing and increased funding for food relief organisations, community food programs, neighbourhood houses, community health services and other providers responding to food insecurity.
3. Support partnerships between local government, community organisations and the food relief sector to improve access to nutritious, culturally appropriate and affordable food.
4. Invest in preventative measures that address the underlying causes of food insecurity, including poverty, housing stress and social disadvantage.
5. Recognise food security as a critical determinant of community health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils across Victoria are seeing increasing demand for food relief services as households face rising costs associated with housing, energy, transport, groceries and other essentials. Community organisations, neighbourhood houses, food relief providers and local services are reporting growing pressure as more individuals, families, older people and workers seek support to meet their basic food needs.

Food insecurity is not only a financial issue but also a significant health and wellbeing concern. Limited or uncertain access to nutritious food can contribute to poorer physical health outcomes, social isolation, stress, anxiety and broader mental health challenges. For many residents, the inability to reliably access food can have compounding impacts on dignity, community participation and overall quality of life.

While councils frequently support local food relief initiatives and community wellbeing programs, collective responsibility for addressing food insecurity also sits with the Victorian and Australian Governments. A coordinated approach is required to ensure that emergency food assistance is adequately funded while also addressing the structural drivers of food insecurity.-

Consolidated Motion C13 - Securing Victoria's food system: from paddock to plate

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government, and through it to the Australian Government, to recognise food security as a matter of strategic state and national significance, a critical determinant of community health and wellbeing, and a growing risk under climate change, and to:

1. Develop a coordinated Victorian Food Security Framework, with local government, industry, regional communities and the Australian Government, that identifies and manages risks across food production, processing, transport and distribution, and integrates climate adaptation, water policy, agricultural land use planning, freight infrastructure and food production strategies through a whole-of-government approach.
2. Develop a statewide strategy to protect strategically important agricultural land as a long-term resource for food production, including statewide mapping based on soil capability, water security, climate impacts, regional production capacity and unfragmented farmland; clear criteria and planning tools that prioritise food production and restrict incompatible uses such as residential development, large-scale infrastructure and renewable energy and battery projects; and strengthened Victorian Planning Provisions and guidance, while preserving landholders' flexibility to diversify into compatible uses such as tourism, events and rural worker housing.
3. Advocate for future Murray-Darling Basin policy settings to explicitly consider cumulative impacts on domestic food production, processing and distribution and on regional economic resilience, alongside environmental outcomes.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Protecting Food Security Through Integrated Water, Climate and Agricultural Policy	Campaspe Shire Council
Protecting Agricultural Land	South Gippsland Shire Council

C13.1 Protecting Food Security Through Integrated Water, Climate and Agricultural Policy

Campaspe Shire Council

Motion

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

- *Recognise food security as a matter of strategic state significance and acknowledge the growing risks posed by climate change, water recovery programs, agricultural supply chain vulnerabilities and changing patterns of food production.*
- *Work with local government, industry, regional communities and the Australian Government to develop a coordinated Victorian Food Security Framework that identifies risks to food production, processing, transport and distribution systems.*
- *Advocate to the Australian Government for future Murray-Darling Basin policy settings to explicitly consider impacts on domestic food production, testing, processing, distribution systems to ensure regional economic resilience and national food security, alongside environmental outcomes.*
- *Ensure that climate adaptation, water policy, agricultural land use planning, freight infrastructure and food production strategies are integrated through a whole-of-government approach.*

Submitting council rationale:

Campaspe Shire is one of Australia's most productive food-producing regions. Agriculture and food processing are central to the regional economy and rely heavily on secure water supplies, efficient transport networks, reliable energy and resilient supply chains. Council's submission to the Murray-Darling Basin Authority Basin Plan Review noted that irrigation-dependent communities have already experienced significant impacts from previous water recovery initiatives, including business closures, pressure on irrigation networks and reduced economic resilience. Council further submitted that changes in water availability, reliability and affordability influence production decisions, concentrate production in fewer locations and have implications for the diversity and resilience of Australia's domestic food production system.

The risks facing food security are broader than water policy alone. Climate change is increasing uncertainty through more frequent extreme weather events, changing rainfall patterns and pressure on irrigation and town water systems. Campaspe Shire's Basin Plan Review submission highlighted that climate change is amplifying existing pressures on food producers and regional communities and that environmental, social and economic outcomes must be considered together. The National Farmers' Federation has similarly identified climate change, global supply chain disruption and

growing pressures on agricultural production as key food security challenges requiring coordinated government action.

Food security should be recognised as a strategic state and national issue. Recent public debate surrounding Murray-Darling Basin water purchases, combined with growing concern about supply chain resilience, demonstrates the need for governments to better understand the cumulative impacts of policy decisions on food production and regional communities. Victoria has already acknowledged potential socio-economic impacts arising from Basin water purchases through the establishment of the Victorian Basin Communities Inter-Departmental Committee. Building on this foundation, a coordinated food security framework would allow governments to better assess emerging risks, support regional resilience and maintain Victoria's and Australia's capacity to produce affordable, high-quality food into the future.

C13.3 Protecting Agricultural Land

South Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to prioritise and develop a coordinated strategy to support the long-term protection and viability of agricultural land across Victoria. This will help to ensure Victoria's agricultural capacity is protected as a long term strategic resource for national food security.

The Strategy should include:

- *Mapping across Victoria that identifies agricultural land, taking into account historical data and future predictions such as water security, soil capability, availability of unfragmented farmland, climate impacts and regional production capacity;*
- *Clear statewide criteria and planning tools that protect these identified regions, prioritising food production and restricting incompatible land use; and*
- *Strengthened Victorian Planning Provisions and guidance to provide clarity and consistency in assessing applications on agricultural land.*

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria's agricultural land is a finite and strategically important resource that underpins food production, regional economies and Australia's long-term food security. Increasing competition from residential development, infrastructure, renewable energy, blanket carbon capture and other permanent non-agricultural uses means a more coordinated approach is needed to identify and protect the land most important to Victoria's future agricultural capacity, with a focus on food security.

This aligns with emerging national priorities.

The Australian Government's Feeding Australia: National Food Security Strategy is being developed to strengthen the productivity, resilience and security of Australia's food system, while the National Adaptation Plan and National Climate Risk Assessment recognise primary industries, food production, water security and regional communities as areas requiring consideration as Australia adapts to a changing climate.

A statewide strategy should therefore identify agricultural land based not simply on its current or historic use, but its long-term suitability for food production. This should consider soil capability, water security, climate impacts, regional production capacity and the availability of sufficiently large and unfragmented areas of farmland.

Importantly, protection should not mean blanket restrictions on agricultural land. Farmers and other landholders should retain flexibility to diversify their businesses and pursue compatible uses, including events, tourism, rural worker housing and other

activities that support the ongoing viability of agricultural enterprises and regional communities.

Rather, stronger planning protection should focus on avoiding the permanent loss, fragmentation or displacement of strategically important agricultural land through incompatible development. This may include consideration of residential development, large-scale non-agricultural infrastructure, renewable energy and battery projects, and land uses that substantially remove productive land from agricultural use.

Clear statewide mapping, criteria and strengthened planning guidance would provide greater certainty for landholders, industry, local councils and communities. It would support confident investment and appropriate diversification while ensuring Victoria's most important agricultural land remains available as a long-term strategic resource for food production and future generations.

Consolidated Motion C14 - State Government Infrastructure Impacts

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Establish a formal State Infrastructure Impact Framework requiring assessment of local infrastructure impacts arising from new, expanded or intensified facilities, assets and services facilitated by all parts of State Government.
2. Require early consultation with affected councils during the planning, business case and design phases of major State Government projects to identify impacts on local infrastructure and associated funding requirements.
3. Ensure business cases and funding for major State Government projects provide for associated local infrastructure, including impacts on council-owned roads, footpaths, parking, drainage, active transport networks and public spaces.
4. Develop a dedicated funding mechanism through which State Government departments and agencies contribute towards local infrastructure required to support State-owned facilities, assets and services.
5. Establish a program to address legacy infrastructure deficits where historic growth in State Government facilities or services has created substantial unfunded infrastructure burdens for councils.
6. Investigate legislative, planning and funding reforms that provide treatment equivalent to development contribution arrangements applicable to major private sector developments.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Fair Funding for Local Infrastructure Supporting State Government Assets and Services	Greater Bendigo City Council
Integrated State and Local Government growth planning	Mitchell Shire Council

C14.1 Fair Funding for Local Infrastructure Supporting State Government Assets and Services

Greater Bendigo City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Establish a formal State Infrastructure Impact Framework requiring assessment of local infrastructure impacts arising from new, expanded or intensified State Government facilities and developments.*
2. *Develop a dedicated funding mechanism through which State Government agencies contribute toward local infrastructure required to support State-owned assets, facilities and services.*
3. *Ensure that business cases for major State Government projects include funding for associated local infrastructure, including where impacts occur on council-owned roads, footpaths, parking, drainage, active transport networks and public spaces.*
4. *Require early consultation with affected councils during the planning and design phases of major State Government projects to identify infrastructure impacts and funding requirements.*
5. *Establish a program to address legacy infrastructure deficits where historic growth in State Government facilities has created substantial unfunded infrastructure burdens for councils.*
6. *Investigate legislative, planning and funding reforms that provide treatment equivalent to development contribution arrangements applicable to major private sector developments.*
7. *Develop a whole-of-government approach to growth infrastructure planning, ensuring that investment in schools, hospitals, transport facilities, emergency services infrastructure, social housing and other State assets is accompanied by appropriate investment in supporting local infrastructure.*

Submitting council rationale:

This is a state-wide issue that affects all Councils. It is related to current and ongoing issues that address a double standard when considering private planning developments and State provided developments. The gravity of this is far beyond a single Council.

C14.2 Integrated State and Local Government growth planning

Mitchell Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to require the Department of Health, the Department of Education, the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, Emergency Management Victoria, Sport and Recreation Victoria, the Victorian School Building Authority and the Victorian Health Building Authority to undertake coordinated long-term planning for growing communities in partnership with local government, recognising councils as essential planning partners and ensuring State infrastructure and service planning is aligned with councils' legislated long-term strategic planning.

Submitting council rationale:

Under the Local Government Act 2020, Victorian councils are required to prepare long-term strategic planning documents, including a 10-year Financial Plan and 10-year Asset Plan, supported by integrated community, infrastructure and service planning. These plans are informed by extensive community engagement, evidence-based analysis and detailed understanding of local growth, demand and infrastructure needs.

In contrast, there is no consistent requirement for key State Government departments and delivery agencies to undertake equivalent long-term planning with councils or to meaningfully participate in local growth planning. This fragmented approach contributes to delayed delivery of schools, health facilities, emergency services, community infrastructure and other essential services, leaving rapidly growing communities without the infrastructure they need. Requiring State Government departments and agencies to partner with councils in long-term growth planning would improve coordination, better align investment with community need and deliver more timely, efficient and integrated outcomes for Victorian communities.

Consolidated Motion C15 - Visit Victoria: Investing in Places, Events and Regional Communities

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Recognise and invest in Victoria's visitor economy as a critical driver of local and regional economic development, including nature-based tourism, major events and destination management.
2. Provide long-term funding certainty for Visitor Economy Partnerships beyond 30 June 2027 through a multiyear funding model, developed in partnership with local government and industry.
3. Invest in the maintenance, resilience and prompt restoration of nature-based tourism assets, particularly following damage from flood, fire, storm or other climate-related events.
4. Establish a Regional Visitor Economy Transition Fund to support communities and local businesses affected by the loss or relocation of major state-supported tourism and sporting events, including investment in new events, tourism infrastructure, destination marketing and economic diversification.
5. Partner with affected councils and Visitor Economy Partnerships to develop long-term destination management and economic diversification strategies, and establish a transparent framework for assessing the regional economic impacts of major event decisions before they are finalised.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Funding for maintenance and repair of nature-based tourism assets	Surf Coast Shire Council
Visitor Economy Partnership Funding	Corangamite Shire Council
Economic Transition for Regional Communities impacted by the Loss of Major Events	Bass Coast Shire Council

C15.1 Funding for maintenance and repair of nature-based tourism assets

Surf Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV calls on the Victorian Government to recognise the critical role nature-based tourism plays in the state economy by investing in the maintenance of nature-based tourism assets and their prompt restoration in the event such assets are damaged by flood, fire, storm, or other climate-related events

Submitting council rationale:

Tourism is a key component of Victoria's economy. In the year ending December 2024, visitor expenditure state-wide reached a record $40 billion.

Nature-based tourism is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the visitor economy. According to Tourism Research Australia, participation in nature-based tourism among Australians increased by 47% between 2014 and 2023. Over the same period, participation in bushwalking and rainforest walks increased by 81%, while visitation to national and state parks grew by 73%.

In Victoria, visits to national and state parks generate approximately $1.4 billion in economic activity each year and support around 14,000 jobs. At a regional and township level, tourism is a key driver of economic sustainability, supporting a broader network of local businesses that rely on visitor spending.

Nature-based tourism assets are managed by a range of land managers, including local and state government. Given their significant contribution to regional economies, the maintenance, renewal and enhancement of these assets must remain a priority for the Victorian Government.

By way of example, a flash flood on 15 January 2026 caused widespread destruction of walking trails and pedestrian bridges in the Great Otway National Park. Since then the majority of the trails remain closed and repair cannot be achieved without dedicated funding. To ensure long term value, funding should enable damaged bridges and trails to be built to a new climate resilient standard and to ensure they meet accessibility standards.

The Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's premier tourism destinations, attracting approximately 6.8 million visitors annually and generating around $1.7 billion in visitor expenditure for regional Victoria. At the heart of this success are the region's internationally recognised natural assets, including the Twelve Apostles, Great Otway National Park, Surf Coast beaches, coastal cliffs, forests and unique wildlife experiences. These natural environments are not simply a backdrop to tourism; they are the tourism product itself.

Maintaining the health, accessibility and resilience of these landscapes is therefore critical to safeguarding both the visitor economy and the environmental values that make the Great Ocean Road a globally recognised destination.

C15.2 Visitor Economy Partnership Funding

Corangamite Shire Council

Supported by: Surf Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Provide long-term operational funding certainty for Victoria's Visitor Economy Partnerships beyond 30 June 2027 through a multiyear funding model that enables Visitor Economy Partnerships to undertake strategic destination management, visitor economy development, industry capability building, tourism investment facilitation and regional events support.*
2. *Recognise Visitor Economy Partnerships as critical economic development partners supporting local government, industry and state government visitor economy objectives.*
3. *Engage with local government and Visitor Economy Partnerships in the development of future funding arrangements to ensure regional tourism and visitor economy outcomes are sustained and enhanced across Victoria.*

Submitting council rationale:

Visitor Economy Partnerships (VEPs) are key regional organisations that support destination management, visitor economy development, tourism industry capability, regional events and investment attraction across Victoria. They work closely with councils, local businesses and the Victorian Government to strengthen regional economies and support employment.

Current Victorian Government funding arrangements for visitor economy programs indicate funding certainty only to 30 June 2027. Without a longer-term funding commitment, there is a risk that regional tourism planning, industry development initiatives, event attraction activities and economic development outcomes may be impacted.

Providing ongoing funding certainty for VEPs will support effective long-term planning, strengthen collaboration between councils and the tourism industry and help maximise the economic and community benefits generated by Victoria's visitor economy.

Victorian councils make significant financial and in-kind contributions to the visitor economy through support for events, visitor servicing, tourism infrastructure, destination management, visitor management and partnerships with Visitor Economy Partnerships.

Long-term State Government funding certainty for Visitor Economy Partnerships will help ensure these local government investments are coordinated, leveraged and maximised for the benefit of rural and regional communities and economies.

C15.3 Economic Transition for Regional Communities impacted by the Loss of Major Events

Bass Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

a. *Acknowledge the significant economic impacts on regional municipalities arising from the loss or relocation of major state supported tourism and sporting events;*

b. *Establish a Regional Transition Fund to assist affected communities and local businesses to respond to the loss of major visitor economies;*

c. *Work in partnership with affected councils to develop long-term destination management and economic diversification strategies that replace lost visitation and expenditure;*

d. *Prioritise investment in new major events, tourism infrastructure and destination marketing for communities experiencing significant economic impacts from the withdrawal of major events; and*

e. *Develop a transparent framework for assessing the regional economic impacts of decisions relating to major state-supported events, including meaningful consultation with affected councils before decisions are finalised.*

Submitting council rationale:

Regional tourism is driven by local, domestic visitors that contribute $12.6 billion, accounting for roughly 7.4% of the entire regional economy and supporting over 109,000 local jobs. The vast majority of the $12.6 billion regional footprint is driven by domestic overnight stays and day-trippers out of Melbourne and neighbouring states. The health of the regional tourism is therefore a statewide issue.

Advocacy on behalf of MAV for a coordinated statewide approach to the loss of major events would strengthen the position and provide more support for the local tourism industry than individual councils can provide alone.

Consolidated Motion C16 – Fair Jobs, Fair Say

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Calls on the Victorian Government to engage with the MAV and councils on significant reforms affecting local government, including the proposed establishment of a Local Government Fair Jobs Code and substantial reform to Victoria's planning system.
2. Calls on the Victorian Government to defer implementation of the proposed Fair Jobs Code and associated regulatory framework until the full details, obligations and impacts of the code have been developed, publicly released and appropriately consulted on with the local government sector
3. Calls on the Victorian Government to commit to meaningful, timely and ongoing engagement with councils, provide councils with adequate notice before implementing any regulatory obligations, and work collaboratively with the MAV and councils to develop a Fair Jobs Code framework that promotes fair and secure employment practices while remaining practical, evidence-based and financially sustainable for local government.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Proposed local government Fair Jobs Code and regulator	Manningham City Council
Meaningful engagement on Fair Jobs Code and Planning Reform	Bass Coast Shire Council

C16.1 Proposed local government Fair Jobs Code and regulator

Manningham City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:

- *defer implementation of the proposed Fair Jobs Code and associated regulatory framework until the full details, obligations and impacts of the code have been developed, publicly released and appropriately consulted on with the local government sector.*
- *work collaboratively with the MAV and councils to develop a Fair Jobs Code framework that promotes fair and secure employment practices while remaining practical, evidence-based and financially sustainable for local government.*

Submitting council rationale:

Councils support fair and secure employment practices and recognises the Victorian Government's objective of strengthening confidence in local government.

However, the proposed creation of a new Fair Jobs Code regulatory framework before the underlying obligations have been defined limits the ability of councils, Parliament and the community to properly assess the scope, impact and necessity of the reforms.

At a time when councils face significant financial constraints and increasing demands for community services, any new regulatory framework should be transparent, proportionate and supported by a clear evidence base.

The local government sector should be actively involved in the development of any Fair Jobs Code to ensure it achieves fair employment outcomes while maintaining council sustainability, protecting local democratic decision-making and preserving resources for community priorities.

C16.2 Meaningful engagement on Fair Jobs Code and Planning Reform

Bass Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council:

a. *Notes that the Victorian Government is progressing significant reforms affecting local government, including the proposed establishment of a Local Government Fair Jobs Code and substantial reform to Victoria's planning system;*

b. *Notes that the detailed operation of the proposed Local Government Fair Jobs Code will be established through regulations and that further regulations, guidelines and implementation arrangements are required to give effect to the Victorian Government's planning reforms; and,*

c. *Calls on the Victorian Government to commit to meaningful, timely and ongoing engagement with councils and provide councils with adequate notice before implementing any regulatory obligations.*

Submitting council rationale:

Changes to the Local Government Fair Jobs Code and substantial reform to Victoria's planning system have not been made in consultation with local government. This is not good practice as it ignores the collective experience of local government in delivering services to their communities.

Consolidated Motion C17 – Planning and funding for equitable access to open space

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Establish a dedicated Open Space Acquisition Fund to assist councils to purchase land for public open space in established urban areas, activity centres and designated housing growth precincts where land values significantly limit local government acquisition opportunities.
2. Introduce a State Government co-contribution model for the acquisition, development and renewal of public open space for both passive and active recreation in areas experiencing substantial population growth, increased housing density and reduced access to private open space.
3. Amend the Subdivision Act 1988 and the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) to ensure Build-to-Rent (BTR) development make public open space contributions in line in line with other residential developments typologies
4. Strengthen planning mechanisms to ensure sufficient land is set aside for public open space for both passive and active recreation as part of major rezoning, urban renewal and housing growth initiatives led or facilitated by the Victorian Government.
5. Review and increase open space contribution frameworks to ensure contributions reflect the true cost of acquiring and developing land in high-value urban locations.
6. Develop a Victorian Urban Green Space Strategy that establishes minimum benchmarks for public open space provision and equitable access to quality green space across metropolitan and regional communities and supports the Victorian Government target of 30% tree canopy cover.
7. Streamline planning and land acquisition processes to support the timely delivery of public open space, including enabling earlier identification.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Levelling the Playing Field for Build-to-Rent Open Space Contributions	Yarra City Council
State Government Support for Green Open Space in Urban Areas	Banyule City Council

C17.1 Levelling the Playing Field for Build-to-Rent Open Space Contributions

Yarra City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to urgently amend the Subdivision Act 1988 and the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP) to close the planning loophole that exempts Build-to-Rent (BTR) developments from making public open space contributions, ensuring these commercial housing models contribute equitably to local open space infrastructure in line with traditional residential developments

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria's current legislative framework fails to account for emerging commercial housing models that retain single property titles Reforming Victoria's Planning System sector submission.

Under current laws, Public Open Space Contributions (POSC) are fundamentally tied to the act of subdivision. Because Build-to-Rent developments operate under a single title, they are exempt from these contributions despite generating the same demand for local parks, open spaces, and community infrastructure.

This creates a systemic inequity where the community and local councils must cross-subsidise the open space needs of BTR tenants, who are also entitled to access adequate open/public spaces.

Given the size of the Victorian Government's housing targets, this loophole robs local communities of millions of dollars in parkland funding precisely when populations are surging.

For example, Yarra City Council estimates conservatively that it has foregone between $15 and $20 million in open space contributions in the past 10 years. One development currently under construction will see Council forego an estimated $4.5 million. Legislative change is urgently required to sever the reliance on subdivision and establish a fair, development-based mechanism requiring all multi-dwelling projects to pay their fair share of open space contributions.

C17.2 State Government Support for Green Open Space in Urban Areas

Banyule City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. *Establish a dedicated Open Space Acquisition Fund to assist councils to purchase land for public open space in established urban areas, activity centres and designated housing growth precincts where land values significantly limit local government acquisition opportunities.*
2. *Introduce a State Government co-contribution model for the acquisition, development and renewal of public open space for both passive and active recreation in areas experiencing substantial population growth, increased housing density and reduced access to private open space.*
3. *Strengthen planning mechanisms to ensure sufficient land is set aside for public open space for both passive and active recreation as part of major rezoning, urban renewal and housing growth initiatives led or facilitated by the Victorian Government.*
4. *Review and increase open space contribution frameworks to ensure contributions reflect the true cost of acquiring and developing land in high-value urban locations.*
5. *Develop a Victorian Urban Green Space Strategy that establishes minimum benchmarks for public open space provision and equitable access to quality green space across metropolitan and regional communities and supports the Victorian Government target of 30% tree canopy cover.*
6. *Streamline planning and land acquisition processes to support the timely delivery of public open space, including enabling earlier identification and reservation of land required to meet future community needs.*

Submitting council rationale:

Public open space is essential community infrastructure that supports health and wellbeing, biodiversity, urban cooling, recreation, social connection and climate resilience.

Victorian councils play a critical role in providing, improving and maintaining public open space. However, in established urban municipalities, activity centres and designated housing growth areas, councils face increasing challenges acquiring land for new public open space due to escalating land values, competing development pressures, fragmented land ownership and limited funding mechanisms.

At the same time, State Government housing policies are facilitating substantial increases in residential density, with more residents relying on public parks and open

spaces as private open space within new developments decreases. Without greater State Government investment and stronger planning mechanisms, councils will be unable to meet growing community expectations for accessible, high-quality green space. This risks exacerbating inequities in access to open space and undermining broader objectives relating to public health, liveability, climate adaptation and biodiversity.

The motion seeks to position open space acquisition, development and renewal as growth-related infrastructure that should be planned and funded alongside housing, transport and social infrastructure.

Motion 12. Accessible Sustainability Fund pathways for major circular economy infrastructure

Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review Sustainability Fund program settings and funding pathways to establish clearer and more accessible mechanisms for supporting large scale industrial circular economy, resource recovery and waste-to-energy infrastructure projects that deliver significant environmental, economic and regional development outcomes The review should include:

a. a dedicated or regularly available funding stream for major infrastructure projects delivered by councils, businesses or individuals;

b. streamlined pathways through which businesses, councils and project partnerships can bring eligible proposals forward;

c. funding models that support projects requiring significant capital investment and leverage private-sector co-investment; and

d. transparent assessment criteria and decision-making timeframes that provide greater certainty for project proponents and host communities.

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria's Sustainability Fund plays an important role in supporting environmental outcomes and the transition to a circular economy. However, funding is generally delivered through State Government departments and grant programs rather than being directly accessible to councils, industry or project proponents. For major industrial circular economy, resource recovery and waste-to-energy projects, this can create delays and uncertainty around how and when strategically significant sustainable infrastructure is progressed and funded. This issue is relevant to councils across Victoria as landfill capacity continues to decline, the rollout of Food Organics and Garden Organics (FOGO) services increases the volume of material requiring processing, and population growth places greater pressure on existing waste infrastructure. Bringing forward investment in advanced resource recovery and waste-to-energy facilities before landfill capacity becomes constrained will help avoid future waste management challenges while supporting regional jobs and private sector investment. As the Sustainability Fund is established and administered through State legislation and budget processes, individual councils cannot improve funding pathways independently. MAV advocacy would provide a coordinated local government voice to work with the Victorian Government on funding mechanisms that improve investment certainty, encourage private sector co-investment and accelerate the delivery of strategically important waste infrastructure that benefits councils across Victoria.

Motion 13. Waste to Energy

Kingston City Council

Motion:

That MAV State Council: Calls on the Victorian Government to address rapidly escalating landfill costs by providing more incentives and simpler planning pathways for councils and waste management providers to encourage increased investment in waste-to-energy capacity.

Submitting council rationale:

While it's understood that some councils are not in favour of waste to energy projects, there is a consistent view among the Councils associated with the South East Advanced Waste Management program that projects like this will dramatically reduce dependence on landfill over time.

Given that the low-emissions technology has been in use in Europe for many years, future governments should assist in ensuring these projects are subject to fair and reasonable scrutiny, with every effort made to identify and secure appropriate land.

Motion 14. Waste to Energy Developments

Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to:

(i) mandate that any future waste to energy developments implement minimum buffer zones based on independent, scientific plume and emissions modelling aimed to prevent any harm or impact on residential areas.

(ii) provide clear messaging to communities on the environmental and health impacts of waste to energy.

(iii) mandate stringent conditions on the separation of waste and organics, plastics and tyres, before it is put through the thermal waste to energy process.

(iv) lead community engagement on proposed waste to energy facilities as soon as any level of Government (Local, State of Federal) is made aware of a potential proposal.

(v) explore other options for the disposal of waste materials.

(vi) Mandate that granted licensees include social investment in the local community.

Submitting council rationale:

Despite the best endeavours of the Government, waste to energy facilities can be contentious as they are relatively new technologies in local communities and without adequate information on the potential impacts, community concerns arise.

Motion 15. Melbourne's Air Quality Management Framework Motion

Hobsons Bay City Council

Motion:

The following motion has been developed for submission to the MAV State Council Meeting to strengthen the Victorian Government's long-term approach to improving air quality and reducing the cumulative impacts of pollution on communities in Melbourne and recognising the inner west as a priority area.

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Establish a coordinated, long-term Air Quality Management Framework that addresses the cumulative air pollution impacts of transport, freight and industrial emissions on community health in Metropolitan Melbourne.
2. Provide clear governance arrangements across relevant State Government agencies, with defined responsibilities, improved coordination and transparent and consistent public reporting on air quality outcomes and actions.
3. Provide ongoing investment in permanent air quality monitoring, public reporting and evidence-based initiatives that reduce air pollution and improve community health outcomes in Metropolitan Melbourne.
4. Ensure air quality, public health and cumulative impact considerations are embedded in the planning, assessment and delivery of major transport, freight and industrial infrastructure projects affecting Metropolitan Melbourne.
5. Develop a consistent methodology for assessing cumulative air pollution impacts when planning major transport, freight and industrial developments affecting Metropolitan Melbourne.
6. Nominate a lead agency responsible for coordinating implementation of the Framework, reporting publicly on progress

Submitting council rationale:

Communities across Melbourne's inner west continue to experience some of the highest levels of air pollution in Victoria due to the cumulative impacts of freight activity, major road networks, industrial operations and ongoing infrastructure development. While significant work has been undertaken by State Government agencies, councils and community groups in recent years, residents continue to express concern about the long-term health impacts of poor air quality and the need for stronger coordination across government.

Hobsons Bay City Council, together with neighbouring councils, has played a leading role in advocating for improved air quality outcomes. Council has delivered community forums, engaged with residents and government agencies, supported regional

advocacy initiatives and established dedicated information resources to improve community awareness and understanding of air quality issues.

These efforts have contributed to important initiatives including the Victorian Air Quality Strategy, targeted air quality improvement projects and expanded monitoring. However, responsibility for managing air quality remains fragmented across multiple government agencies, limiting coordination, creating uncertainty around accountability and making it difficult for communities to understand how progress is being measured and improvement delivered.

As Melbourne continues to grow and major transport, freight and industrial infrastructure projects are delivered across the state, there is an opportunity for the Victorian Government to strengthen its long-term approach to air quality management. While air pollution affects communities across Victoria in different ways, Melbourne's inner west experiences a unique concentration of cumulative impacts and should be recognised as a priority area for coordinated action.

A dedicated Air Quality Management Framework would provide a clear and transparent structure for cross-government collaboration, establish accountability for outcomes, support evidence-based decisions making and better integrate environmental, planning and public health objectives. It would also help ensure that communities experiencing the greatest cumulative impacts are prioritised for investment, monitoring and mitigation measures.

This motion seeks MAV's support in advocating for a coordinated statewide approach to air quality management, with an initial focus on Melbourne's inner west, that delivers measurable improvements in air quality, strengthens government accountability and protects the health and wellbeing of current and future generations.

Motion 16. Improving Clarity and Consistency in Contaminated Land Assessment Processes Motion

Hobsons Bay City Council

Motion:

The following motion has been developed for submission to the MAV State Council meeting to address ongoing challenges faced by councils in assessing and managing contaminated land through planning and development application processes.

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Provide clearer and more consistent guidance on the assessment of contaminated and potentially contaminated land through planning and development application processes, including when environmental audits or site investigations are required,
2. particularly where land is identified as potentially contaminated due to historic use, to support proportionate and risk-based decision making.
3. Clarify the respective roles, responsibilities and liabilities of councils, EPA Victoria, landowners and other relevant parties in contaminated land assessment and decision-making, including the level and type of information required to inform statutory decisions.
4. Improve the timeliness, capacity and accessibility of contaminated land assessment and environmental audit processes, including addressing delays that impact planning approvals, development timeframes and housing delivery.
5. Support councils with practical tools, advice and training to enable consistent, confident and proportionate assessment of contaminated land across the sector.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils across Victoria routinely assess planning permit applications, rezonings and development proposals involving contaminated or potentially contaminated land. However, current guidance and processes are often unclear, inconsistent and resource-intensive, creating uncertainty for councils, applicants and communities.

Recent changes to planning system settings and statutory processes have reduced clarity around when statutory planning officers can request site investigations or environmental audits, even where historic land use indicates a potential contamination risk. This has created inconsistencies in practice across municipalities and reduced confidence in decision-making.

Councils are increasingly required to assess complex contamination issues as part of statutory planning processes, often without clear guidance regarding liability, appropriate reliance on expert advice, or the respective roles of state agencies in managing contamination risks.

Improved clarity and consistency would support more efficient and transparent planning processes, reduce delays and uncertainty for applicants and councils, strengthen public confidence in decision-making and help ensure potential contamination risks are appropriately identified and managed to protect human health and the environment.

Motion 17. Support for our neighbourhood houses

Wyndham City Council

Motion:

a. That the MAV calls on the State Government to support our neighbourhood houses by allocating operational funding towards new centres as our State grows to strengthen community connection, improve social inclusion, and ensure these vital local hubs can continue delivering essential programs and services to their communities and

b. Increase coordination funding for existing neighbourhood houses to ensure funding keeps pace with rising costs and community demand and supports the ongoing viability and effectiveness of the neighbourhood house network.

Submitting council rationale:

Neighbourhood houses represent a special connection point for our community. They bring people together to connect and grow through social, educational, recreational and support activities. They play a significant role in combating loneliness and building stronger ties within the community.

Also known as community centres, learning centres, community houses or neighbourhood centres, these community-based organisations are an outlet for people of all ages and interests, creating opportunities for people to connect more deeply with their own community.

However, while many centres receive recurrent ongoing operational funding, the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program through the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing is not providing operational funding for new centres. This limits the growth of new neighbourhood houses, particularly in high-growth areas like Wyndham.

The State Government must demonstrate its commitment to the future of these centres by supporting funding allocation for the operation of new neighbourhood houses.

Motion 18. Strengthening Accountability and Awareness of the role of Councils and Municipal Building Surveyors

Wyndham City Council

Motion:

That the MAV support a review of the current legislative framework to ensure that complaint and escalation processes (in situations where the building permits have been issued by private building surveyors) are transparent, timely, and effective, with strengthened accountability and coordination among responsible agencies in circumstances where responsibility for responding to reports of potentially unsafe construction involving private building surveyors is unclear or shared between multiple parties.

Submitting council rationale:

Residents rightly expect that when they report potentially unsafe or non-compliant construction, Council will take action to protect the community. However, the current legal framework governing building control in Victoria is complex and often misunderstood. Under the Building Act 1993 (Vic), both municipal and private building surveyors (acting as Relevant Building Surveyors) have powers to issue building permits, inspect works, and enforce compliance, including issuing stop-work or emergency orders where safety is at risk.

The Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS), appointed by Council, acts independently of Council in performing these statutory duties. Meanwhile, WorkSafe Victoria has separate powers under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) to issue prohibition notices addressing workplace safety hazards. This division of responsibilities can create confusion for residents and delay responses to urgent concerns.

By seeking stronger coordination between Council, the Victorian Building & Plumbing Commission, and WorkSafe Victoria and advocating for legislative reform, Council can help ensure clearer communication, faster escalation of safety risks, and greater transparency in how construction safety issues are managed across Victoria.

Motion 19. Strengthening laws around illegally modified motorised vehicles

Wyndham City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to strengthen legislation, enforcement and inter-agency coordination to address the unlawful use of unregistered, non-compliant and illegally modified motorised vehicles on roads and public land, including footpaths, shared paths, parks, sporting reserves, playgrounds, conservation areas and other council-managed public spaces.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils across Victoria are experiencing increasing reports of illegally operated powered vehicles within parks, sporting reserves, playgrounds, shared paths, conservation areas and other public open spaces. These incidents involve a range of powered vehicles, including illegally modified electric bicycles, electric dirt bikes, unregistered motorcycles and petrol-powered recreational bikes.

The unlawful use of these vehicles poses significant safety risks to pedestrians, cyclists, children and other users of public open spaces. It also causes damage to sporting fields, parks, shared paths, environmental assets and other community infrastructure, resulting in increased maintenance costs and reduced community enjoyment of these spaces.

While councils are often the first point of contact for community complaints, responsibility for regulating and enforcing offences involving powered vehicles rests primarily with the Victorian Government and Victoria Police. Local governments have limited legislative powers to respond directly despite managing many of the public spaces where these incidents occur.

As powered vehicle technology continues to evolve, a coordinated statewide approach is needed to ensure legislation, enforcement powers and inter-agency coordination remain effective in protecting public safety, preserving community assets and maintaining confidence in the safe use of public open spaces.

Motion 20. Illegal removal of vegetation and increasing fines and restitution

Frankston City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council calls on the Victorian Government to strengthen the regulatory framework for illegal vegetation removal by:

1. Reviewing and increasing penalties for the unlawful removal, destruction or damage of native vegetation so they provide an effective deterrent and appropriately reflect the environmental harm caused, the financial or amenity benefit obtained, and the costs of environmental restoration.
2. Strengthening legislative restitution provisions to enable courts and responsible authorities to require offenders to fund and undertake ecological restoration proportionate to the environmental harm caused, including revegetation, habitat restoration, replacement canopy planting and ongoing maintenance and monitoring where appropriate.
3. Expanding enforcement powers available to responsible authorities and relevant government agencies to improve investigation, compliance and prosecution outcomes.
4. Establishing a consistent statewide framework that enables the recovery of full costs associated with investigation, enforcement, environmental rehabilitation, long-term monitoring and maintenance of restoration works. There is increasing incidence of illegal removal, destruction and lopping of native vegetation throughout Victoria. These activities result in significant and often irreversible environmental, landscape, biodiversity and community impacts, calling for stronger penalties, improved enforcement powers and mandatory environmental restitution for unlawful vegetation removal.

Submitting council rationale:

Native vegetation provides significant environmental, social and economic benefits to Victorian communities. It supports biodiversity, provides habitat for native fauna, improves urban cooling, captures carbon, contributes to landscape character and enhances community wellbeing. Once mature vegetation is removed, the environmental values it provides can take decades to recover and, in some circumstances, may never be fully restored.

Councils across Victoria continue to encounter instances of unlawful vegetation removal on private and public land. Such activities can undermine planning controls, reduce community confidence in regulatory systems and create inequities where individuals or organisations gain a benefit from non-compliance. In some cases, the increase in land value, development potential or views obtained through vegetation removal may significantly outweigh the penalties imposed, reducing the effectiveness of current deterrents.

While enforcement mechanisms exist, penalties and restoration requirements are not always proportionate to the environmental harm caused or the long-term costs associated with rehabilitation. Real world examples show the public perception, that it is cheaper and quicker to simply remove a tree and receive an infringement than it is to go through the Statutory Planning process to apply to remove the tree. Where unlawful clearing occurs, Councils and the broader community are often left managing the environmental consequences while public resources are expended investigating and addressing breaches.

A strengthened regulatory framework would ensure that those responsible for illegal vegetation removal bear the full cost of restoring environmental damage. Greater penalties, coupled with more consistent, mandatory restitution requirements, would reinforce the principle that environmental harm should not result in financial gain. Improved enforcement powers and cost-recovery mechanisms would also assist regulatory agencies in achieving more effective compliance outcomes.

This motion seeks State Government leadership to review and strengthen Victoria's approach to illegal vegetation removal by ensuring penalties are meaningful, restoration obligations are enforceable and proportionate to the environmental harm caused. Such reforms would better protect Victoria's natural environment, support local government enforcement efforts and align with community expectations for the responsible management of native vegetation and urban canopy cover.

Motion 21. Taxation Reform to Encourage Infill and Brownfield Development

Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review taxation and financial policy settings to encourage the redevelopment of infill and brownfield sites within existing urban areas, particularly in regional and interface municipalities, by ensuring taxation and development charges support urban renewal, housing diversity and efficient use of existing infrastructure. The review should consider:

c. opportunities to incentivise the redevelopment of underutilised land within existing town centres and activity centres;

d. the impact of current taxation and development charges on infill and brownfield development compared with greenfield development;

e. mechanisms to encourage greater housing diversity in locations with existing infrastructure, services and public transport; and

f. measures that support the revitalisation of regional activity centres while protecting productive agricultural land and limiting unnecessary urban sprawl.

Submitting council rationale:

Victorian councils are being asked to accommodate significant housing growth while creating well-connected communities and maintaining vibrant town centres and activity centres. Infill and brownfield development can contribute to these objectives by bringing housing and investment into established areas where infrastructure, services, employment and public transport already exist.

However, infill and brownfield sites can be more complex and costly to develop than greenfield land. Taxation and development charges can further influence this difference, potentially discouraging redevelopment of underutilised sites despite councils identifying these locations for growth and urban renewal.

For regional and interface municipalities, encouraging greater investment in established areas could help revitalise CBDs and activity centres, increase housing diversity, make more efficient use of existing infrastructure and reduce unnecessary urban expansion into productive agricultural land.

These financial settings are largely determined at the State level and cannot be addressed by councils individually. MAV advocacy could drive a coordinated review of taxation and development charges so that Victoria's financial settings better support its planning objectives and help councils create more connected, efficient and vibrant communities.

Motion 22. Green Wedge Zones and Places of Worship

Cardinia Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) call on the Victorian Government to partner with local government and multi-faith peak bodies to review and reform Victoria's planning framework for new places of worship, recognising them as essential social infrastructure in growing communities. This work should:

1. Identify the barriers, constraints and opportunities presented by existing planning provisions, informed by the experience of councils and faith communities;
2. Ensure that land for places of worship is considered early in state-led precinct structure planning and activity centre planning for new and growing communities;
3. Support the Victorian Governments implementation of Recommendation 9 of the 2-24/25 Parliamentary enquiry into Securing the Victorian Food Supply and implement stronger planning protections for productive agricultural land, Green Wedge land and state significant industrial land, while ensuring suitable locations for places of worship are identified through strategic planning processes;
4. Develop clear, practical, proportionate, and consistent statewide planning policy and guidance that supports timely, transparent, and equitable decision-making for places of worship;
5. Encourage opportunities for co-location and shared use of facilities between places of worship and other community infrastructure where appropriate;
6. Recognise the contribution of places of worship to community wellbeing, volunteering, social connection, charitable services and community resilience when considering their role within future infrastructure and land-use planning.

Submitting council rationale:

This motion addresses a growing statewide planning issue affecting many Victorian councils, particularly those experiencing population growth and increasing cultural and religious diversity. Councils across metropolitan, peri-urban and regional Victoria are receiving requests for new places of worship and are often required to balance these proposals against competing land-use priorities, including housing, employment land, transport infrastructure, agricultural land protection, environmental values and community infrastructure needs. The absence of clear and consistent statewide planning guidance can lead to uncertainty for councils, applicants and communities.

The issue is directly connected to current Victorian Government planning and growth management priorities, including precinct structure planning, activity centre planning, housing and infrastructure delivery, and implementation of recommendations arising from the Parliamentary Inquiry into Securing the Victorian Food Supply. The motion seeks to ensure that planning for places of worship is integrated into these broader

state-led planning processes from the outset, rather than being considered retrospectively after communities are established.

This issue cannot be effectively resolved by individual councils or regional groupings acting alone because the planning controls, policy settings and strategic growth frameworks that guide land use decisions are established through the Victorian planning system. Councils have limited ability to address inconsistencies in planning policy or secure the early allocation of land for places of worship through local action alone. Without statewide reform, councils will continue to face similar challenges across municipalities, often making decisions without clear policy direction or strategic guidance.

MAV advocacy is therefore necessary to achieve sector-wide outcomes. By representing the collective interests of Victorian councils, MAV can work with the Victorian Government and multi-faith peak bodies to develop consistent planning policies, improve strategic land-use planning, and ensure places of worship are appropriately recognised as community infrastructure. This would provide councils with greater certainty, support more consistent decision-making across Victoria, and help create well-planned, inclusive communities that meet the needs of a growing and diverse population.

Motion 23. Local Government Inclusion and Support in Treaty Implementation

Loddon Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria State Council:

a. Calls on the Victorian Government to provide clear, comprehensive and timely advice to all Victorian councils on the expected financial, resourcing, statutory and operational impacts arising from implementation of Statewide and Traditional Owner Treaties between the Victorian Government and the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

b. Requests that the Victorian Government commit to fully fund all new responsibilities required of councils under the Treaty framework.

c. Requests that the Victorian Government establish a coordinated communication framework for councils and their communities to ensure accurate, consistent information is available about Treaty obligations and processes.

d. Advocates for the formal inclusion of local government in Treaty implementation planning, noting that councils are not negotiating parties to the Statewide Treaty but will experience significant operational impacts as the Treaty process evolves.

e. Requests that MAV lead a sector wide approach to ensure all councils receive consistent guidance, representation and advocacy throughout the rollout of Statewide and future Traditional Owner treaties.

Submitting council rationale:

This motion does not seek to support or oppose Victoria's Treaty process. Rather, it seeks improved communication with councils, and clarity about any potential financial, resourcing, statutory and operational implications for local government arsing from statewide or local treaties.

Without a representative body as part of the negotiations providing clear and timely advice, councils may be unable to plan, budget or resource appropriately for any new obligations.

This is a current change process which may impact the sector, and MAV advocacy will strengthen the case for coordinated guidance and support across all councils.

Motion 24. Statewide River and Waterway Restoration Program

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to establish a Statewide River and Waterway Restoration Program to protect and restore the environmental, cultural, recreational and economic values of Victoria's rivers, creeks and waterways by:

1. Providing dedicated and ongoing funding for riverbank stabilisation, erosion control and habitat restoration projects.
2. Developing a long-term statewide strategy to address the impacts of climate change, increased storm intensity, altered flow regimes and urbanisation on river and creek systems.
3. Supporting councils, catchment management authorities and relevant community led waterway organisations to undertake priority river restoration works, including:

- Riverbank stabilisation;
- Revegetation and habitat enhancement;
- Weed and pest animal management;
- Water quality improvement projects;
- Urban creek naturalisation and daylighting initiatives;
- Floodplain and wetland restoration.

4. Establishing a funding stream to assist councils with the renewal and protection of public infrastructure impacted by riverbank erosion and waterway degradation.
5. Improving coordination between the Victorian Government, Melbourne Water, catchment management authorities and local government to ensure a strategic and catchment-wide approach to river health and resilience.
6. Recognising rivers and waterways as critical natural infrastructure that provides environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits to Victorian communities.

Submitting council rationale:

Victoria's rivers, creeks and waterways are critical natural assets that support biodiversity, cultural heritage, recreation, public health, climate resilience and local economies.

However, many waterways are experiencing increasing pressures from urbanisation, population growth, climate change, stormwater pollution, invasive species and erosion, resulting in declining environmental health and increased risks to public infrastructure and community assets.

Local governments are increasingly required to respond to the consequences of waterway degradation, including riverbank erosion, loss of vegetation, reduced water quality, flood impacts and damage to public open space, shared trails, drainage assets and community infrastructure. The scale and complexity of these challenges frequently exceed the financial and technical capacity of individual councils and require a coordinated, long-term response across catchments and jurisdictions.

While significant work is undertaken by councils, Melbourne Water and Catchment Management Authorities, investment remains fragmented and often focused on isolated projects rather than strategic, catchment-wide restoration outcomes.

A dedicated Statewide River and Waterway Restoration Program would provide a coordinated framework for investment and action, ensuring resources are directed towards priority areas and long-term resilience is strengthened.

Motion 25. Strengthening the Integrity and Application of Significant Landscape Overlays and Environmental Significant Overlays

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to strengthen the integrity, transparency and enforcement of Significant Landscape Overlays and Environmental Significant Overlays:

1. Reaffirming that State Government decision-making processes, authorities and referral agencies are required to fully consider and comply with the intent and objectives of Significant Landscape Overlays and equivalent planning controls.
2. Requiring decision-makers to clearly demonstrate how developments within Significant Landscape Overlays are consistent with the purpose, objectives and decision guidelines of the overlay.
3. Publishing detailed reasons for decisions where developments are approved despite identified impacts on landscape values, environmental assets or visual amenity protected by a Significant Landscape Overlay.
4. Undertaking a review of the effectiveness of Significant Landscape Overlays to ensure that approved developments are achieving the intended landscape protection outcomes.
5. Strengthening compliance, monitoring and enforcement mechanisms for developments approved within Significant Landscape Overlays.
6. Ensuring councils are appropriately consulted on applications affecting Significant Landscape Overlays and that their assessment of local landscape values is given substantial weight in decision-making.
7. Reporting publicly on compliance outcomes and enforcement actions relating to developments approved within areas subject to Significant Landscape Overlays.

Submitting council rationale:

Where approvals are granted in areas subject to landscape protection overlays, there should be a clear and transparent explanation of how the development is consistent with the intent of the overlay and why any identified impacts are considered acceptable.

The motion also recognises the important role of local government in assessing landscape values and understanding the cumulative impacts of development within sensitive areas. Councils possess detailed knowledge of local environmental conditions, community expectations and strategic planning objectives, and their assessment should be given significant weight in decision-making processes.

In addition, stronger compliance, monitoring and enforcement arrangements are required to ensure approved developments continue to meet permit conditions and deliver the landscape protection outcomes originally contemplated. Public reporting on compliance activities and enforcement actions would improve transparency and strengthen community confidence in the planning system.

This motion seeks to ensure that Significant Landscape Overlays and similar protections remain effective tools for safeguarding Victoria's environmental and landscape assets. Strengthening transparency, accountability and enforcement will help preserve the character, amenity and environmental values that contribute significantly to the identity and liveability of communities across Victoria.

Motion 26. Promoting Healthy Food Environments through Victorian Planning Provisions

Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria calls on the Victorian Government to amend the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and the Victorian Planning Provisions to enable local governments to promote healthy food environments by:

1. Amending Clause 34.01 (Commercial 1 Zone) of the Victorian Planning Provisions and its Table of Uses (Section 1 - Permit Not Required) to require branded and multinational fast-food corporations to obtain planning permission from councils for all new outlets.
2. Strengthening Section 60 of the Act to require responsible authorities to consider public health, food security and affordable and equitable access to healthy food when determining planning permit applications.
3. Providing councils with explicit planning powers to assess the cumulative public health and wellbeing impacts of the concentration of fast-food outlets, particularly around schools, kindergartens, childcare centres and communities experiencing disadvantage.
4. Providing councils with explicit powers to refuse planning permission for new fast-food outlets on the grounds of anticipated negative impacts on public health and wellbeing, especially of children, young people and vulnerable community members.
5. Provide Councils with a definition of fast-food outlets, and a register of multinational fast-food premises in Victoria.
6. Requiring that any appeals to VCAT against refusals by councils of planning permission must include a Health Impact Assessment, paid for by the appellant and conducted by an independent expert, proving that the new outlet will not, on the balance of probabilities, negatively impact public health and wellbeing.
7. Developing state planning policy and guidelines that support healthy food environments and recognise the relationship between land-use planning, chronic disease prevention and community wellbeing.
8. Supporting councils to encourage diverse, locally owned and healthy food businesses through planning policy and strategic planning instruments and guidance.

Submitting council rationale:

Recent Victorian research has identified significant opportunities for local governments to more actively improve food environments through public policy and planning interventions, recognising the strong relationship between place, food choice and health outcomes.

Evidence demonstrates that unhealthy food environments disproportionately affect children, young people and communities experiencing social and economic disadvantage. Fast-food outlets are often concentrated in growth areas and lower socioeconomic communities, with concerns also raised regarding their proximity to schools, childcare centres and other places frequented by young people.

Victorian parliamentary consideration of food security and planning reform has highlighted calls for councils to be given greater flexibility to regulate fast-food outlet density and consider community health impacts in planning decisions.

The proposed reforms would not prohibit fast-food businesses from operating in Victoria. Rather, they would establish a balanced planning framework that enables councils to properly assess public health implications alongside other planning considerations, including cumulative impacts and local context.

Introducing Health Impact Assessments for VCAT appeals would provide an evidence-based approach to decision-making and ensure that public health considerations are given appropriate weight. The motion is consistent with broader Victorian public health objectives and growing recognition that councils play a critical role in creating healthy, equitable and sustainable communities.

By aligning planning policy with public health outcomes, Victoria can strengthen prevention efforts, reduce long-term health costs and support healthier futures for all Victorians

Motion 27. Request for State Government Review of Flood Planning and Emergency Management Framework

Melbourne City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council call on the Victorian Government to:

1. Note the increasing challenge of accommodating forecast population and housing growth within established urban areas that are also subject to flood risk.
2. Investigate whether alternative risk management approaches, including regulated shelter in-place frameworks used in other Australian jurisdictions, could safely support additional housing and urban renewal outcomes in priority flood-prone areas.
3. Review the interaction between:

3.1. acceptable levels of residual flood risk;

3.2. flood planning controls;

3.3. flood mitigation infrastructure and flood-resilient building design;

3.4. emergency management policies, including evacuation requirements and shelter-in place; and

3.5. Victorian Government 2051 Housing Targets and other housing delivery objectives.

4. Engage with local government, relevant floodplain management authorities, emergency services, and relevant stakeholders as part of this review to identify opportunities to balance community safety, climate resilience, and housing delivery outcomes.

Submitting council rationale:

Victorian councils are facing increasing pressure to accommodate significant population growth and housing demand within established urban areas. Many of the state's major urban renewal precincts identified for substantial housing and employment growth are also subject to flood risk, flood planning controls and associated emergency management requirements.

Advances in flood mitigation infrastructure, flood-resilient building design and emergency management practice may provide opportunities to reconsider how residual flood risk is managed in certain locations. Other Australian jurisdictions have implemented regulated shelter-in-place approaches that may offer useful lessons for Victoria.

A review of the interaction between flood planning, emergency management frameworks and housing delivery objectives would help ensure that planning settings

continue to protect community safety while supporting the delivery of housing in strategically important urban renewal areas.

Motion 28. Increase Living Libraries funding

Merri-bek City Council

Motion:

That the MAV: Call on the Victorian Government to:

1. Increase the annual allocation available through the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program to better meet growing community demand for contemporary library and learning facilities across metropolitan, regional, rural and interface councils.
2. Establish a long-term, indexed funding commitment for public libraries that reflects population growth, rising construction and infrastructure costs and the increasing expectation that libraries also support liveability, social connection, lifelong learning, access to services and flexible community space.

Submitting council rationale:

Public libraries are valued and widely used community facilities in Victoria. They are no longer simply places to borrow books; they are essential community hubs that support literacy, lifelong learning, digital inclusion, social connection, community cohesion and access to government and support services. The Victorian Government recognises libraries as places that strengthen communities, encourage participation and improve access to learning opportunities.

Libraries play an increasingly important role in addressing social and economic challenges. They provide free internet access, digital literacy support, quiet study environments, access to information and opportunities for community engagement. These services are particularly important for young people, older residents, newly arrived communities and people experiencing financial hardship.

As more housing is delivered, particularly higher density housing in established suburbs and activity centres, libraries are also expected to support liveability, providing residents with welcoming, free and flexible public places close to where they live. Investment in library infrastructure delivers benefits well beyond the library sector, contributing to education, health, inclusion and economic participation outcomes. Economic modelling shows that every dollar invested in Victorian public libraries generates $4.30 of benefits to the local community.

The Living Libraries Infrastructure Program plays a critical role in helping councils deliver new and upgraded library facilities. Government investment through the program has delivered significant benefits for local communities in recent years. However, demand for library services continues to grow; Living Libraries funding has not increased at the same rate that construction, maintenance and renewal costs have increased. Many councils are experiencing rapid population growth, changing demographic needs and increasing demand for flexible spaces that support study, digital access, community programs and social connection. At the same time, the current funding pool remains small and can support only a very limited number of projects each year, leaving many proposals unfunded or significantly delayed.

Increasing Living Libraries funding would enable councils to respond to growing community expectations, deliver contemporary library facilities and ensure all Victorians have access to welcoming, inclusive and future-focused public library services.

A larger, sustainable and indexed funding commitment would strengthen the partnership between state and local government and support thriving, connected communities across Victoria

Motion 29. Road condition data

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV lobby the State Government for the release of the state road condition data.

Submitting council rationale:

Improved transparency of road condition data will ensure Council and public understanding of the level of investment needed to address road conditions across the state and inform prioritisation. At the moment, it is unclear whether funding announcements by the Government and Opposition are sufficient to address the problem in a reasonable time frame or will only exacerbate the problem.

Motion 30. Tiered Category Mandatory Regulatory Requirements

Strathbogie Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV advocate to the State Government to introduce a proportionate, tiered framework for mandatory and other regulatory requirements, reflecting council category, scale, capacity and available resources, to reduce the administrative burden on small rural councils while maintaining transparency, accountability and good governance.

Submitting council rationale:

The need for a more proportionate approach was identified in the Strathbogie Shire Council Final Municipal Monitor's report to the Minister for Local Government, the Hon Nick Staikos MP, in November 2025. In that report, Municipal Monitor Marg Allan recommended:

(2) "That Local Government Victoria consider the impact on small rural councils, with limited resources, when proposing introducing new reporting obligations for local government".

While a more proportionate approach is important, a broader focus should extend beyond reporting to encompass the full range of mandatory and regulatory obligations.

Small rural councils face a disproportionate compliance burden under a largely one-size-fits-all legislative and regulatory framework. Despite operating with significantly smaller budgets and workforces than metropolitan and larger regional councils, they are often required to meet the same complex compliance and performance reporting obligations across a broad range of legislation, regulations and policy requirements.

These constraints make it difficult to meet additional administrative and mandatory requirements without affecting service delivery. With fewer ratepayers to fund corporate overheads, smaller councils face significantly higher per capita compliance costs, diverting limited resources from essential local services.

Small rural councils are disproportionately affected by compliance requirements due to factors including, but not limited to:

- limited budgets restricting investment in automation, data management systems and reporting technology, which reduces the ability to streamline operations and improve efficiency.

Strathbogie Shire Council submits that the State Government should introduce a proportionate, tiered framework for mandatory and related regulatory obligations.

For example, the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal sets remuneration and allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors using a tiered approach. The tiers are as follows:

Category A lowest level	Twenty two small, rural shires	predominately rural small rate base small budgets
Category B medium level	Twenty eight regional and larger rural shires	predominantly regional towns and larger shires Medium rate base Medium budgets
Category C Medium/high level	Twenty two metropolitan and larger rural shire	predominately metropolitan and large regional cities large rate base large budgets
Category D High level	Six large regional shires	predominately outer metropolitan and large regional cities large rate base large budgets
Category E highest level	City of Melbourne	large rate base large budget

This example demonstrates that remuneration frameworks already recognise differences in council size, rate base, and indicative budgets. Applying a similar principle to reporting requirements would provide a more proportionate and equitable regulatory framework for small rural councils.

The current mandatory and regulatory framework does not adequately recognise the significant differences in scale and capacity between councils. For example, Strathbogie Shire Council*—with a population of 11,739, a workforce of 138.3 FTE and annual rates and charges revenue of $23.3 million—is subject to the same reporting requirements as Greater Dandenong Council*, which has a population of 167,000, a workforce of 756.44 FTE and annual rates and charges revenue of $178.1 million. This demonstrates the need for a more proportionate, risk-based approach.

*Source 2024-2025 Annual Reports

Audit costs provide another example of how smaller councils can be disproportionately affected by mandatory requirements. In 2024, the VAGO audit fee equated to $5.13 per capita for Strathbogie Shire Council, compared with $0.53 per capita for Banyule Council.

A tiered framework would recognise the different operating environments of Victorian councils while continuing to support consistent, transparent and accountable. It would also ensure that small rural councils can direct more of their limited capacity toward essential community services and strategic local priorities.

A proportionate, risk-based framework would reduce unnecessary administrative burden while maintaining the principles of transparency, accountability, and good governance.

Motion 31. Youth Belonging and Resilience Initiative

Banyule City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Acknowledge that local governments are well positioned to contribute to or support a coordinated a prevention and early intervention approach to Youth radicalisation across communities, focusing on strengthening belonging, critical thinking and trusted community connections before harmful ideologies take hold. Local governments, through Youth Services teams, have established models and sustainable partnerships to coordinate a collaborative approach with schools, community organisations, multicultural and faith groups, mental health agencies and online safety agencies like the e-Safety Commissioner.
2. Establish a dedicated, long-term funding stream and state-led partnership framework to support local governments to deliver place-based prevention and early intervention initiatives, building on proven place-based models like Banyule's Saldig project, to build young people's sense of belonging, civic participation and media literacy.
3. Resource councils to deliver place-based, evidence informed prevention programs that support age-appropriate education on identifying misinformation, understanding algorithms and AI-generated content, respectful dialogue across difference, and opportunities for young people to contribute to solutions through co-design and community projects.

Submitting council rationale:

Youth radicalisation is increasing targeting younger teenagers, driven by a mix of extreme right and ideologically motivated violent extremism, influenced by online grooming, social media echo chambers and localised factors like mental health challenges and social isolation.

Drawing on recommendations for coordinated responses to disinformation, the Victorian government could support Councils to lead a multi-agency network linking key partners to identify and address emerging risks, provide mentoring and wellbeing support, and respond quickly to harmful online narratives.

Community-led initiatives should be funded to build resilience within local communities and create positive alternatives to exclusionary or extremist movements. Results from these place-based approach can contribute to ongoing research and data collection to track trends, evaluate interventions and inform continuous improvement.

This approach recognises that radicalisation is not only a security issue but also a social cohesion challenge that is best addressed through inclusion, education, community leadership, and collaboration.

Motion 32. Strengthening strata governance in higher-density housing

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Strengthen owners corporation and strata governance arrangements to support the long-term safety, sustainability, liveability and effective management of higher-density housing.
2. Establish stronger independent oversight, compliance and complaints mechanisms for strata management and owners corporation service providers.
3. Improve transparency, consistency and accountability in owners corporation governance, financial management, decision-making and reporting arrangements.
4. Develop funding, guidance and support programs that assist owners corporations to manage ageing building stock, improve energy efficiency, enhance accessibility and adapt to climate change.
5. Ensure renters have a meaningful voice on strata committees to improve representation for all residents affected by committee decisions.

Submitting council rationale:

Higher-density housing is becoming an increasingly important component of Victoria's housing supply, with growing numbers of residents living in apartment and strata developments. As these communities grow, owners corporations and strata managers play a critical role in maintaining shared assets, managing common property, supporting resident wellbeing and protecting the long-term value and quality of housing stock.

Residents, councils and industry stakeholders have raised concerns regarding the consistency, transparency and accountability of some owners corporation governance and strata management practices. Challenges can include limited oversight, difficulties resolving disputes, inconsistent governance standards, inadequate maintenance planning and barriers to holding strata managers accountable for service delivery and financial management.

As apartment living continues to expand across Victoria, there is a growing need for more transparent and standardised governance arrangements, stronger independent oversight and accessible complaints mechanisms that build trust and confidence in the strata sector. Reform in these areas would help support residents, improve building outcomes and ensure higher-density communities remain well-managed, resilient and fit for purpose into the future.

Motion 33. Strengthening wildlife protection and responsible recreational fishing education

Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Review and strengthen statewide education, guidance and funding programs relating to recreational fishing in urban waterways and coastal environments to minimise impacts on wildlife.
2. Support councils to deliver responsible fishing education initiatives that promote the safe disposal of fishing lines, hooks and fishing waste and reduce wildlife injuries and entanglement.
3. Develop a coordinated response with local governments, wildlife rescue organisations and environmental agencies to address emerging threats to native wildlife, including disease outbreaks like H5N1 and human-related impacts.
4. Provide resources for community awareness, monitoring and wildlife protection measures in areas of high recreational use, particularly where vulnerable bird and marine species are present.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils across Victoria are increasingly balancing the promotion of outdoor recreation with the protection of native wildlife in parks, waterways and coastal environments. Community concerns have been raised regarding the potential impacts of recreational fishing activities on birds and other wildlife, including injuries and entanglement caused by discarded fishing line, hooks and tackle.

These concerns are heightened by the emergence of H5N1 avian influenza (bird flu) in Australia. Recent assessments indicate that almost one in five Australian bird and mammal species are at high, very high or extreme risk from the disease, with many waterbirds, seabirds and marine species identified as particularly vulnerable. Experts have warned that the impacts could be significant and widespread across the country.

As councils work to support community participation in outdoor and nature-based activities, there is an opportunity to strengthen responsible recreational fishing education while improving wildlife protection outcomes. A coordinated statewide approach would help councils, community groups and environmental organisations better manage risks to wildlife, support public education and promote stewardship of Victoria's natural environments.

Motion 34. Improving Legislative Protections for Council Assets Affected by Utility and Third-Party Works

Boroondara City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocates to the Victorian Government to amend the Road Management Act 2004, associated Codes of Practice and related legislation to strengthen councils' powers to manage utility and third-party works within municipal road reserves, including notification and consent requirements, asset protection, compliance, enforcement, reinstatement and cost recovery.

Submitting council rationale:

Councils manage significant public infrastructure assets that are regularly affected by works undertaken by utilities, statutory authorities and other external agencies. Despite existing notification and consent requirements under the Road Management Act 2004, councils continue to experience inconsistent compliance, insufficient information regarding proposed works, poor consultation practices and inconsistent reinstatement outcomes.

Councils can also experience difficulties obtaining additional information within statutory assessment timeframes, enforcing compliance with approved conditions, requiring rectification of defective works and recovering costs where affected infrastructure is not restored to the required standard. Inconsistent approaches to financial assurances and asset reinstatement can further expose councils to financial and asset management risks.

Strengthening the legislative and regulatory framework would improve accountability, clarify obligations and support better asset management outcomes across Victoria.

Motion 35. Sustainable Funding for the School Crossing Supervisor Program

Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review the level of funding provided to councils to deliver the School Crossing Supervisor Program to ensure funding is sufficient to meet the Victorian Government's commitment to 50 percent of the cost of delivering the program.

The review should consider:

- the outcomes of School Crossing Risk Assessment Framework assessments undertaken across Victoria; community expectations regarding delivery of the program;
- the program's role in supporting vulnerable road users as part of the Safe System approach; its role in supporting active transport and associated health benefits for school-aged children;
- challenges faced by councils in recruiting and retaining supervisors; and
- increasing program delivery costs.

Submitting council rationale:

The School Crossing Supervisor Program is an important State and local government partnership that supports the safety of school children and other vulnerable road users across Victoria. It also contributes to active transport by helping families feel safer walking to and from school.

The Victorian Government has previously committed to sharing the cost of the program equally with councils. However, increasing wages and program delivery costs, together with challenges recruiting and retaining supervisors, mean the level of State funding does not necessarily translate to 50 per cent of the actual cost incurred by individual councils. This creates increasing financial pressure on councils and risks different levels of service being available between communities.

The issue is becoming more important as School Crossing Risk Assessment Framework assessments are undertaken and councils consider the future requirements of individual crossings. Funding arrangements should reflect these assessments, contemporary delivery costs and the role crossings play within the broader Safe System approach to road safety.

MAV has a long history of advocating for a genuine 50:50 funding partnership for the program, and the Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry into Local Government Funding and Services also recommended reinstating a 50:50 funding split for school crossing supervisors. The Victorian Government provided $16.8 million for the program in 2026–27, but MAV continues to seek an ongoing funding commitment rather than reliance on year-to-year announcements.

MAV advocacy can build on this existing position by seeking a transparent review of the actual cost of delivering the program across councils and ensuring future State funding is sufficient to meet the intended 50 per cent contribution.

Motion 36. Gambling Harm Minimisation

Casey City Council

Motion:

The MAV calls on the Victorian State Government to consider reforms to reduce impacts of gambling harm with the following steps:

1. Limit transfer or introduction of Electronic Gambling Machines (EGMs) in disadvantaged areas or areas of unknown disadvantage.
2. Provide greater transparency of the State Government Community Support Fund at a municipal level.
3. Require the Victorian Gambling Casino Control Commission to provide greater oversight and regulation of EGM venue community contributions.
4. Remove licensing and entitlement liabilities for clubs and not-for-profit venues, seeking to permanently divest from EGMs.

Submitting council rationale:

Australians are losing more to legal gambling per capita than any country in the world, resulting in significant health and wellbeing impacts. Whilst gambling is a legal and regulated activity, the City of Casey recognises the significant harms and risks to health and wellbeing that result directly and indirectly from gambling activities within the municipality and across Australia.

Victorians lost a record $3.318 billion to electronic gaming machines (EGMs) in hotels and clubs during the 2025–26 financial year.

For each individual experiencing gambling harm, it is estimated that between seven to ten people are adversely impacted, most commonly family, friends and employers, through a range of harms, including:

- Financial harm
- Relationship breakdown (including but not limited to, conflict, communication breakdown, and family neglect)
- Increased likelihood of experiencing family and/or domestic violence
- Emotional or psychological distress
- Negative health outcomes
- Cultural harm
- Adverse impact on work or school performance, and
- Criminal activity.

The section below expands upon the rationale for each step outlined in this motion.

1. Requests to limit transfer or introduction of EGMs in disadvantaged areas or areas of unknown disadvantage.

a) State planning and gambling settings that prevent the transfer, relocation or introduction of EGM entitlements into areas of established disadvantage or gambling vulnerability.

b) Decision-making criteria that consider cumulative harm, nearby venue concentration, accessibility, housing and financial stress, alternative recreation, population growth and the needs of communities at elevated risk.

c) A requirement that applicants demonstrate a clear, independently assessed net community benefit, rather than relying principally on projected venue expenditure or broad community contribution claims.

Summary: Locating EGMs in communities experiencing financial stress can intensify existing pressures and shift household resources away from essentials. A precautionary approach avoids requiring communities to experience measurable harm before stronger safeguards can apply.

2. Provide greater transparency of the State Government Community Support Fund at a municipal level.

a) Annual public reporting of Community Support Fund revenue attributable to each municipality and expenditure allocated to each municipality.

b) A consistent municipal breakdown by program, recipient, purpose, year and funding department, with clear treatment of statewide or multi-municipality initiatives.

c) Publication in accessible, downloadable formats that allow councils and communities to compare local gambling losses, hotel-derived contributions and funded harm-prevention or community initiatives.

Summary: Local communities should be able to see whether gambling-derived revenue is being reinvested transparently and whether allocations reflect local harm and service need. Municipal reporting would help Council identify funding gaps, advocate for prevention and support services, and explain to residents how gambling revenue is being used.

3. Require the Victorian Gambling Casino Control Commission to provide greater oversight and regulation of EGM venue community contributions.

a) More active VGCCC scrutiny and risk-based auditing of Community Benefit Statements, including supporting documents and the classification of claimed expenditure.

b) Stronger rules that prioritise genuine, additional and externally directed community benefit, particularly gambling-harm prevention and support, over ordinary operating costs, retained earnings or expenditure primarily benefiting the venue or its members.

c) Publication of clear venue and municipal summaries that distinguish direct external community contributions from internal or operational claims.

d) A transparent complaints, correction and enforcement pathway where claims are unsupported, misleading or inconsistent with the purpose of the scheme.

Summary: Community benefit reporting should demonstrate a real and additional benefit to communities that experience the losses and harms associated with EGMs. Broad claim categories can make it difficult for residents and decision-makers to understand what is genuinely returned outside the venue. Stronger oversight would improve the credibility of community benefit claims used in public discussion and regulatory decision-making.

Motion 37. Reliability of Water Supply for Recreational Lakes

Horsham Rural City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government to:

a. Commit, through water planning processes, to identify and fund options to improve the reliability of water supply to recreational lakes affected by declining inflows due to climate change, drought and increasing levels of competing extraction demands.

b. Ensure recreational and amenity values are explicitly and equitably weighted alongside urban, agricultural, industrial, mining, environmental and cultural water values in regional water strategy decision-making

c. Recognise the importance of recreational water for the regional economy and the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents and visitors, in particular during times of drought or adversity.

Submitting council rationale:

Recreational lakes and weir pools across regional and rural Victoria are significant economic and community assets, yet current water planning and entitlement arrangements do not guarantee their reliability, leaving them acutely exposed to climate-driven inflow decline and competing extraction demands. This risk is not isolated to any single catchment, but it is best evidenced in the Wimmera Southern Mallee, where four years of independent longitudinal research found regional economic contribution from recreational lakes fell from $33.68 million in 2018–19 to $28.49 million in 2019–20, a drop of over $5 million in a single year. This was accompanied by a fall of more than 30,000 recreational visits, driven substantially by low water levels and algal blooms rather than reduced demand. Regional water authorities have, in some cases, resorted to piping water from storage catchments into recreational lakes and weir pools to sustain them through summer after seasonal inflows failed as an interim operational fix rather than a funded, structural solution.

Beyond economic contribution, recreational waterbodies deliver measurable health and wellbeing benefits, valued at around $1.5 million annually for Wimmera Southern Mallee resident participants and $2.5–4 million annually across regional Victoria, reflecting reduced risk of breast cancer, coronary heart disease, diabetes, bowel cancer, stroke, anxiety and depression. Passive use such as walking, jogging and cycling near waterbodies increased markedly during COVID-19 restrictions, demonstrating that these benefits are most needed during periods of adversity, precisely when reliable access is hardest to guarantee under declining inflows. Community perception data reinforces this: residents in rural and regional communities consistently rate their local lakes and weir pools among their towns' greatest community assets, with smaller communities often rating them the single greatest asset.

While the evidence base is strongest in the Wimmera, the underlying pattern of declining inflows, entitlement frameworks that treat recreational water as a lower priority than other uses, and real, quantifiable economic and wellbeing losses when reliability fails, is consistent with pressures facing recreational water bodies across regional and rural Victoria. Without explicit recognition and funding through formal water planning processes, reliability of supply to recreational lakes risks continuing to be treated as incidental to water strategy decision-making, rather than as a legitimate competing value alongside urban, agricultural, industrial, mining, environmental and cultural water uses.

Why State Government Action Is Required

The Victorian Government holds central responsibility for:

- Development and administration of Regional Sustainable Water Strategies and associated water planning processes;
- Setting the framework by which competing water values (urban, agricultural, industrial, mining, environmental, cultural and recreational) are weighed and prioritised in bulk water entitlement and allocation decisions;
- Oversight and funding of water corporations (such as regional water authorities) responsible for the operational management and supply of water to recreational lakes; and
- Determining eligibility criteria and funding programs for water infrastructure and resilience investment.
- Assessing and approving major water-intensive developments, including mining proposals, that may compete with recreational water allocations.

The evidence demonstrates that recreational water is currently treated as a residual use, sustained only through discretionary transfers rather than a secured, high-reliability entitlement. This is a structural feature of the entitlement framework the State Government controls, not an operational issue councils or water corporations can resolve independently. Without an explicit State commitment to review and fund reliability improvements and to formally weight recreational and amenity values in strategy decision-making, recreational lakes will remain the most exposed water use to further inflow decline and competing extraction, including from proposed mining developments

Financial and Governance Impacts on Councils

While councils do not control water entitlements or supply infrastructure, declining reliability of recreational water supply has direct and quantifiable consequences for local government, including:

- Loss of regional economic activity underpinning local tourism, hospitality and event-based revenue
- Continued fixed costs for council-managed lakeside and foreshore infrastructure (boat ramps, camping grounds, amenities) regardless of visitation, while revenue and economic return decline in low-water years;
- Community and reputational pressure on councils to respond to or advocate on an issue over which they hold no regulatory control; and

- Risk to community wellbeing outcomes that councils are otherwise investing in through open space, recreation and public health strategies, given the quantified physical and mental health value of reliable water access.

Councils are, in effect, absorbing the economic and community consequences of an entitlement and planning framework they have no authority to change, while lacking any funded mechanism of their own to secure improved reliability.

Alignment with MAV Strategic Priorities

This motion aligns with MAV's enabling priorities relating to:

- Health & Wellbeing — recognising the physical and mental health value of accessible recreational water, particularly during drought or adversity;
- Connected Places — supporting the public spaces and shared community assets that recreational lakes represent;
- Sustainable Economy — protecting regional and rural economic assets shown to generate significant tourism and local economic activity, which are vulnerable to climate-driven supply decline; and
- Climate & Regenerative Design — advocating for water planning frameworks that explicitly account for climate change impacts on inflows and competing extraction pressures.

Motion 38. Increased Government Funding for Integrated Water Management (IWM) Implementation

Horsham Rural City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government to:

a. Provide dedicated, ongoing funding to support the implementation of Integrated Water Management (IWM) initiatives identified through regional and local IWM forums

b. Streamline access to annual funding programs for IWM projects that deliver stormwater harvesting, alternative water supply, and waterway health outcomes, recognising the significant co-investment and coordination role played by local government.

Submitting council rationale:

Integrated Water Management (IWM) delivers significant, proven benefits for Victorian communities by improving water security, reducing reliance on potable and river water, building drought resilience and creating healthier, cooler and more liveable public spaces. Since 2017, the Victorian Government has invested $72.8 million to support 176 priority IWM projects statewide, 126 of them in regional Victoria, delivered through 15 regional and metropolitan IWM forums engaging over 100 partner organisations. This investment has enabled genuine, demonstrated outcomes: in the Wimmera alone, completed projects such as the Horsham SmartWater and IWM Connections project and the Greening St Arnaud recycled water scheme have measurably reduced reliance on drinking and river water while improving town amenity and drought resilience.

However, current funding arrangements do not match the scale or pace of identified opportunity. IWM funding is delivered through competitive grant rounds rather than dedicated, ongoing programs, requiring councils to compete annually for implementation funding even where projects are already identified, supported and ready to advance through their regional IWM forum's Strategic Directions Statement. Horsham Rural City Council's 2026 application to extend its reclaimed water pipeline from the Horsham Racecourse to the Wotonga Basin Pump Station illustrates the practical burden of this model: a $502,390 project requiring a council co-contribution of approximately 34 per cent, sourced from an existing council budget, to be competitive for a single grant round with a second project stage still requiring a separate future funding application. This pattern is repeated across the sector, wherever a "ready-to-advance" IWM opportunity depends on securing one-off, competitive funding rather than a predictable implementation pathway.

The 2026 refresh of the Wimmera IWM Forum's Strategic Directions Statement identifies further systemic barriers limiting the effectiveness of the current funding model, including high staff turnover risking loss of technical knowledge within partner organisations; inequitable distribution of project support toward councils with greater

existing capacity, disadvantaging smaller and lower-resourced councils; IWM not yet being treated as a strategic priority in some councils; and complex regulatory approval processes, compounded in many regional areas by the absence of a local EPA presence. Numerous regionally-endorsed, "ready to advance" IWM opportunities including the Donald IWM Plan, Mooney Dams Reactivation, Murtoa Grain Bunkers reclaimed water project, Horsham Water Grid Stage 2 and the Wimmera Greenscapes program remain at feasibility or concept stage, awaiting implementation funding despite being formally identified and supported through their regional forum.

While this evidence is drawn substantially from the Wimmera, the underlying funding model competitive, uncertain and requiring significant council co-investment applies to all 15 IWM forums statewide, making dedicated and ongoing implementation funding a matter of genuine statewide significance to the local government sector.

Why State Government Action Is Required

The Victorian Government holds central responsibility for:

- Design and administration of the IWM funding framework, including the IWM Partnerships Program and other grant mechanisms through which project implementation funding is allocated;
- Establishing and resourcing the 15 regional and metropolitan IWM forums through which project priorities are identified and endorsed;
- Setting the eligibility, co-contribution and competitive assessment criteria that determine which projects proceed to delivery; and
- Regulatory settings that directly affect the pace and complexity of IWM project delivery, particularly in regional areas without a local EPA presence.

Local government does not control the funding mechanism, competitive assessment process or regulatory approval pathway that determines whether an IWM project identified through a forum actually proceeds to delivery. Councils can identify, plan and co-fund projects, but cannot guarantee implementation funding without a fundamentally different, government-led funding model. Moving from competitive, uncertain grant rounds to dedicated, ongoing implementation funding matched to the genuine pipeline of forum-endorsed projects is a decision only the State Government can make.

Financial and Governance Impacts on Councils

The current competitive funding model imposes direct financial and governance costs on councils, including:

- Significant co-investment obligations, often 30 per cent or more of total project cost, drawn from already-constrained council operating or capital budgets
- Resourcing costs associated with preparing competitive grant applications for projects that may not ultimately be funded, despite being formally endorsed through a regional IWM forum process;

- Loss of project momentum and cost escalation risk where multi-stage projects must secure separate, sequential funding rounds for each stage, rather than a coordinated funding pathway;
- Disproportionate impact on smaller and lower-capacity councils, who are less able to prepare competitive applications or fund co-contribution requirements, reinforcing regional inequity in which communities benefit from IWM investment; and
- Ongoing strategic and staff resourcing pressure associated with maintaining forum participation and project readiness, compounded by high staff turnover across the sector.

Without a shift to dedicated, ongoing funding, councils will continue to bear disproportionate financial risk and administrative burden to progress projects that have already been identified as regional priorities.

Alignment with MAV Strategic Priorities

This motion aligns with MAV's enabling priorities relating to:

- Climate & Regenerative Design — supporting IWM as a core mechanism for climate adaptation, drought resilience and sustainable water use across Victorian communities;
- Connected Places — enabling the public open space, greening and amenity outcomes that IWM projects consistently deliver;
- Sustainable Economy — reducing council and community reliance on increasingly constrained potable and river water supplies through cost-effective alternative water sources; and
- Intergenerational Infrastructure — securing long-term, resilient water infrastructure investment rather than one-off, competitively-funded projects with uncertain continuity.

Motion 39. State Emergency Service Funding

Kingston City Council

Motion:

That MAV State Council:

- Notes that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is currently in force between the State Emergency Service (SES) and MAV, which obliges councils across Victoria to carry as much as half the cost of buildings and facilities used by the SES.
- Notes that the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) was established to fully fund the SES and that continued financial contributions by councils represent double-dipping by the State Government.
- Calls on the Victorian Government to release local government from its obligations towards the SES and fully fund SES facilities and operations.

Submitting council rationale:

The ESVF has been communicated as a way to sustainably fund Victoria's key rescue and recovery agencies. The current arrangement is double dipping because ratepayers are paying the ESVF levy – intended to fully fund the SES, while still paying for many SES facilities as a result of a MOU signed between MAV and the Victorian Government.

Motion 40. Changing places bathrooms

Kingston City Council

Motion:

That MAV State Council:

- Calls on the Victorian Government to significantly increase state funding for Changing Places bathrooms at beaches, major parks, regional tourism destinations and regional level playgrounds.

Submitting council rationale:

Changing Places bathrooms are proven to be a transformative facility for people with disability and their carers. They are in a growing number of locations, but some of the most important gaps in the network of bathrooms are at beaches, park and playgrounds where there has already been an investment in, for example, all abilities beach ramps and playground equipment. The value of these investments is limited by the ability of users to access toilet and change facilities appropriate to their needs.

Motion 41. Kangaroo Management Plans

Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to require all approved kangaroo management plans involving a cull or shooting program to include a mandatory notification requirement for adjoining residential property owners, particularly where management activities are proposed in or immediately adjacent to urban Melbourne communities, so that affected residents are informed in advance of the timing, location, nature and authorised safeguards of the program.

Submitting council rationale:

An absence of advanced notification to local communities about kangaroo management is concerning and greater transparency and communication is essential when decisions of this nature are being implemented.

Motion 42. EPA Name and Shame Communications Campaign

Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Environmental Protection Agency to run ongoing illegal dumping "name and shame" communications campaign as a way to deter the prevalence of illegal dumping in communities.

Submitting council rationale:

Council has implemented "Name and Shame" campaigns as a deterrent to illegal dumping activity – which are being copied by many other Councils across Victoria.

We believe that the Victorian Government, through the Environmental Protection Agency, can follow our lead and implement their own "Name and Shame" campaign to compliment the work of many Council's with the aim of ultimately ridding the state of illegal dumping.

Motion 43. Implement the National Anti-Racism Framework

Melbourne City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council urge the Australian Government to fully fund and implement the Australian Human Rights Commission's 10-year National Anti-Racism Framework, including all 63 recommendations, and work with the Commission to identify and promote actions from the Framework for local government to address racism in their communities.

Submitting council rationale:

In May 2026, the MAV State Council resolved to advocate to the Victorian Government to:

• Acknowledge the importance of all levels of government working collaboratively to combat racism, antisemitism and intolerance towards other religious identities and belief, hatred, and bigotry, and to promote social cohesion across Victoria.

• Establish a dedicated funding stream and partnership framework to support local governments to lead social cohesion initiatives and prevent and respond to racially, or religiously malicious incidents.

• Resource councils to deliver practical, evidence-based initiatives, including upstander training in schools, community engagement activities, and social cohesion taskforces.

• Facilitate strong collaboration between councils, state agencies, and community organisations to share best practice, respond effectively to incidents, and build safer, more inclusive communities.

This new motion adds to that resolution by urging the federal government to use the existing National Anti-Racism Framework to reduce all forms of racism in Australia. The federal government has commissioned and funded the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) to devise a comprehensive, national response to racism. The Commission did a very thorough job, it spent two years travelling the country, consulting with diverse minorities, community groups, government departments, service providers, academics, and experts. In total, some 300 organisations were consulted, and another 164 public submissions were received.

The AHRC published their work in December 2024. It is called the National Anti-Racism Framework (NARF). The framework takes a whole-of-society approach – because dismantling pervasive, systemic racism is a joint responsibility that will require coordinated effort. Naturally, it includes antisemitism.

It is a 10-year roadmap. Its 63 recommendations are directed at our justice and legal systems, health, education, workplaces, media, the arts, and the ways we collect data.

Australia's then-Race Discrimination Commissioner (Mr Chin Tan) has called on the federal government to support the framework, fully resource it and implement it.

We have a comprehensive, rights-based, thoroughly road-tested roadmap and want the federal government to implement it and assist local government in taking actions appropriate to our sector

Motion 44. Deer Management

Nillumbik Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the State Government to reduce the impacts of deer on biodiversity, environmental values, personal property, and public safety by:

a. Providing sustainable and long-term funding for Deer Management Programs

b. Fund dedicated, ongoing regional deer co-ordinator roles

c. Ensure deer management initiatives are included within state invasive species funding programs

d. Invest in deer processing infrastructure and facilities

Submitting council rationale:

Feral deer are causing increasing damage across Australia, threatening native biodiversity, degrading natural environments, damaging agricultural land and personal property, and creating serious safety risks for motorists. As deer populations continue to expand, communities, landholders and local governments are facing growing challenges in managing their impacts on the landscape and reducing the risk of deer-vehicle collisions. The following investments are needed to tackle this increasing problem:

Increase funding for the Victorian Deer Control Strategy and associated Regional Management Plans though secure, ongoing budget commitments. Transition away from short-term and ad hoc grant funding models to provide councils and land managers with the certainty required to deliver effective, sustainable, long-term local deer control programs. Build in buffer mechanism to allow expansion and adjustment of programs as the effectiveness of the ongoing control programs need to be adjusted to capture changes in territory or respond to new infiltrations.

Fund dedicated, ongoing regional deer co-ordinator roles in each Council to deliver the regional plans, lead local collaboration, support stakeholders including local program leads, and improve the strategic delivery of deer management programs.

Ensure deer management initiatives are included within state invasive species funding programs. While deer are not currently classified as pest species for some funding purposes, their significant detrimental environmental, agricultural, cultural heritage, biodiversity and community impacts warrant recognition and investment in control and removal. Expanding funding eligibility would enable greater implementation of coordinated control measures across affected landscapes.

Invest in deer processing infrastructure and facilities by supporting the development and expansion of deer processing infrastructure, particularly within peri-urban Melbourne and other high-priority regions. Increased processing capacity will improve the efficiency and viability of commercial and authorised harvesting programs, helping to maximise the utilisation of harvested animals.

Motion 45. DEECA Crown Reserves Funding

Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the State Government, State Opposition and Cross Benchers requesting the Victorian State Government:

- Provide adequate funding streams to the DEECA Crown Reserve Committees of Management to address maintenance and renewal needs of these state-owned assets.
- Develop a strategy to support intergenerational hand over of these committees to a younger generation of volunteers.

Submitting council rationale:

A lot is expected of the 1,150 Voluntary CoMs in Victoria. Expectations on these volunteers include managing Aboriginal cultural heritage and Traditional Owner rights, committee responsibilities, standards of conduct and required policies, financial management, developing the reserve, leases and licences, insurance and other governance and land management matters. It is unconscionable to think that this broad asset class can be managed with reasonable funding support.

In addition, the profile of volunteers is aging, and a strategy is needed to encourage a new generation of volunteers to step into these positions, otherwise the management of these assets will fall back on DEECA, or possibly Councils, and the assets themselves will fall into despair without the many volunteer hours that go into them.

Motion 46. Consistent public reporting of significant council expenditure

Darebin City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV):

1. Notes and supports the unresolved May 2025 State Council resolution (Motion 32) calling for the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal to set remuneration bands for Council CEOs.
2. Notes that the Local Government Legislation Amendment (Stronger Communities) Bill 2026 strengthens CEO employment and remuneration governance through independently chaired CEO Employment Matters Committees, but does not establish consistent sector-wide public reporting requirements for senior executive employment costs or other significant corporate expenditure.
3. Notes that while councils already disclose certain remuneration and expenditure information under legislative and accounting requirements, reporting practices vary across the sector.
4. Advocates for a consistent, standardised annual reporting framework across all 79 Victorian councils requiring significant expenditure categories to be separately identified and publicly reported, consistent with applicable employment, privacy and other relevant legal obligations including:

a. CEO remuneration and senior executive employment costs;

b. consultancy expenditure;

c. legal services expenditure;

d. external arbitration and dispute resolution costs;

e. councillor conduct-related costs; and

f. other significant governance and corporate expenditure.

5. Consults with member councils to develop best-practice principles and guidance for clear and consistent reporting of the above categories so communities can better understand significant council expenditure.
6. Advocates for measures that support transparency, accountability and community confidence, complementary to existing advocacy on CEO remuneration bands and the reforms in the Stronger Communities Bill

Submitting council rationale:

Motion 32 remains open and seeks independent band-setting for CEO remuneration. The Stronger Communities Bill improves the process for CEO employment and related advice. Neither establishes consistent public reporting of senior executive

employment costs or other major expenditure categories such as consultancies, legal services and governance-related costs.

Councils already hold and, in varying formats, report much of this information. Current variation can limit comparability and community understanding. This motion seeks practical, sector-wide improvements to the visibility and consistency of significant expenditure reporting. It focuses on information councils already hold and expressly requires any framework to comply with employment law (including Fair Work Act section 333B workplace rights), privacy obligations and other legal requirements. It does not require employees to disclose information contrary to their rights.

Motion 47. Safe and cohesive communities

Manningham City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to provide sufficient dedicated ongoing funding for specialised legal partners to co-locate and collaborate with local councils to deliver proactive legal education, timely crisis support, and safe referral pathways within local communities.

This motion directly relates to the 'health & wellbeing' priority area in the MAV Strategic Plan as it seeks funding to support local councils to deliver legal education and support local communities.

Submitting council rationale:

As the closest level of government working with its local communities, local councils are uniquely positioned to identify emerging priorities such as:

- Elder abuse: 7,386 recorded family violence incidents with victims aged 65+ in Victoria.
- Family violence: 106,430 recorded total family violence incidents in Victoria.
- Financial hardship: 30,844 recorded family violence incidents identified the perpetrator or victim are having financial difficulties in Victoria.

All 3 indicators are at their highest recorded rates in the past 5 years in 2024-25.

Increasing vulnerabilities are impacted by a range of factors including continued ageing population (forecasted to increase by around 60% by 2046) housing stress, and increasing cost-of-living pressures.

As a result of increased rates of vulnerability and increased need, community legal services are overstretched. For every person they manage to assist, two are turned away, amounting to nearly 200,000 unassisted Victorians every year.

Securely funded community legal services working in partnership with local councils play an important early intervention role, providing legal support, safe referral pathways, and building stronger and healthier local communities for residents facing, or at risk of future harm.

Funding for community legal services is critical and more important than ever as 77% of family violence incidents in Victoria assessed by police, identified that future family violence were likely to occur.


MAV
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA