

Council calls for financial independence

30 September 2022

Victorian councils, together with the MAV, are repeating the call for the next State Government to better recognise the significant economic challenges faced by the sector.

Key issues for all councils are the sizeable loss of revenue from the mandated closure of facilities during the pandemic, together with the current rate cap and escalating operational and asset maintenance costs.

As part of the Municipal Association of Victoria's (MAV) State Election Campaign, MAV President Cr David Clark said following support for the community through the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic, council was just as passionate about leading the recovery from serious economic and social impacts that are now coming into sharp focus

"The opportunities for the State to better work alongside councils to achieve the best outcomes for the community should be a key concern for our state representatives," Cr Clark said.

"We'd like to see reduced duplication by better use of existing local government conduits to generate increased economic development and innovations that benefit local businesses across Victoria.

"Service efficiencies and less duplication from multiple agencies will assist local businesses navigate government programs and better tap into available supports and networks."

Cr Clark also highlighted the need for a partnership, not cost shifting and unfunded mandates.

"Councils want to improve the quality of local services and infrastructure across Victoria. The best way for the State to support us in that is by minimising cost shifting and reviewing the rate capping system.

This campaign aligns with the *MAV Strategy 2021-25*, which was adopted by the MAV's State Council in May 2021, and outlines opportunities to ensure we can deliver in the best interests of local communities.

The key asks from the local government sector are fully documented in the MAV's [State Election Platform \(PDF 3.8MB\)](#) or [State Election Platform \(Word - 34KB\)](#).

Overall, the key issues for councils in this election are:

- A local government-specific workforce development program generating local employment opportunities and addressing key local government workforce skill deficits

- Reduce duplication by using existing local government conduits to generate increased economic development and innovations which benefit local businesses
- Bringing forward the rollout of funding for councils to provide Local Community Collectives (now known as Social Action Inclusion Groups) which were recommended by the Victorian Royal Commission into Mental Health to support for people with mental health needs connect with people and organisations close to where they live and work
- Support for reconciliation and strong constructive relationships between councils and local Aboriginal communities, including a capacity building program for councillors to partner with Victorian Traditional Owners
- An investment in new local, place-based creative industries strategies, which support collaboration and identify local priorities for investment; and an expansion of Creative Victoria's Regional Partnerships program to enable new entrants from regional and outer-suburban areas
- Restore funding to the Building Inclusive Communities program to local government to support the State Government's delivery of the Victorian Disability Plan through place-based approaches and involvement of local people, groups, businesses and services.
- No shifting of new or additional costs and responsibilities to local government without ensuring adequate and ongoing resources to meet them
- Reform the rate capping system to support rather than hinder the ongoing financial sustainability of councils
- Renegotiate agreements for co-funded services that over time have shifted an increasing burden to councils.

For further information, contact Sean Rogasch on 0429 200 981.