

2024

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2027

The
Municipal
Association
of Victoria
Strategic
Plan

SHAPING OUR FUTURE

Helping local councils build a
resilient & sustainable Victoria



Foreword	02
Message from President, Cr David Clark	04
The big picture: Our Purpose and Vision	06
The global context: Sustainable Development Goals	10
How the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan works	14
Our roles	16
Our priorities	18
The broader context: How this plan fits in with our work	22
Conclusion	26

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Disclaimer and Copyright

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) Strategic Plan 2024-2027 has been prepared by the MAV to set directions for the MAV that respond to the local government sector's vision for a more sustainable future.

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The MAV is the statutory peak body for local government in Victoria, representing all 79 municipalities within the state.

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Foreword

No one understands the challenges and opportunities facing Victoria in the 21st century better than local councils. From rapidly evolving technology to social changes, shifting economies to environmental pressures, our local communities—and the governments that represent them—are at the forefront of multiple transformations happening simultaneously.

These changes will affect every aspect of life in Victoria – and local councils, equipped with intimate knowledge of the needs and capabilities of their communities, are uniquely positioned to meet them head-on.

But local councils do not have to navigate these growing complexities alone.

The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) is the local government sector's partner and ally in this journey. As the collective voice of Victoria's 79 local councils, the MAV works collaboratively with councils to ensure their communities both adapt and thrive, offering advice, services and resources necessary to ensure our councils can fulfil their essential roles.

To ensure the MAV is best placed to help local councils successfully navigate this ever-evolving landscape, we have developed the MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027. It outlines the clear objectives and actionable strategies we will implement to empower local councils to not just face the future, but actively shape it.

Achieving the aspirations in this plan will not be a solitary endeavour performed by a peak body, but rather a collective voyage requiring collaboration. To that end, this plan outlines the roles and responsibilities the MAV will take to influence other levels of government and collaborate with our communities and the local government sector to create a more sustainable and resilient future for all.

President's Message

I am pleased to present to you the MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027, which sets the direction for our organisation's activities over the next four years.

As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, MAV is committed to advocating for councils on the issues that affect them, empowering them with the support and resources they need to foster innovative and resilient communities.

The priorities outlined in this plan are designed to strategically lead and strengthen councils to successfully navigate the issues that affect them and take advantage of the opportunities they present. They focus on everything from facilitating active local democracy through to promoting diversity and inclusion and investing in intergenerational infrastructure.

We consulted widely to develop this plan, gathering the input of sector representatives, state and federal government agencies and partner organisations to determine what truly matters to the community members across each of our regions. We will continue to monitor sector and community concerns, ideas, and aspirations throughout the life of this plan to see if, or how, perspectives have changed.

To achieve the aspirations outlined in this plan, we must unite as a sector. We extend an open invitation to other tiers of government, businesses, academic institutions, civil society, and individuals to collaborate with us in shaping our shared future together.

I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead, and confident in our collective capacity to tackle these challenges. Together, we will pave the way for a sustainable and thriving future for the Victorian local government sector and the communities we are privileged to serve.

Cr
David
Clark

The big picture.

Our Purpose and Vision.



As the peak body for the Victorian local government sector, the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) offers councils a one-stop shop of services and support to help them serve their communities.

MAV advocates for local government interests, initiates projects and services across a broad range of areas, and supports the development, adoption and implementation of evidence-based research and policy.

Our purpose is to mobilise action that supports Victorian councils to create cities, regions, and towns that are thriving, resilient and inclusive communities.

Our vision is to be a nation-leading thought leader, partner and resource hub for the Victorian local government sector in strategic foresight, policy and research, leadership and governance, service design and advocacy impact.

In addition to the activities we perform to achieve our purpose and vision day to day, we have also begun to focus our efforts on more specific issues affecting our members, including the urgent imperative to work with councils to address climate change and adapt to our changing climate. We have also worked to address rising inequalities and collaborated with councils to build resilience in our communities, networks and infrastructure, as we recover from the impacts of the pandemic, fires and floods.

While these issues are not new, they have become more pressing for our local communities in recent years. It is within this context that we have created the MAV Strategic Plan 2024-2027.

A roadmap for the next four years, it sets out the roles we will perform to gear councils and the communities they serve towards more sustainable, resilient, and prosperous futures.

We do a lot of things to achieve our purpose and vision day to day, including: Amplifying local government leadership. Enhancing collaboration with critical partners. Leveraging the power of collective knowledge. Supporting and connecting local government communities, civil society organisations, and movements across the state and nation. Helping local government and communities develop core competencies to strengthen their resilience. Investing in local capacity and leadership. Innovating new models of policy co-creation between local councils and other levels of government. Advocating for local government interests with other levels of government.

Purpose	✓
Vision	✓

Sustainable Development Goals.

While local councils serve the needs of their communities, they also operate in a global context that acknowledges that what we do locally has broader implications, both for our neighbours and for the planet as a whole. These acknowledgements are increasingly taking the form of international agreements designed to deliver a better future for everyone.

The goals and priorities outlined in this strategic plan align with leading global agreements between national and city governments on climate, sustainable development, and resilience. One such agreement is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015.

At its heart are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) created by the UN to achieve “peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future”. Developed in a global partnership between developed and developing countries, the SDGs recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand in hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.

While the SDGs are not legally binding, they do act as a framing mechanism for measuring progress toward environmental, economic, and community outcomes. For this reason, and in the spirit of collaboration, the SDGs underpin the strategic priorities contained within this plan.



17
Goals to
transform
our
world.

1 NO
POVERTY



2 ZERO
HUNGER



3 GOOD HEALTH
AND WELLBEING



4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



5 GENDER
EQUALITY



6 CLEAN WATER
AND SANITATION



7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



10 REDUCED
INEQUALITIES



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14 LIFE
BELOW WATER



15 LIFE
ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



How the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan works

This strategic plan sets out our aspirations for the local government sector for the coming four years. It also outlines how we will achieve them, in tandem with input from our members and stakeholders in the local government sector.

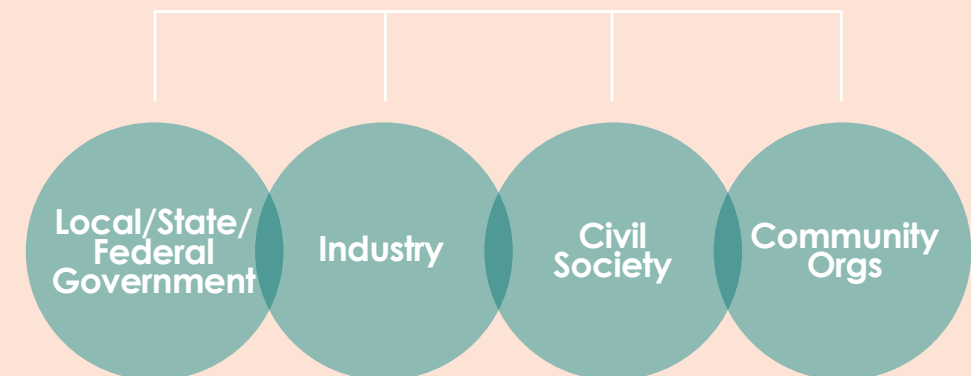
Who we will work with.

Broadly speaking, we will play a critical role in developing policy and designing projects, programs, and services to support the work of the local government sector as outlined in this strategic plan.

To do this, we will work with a range of partners across local, state and federal government, industry, civil society, and community organisations. We will also enter into formal partnerships, sponsorships, agreements, and memorandums of understanding as needed, in addition to informal arrangements and collaborations.

Advisory committees will provide specialist advice and guide our work. And while we will be responsible for the actions outlined in this strategic plan, many outcomes will be achieved by councils, as well as other levels of government and other partner organisations.

Our Partners



Our roles.

To achieve our strategic plan, we will perform 10 discrete roles over the next four years.

1. Leader

We will seek to understand the underlying values of councils and the needs and aspirations of their communities, and invest in building local capacity and leadership.

2. Service provider

We will provide a range of projects, programs, and services for the benefit of the local government sector to create more innovative, resilient and inclusive communities.

3. Amplify impact

We will provide timely, accurate, inclusive, and inspiring information to the target audiences of our programs, projects and services, and engage them in conversation about the work we are doing.

4. Influencer advocate

We will act as an advocate on behalf of our sector, giving voice to their communities' needs and aspirations. We will call on other levels of government and industry for policy and regulatory reform, as well as changes to service provision for the benefit of the local government sector and its communities.

5. Networker

We will engage in local, state, national, and global networks to share and develop expertise in urban, regional and rural issues.

6. Capacity builder

We will work with councils and their communities and related organisations, building connections and strengthening their capacity to respond to their needs and not just face the future, but help shape it.

7. Thought leader

We will commission and publish thought leadership and research on urban, regional, economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues and solutions relevant to the sector and our communities.

8. Partner

We will embed partnership in all our initiatives, prioritising co-design and collaboration.

9. Planner

We will use our professional expertise in policy, research, planning, and program and service design to undertake research, provide information and collaborate with councils, communities and stakeholders to develop and evaluate ways to resolve identified issues.

10. Convener & Facilitator

We will bring together all the forces essential for the success of the local government sector, including governments, civil society, industry, and academia to deliver outcomes with and for our communities.

Our Priorities.



**We have
created the
following
10 enabling
priorities, or
areas of focus,
to shape our
actions as
we work to
foster thriving
and resilient
communities
over the next
four years.**



Photo: Kate Longley



1. Active local democracy

We will work with local government and other levels of government to ensure that local policies reflect the needs and preferences of local communities. Effective local democracy can facilitate public participation, improve service delivery, strengthen communities, and improve development outcomes.

3. Health & wellbeing

We will work with the local government sector, community health organisations, the acute health sector and other levels of government to improve population health and wellbeing, creating place-based services that meet the diverse needs, experiences and identities of different population groups at different life stages.

2. Connected places

We will work with the local government sector to inspire people to collectively reinvent the public spaces at the heart of their communities, creating places that connect people to resources, opportunities, and to each other. We will strengthen the connection between people and the places they collectively inhabit through urban planning, transport, built forms, and the creation of a collaborative process by which we can shape our places to maximise shared value.

4. Sustainable economy

We will work with the local government sector to design and support practices that facilitate long-term economic growth without negatively impacting the social, environmental and cultural aspects of the community. To do this, we will explore diverse strategies for achieving economic growth that strengthen local industries and improve circular economy performance. We will prioritise working with councils to enable the right conditions for creative and entrepreneurial thinking to meet future challenges and needs.

5. Future Gen

We will embrace FutureGen, a movement to improve lives in the present, the future, and for years to come. By collaborating with young people and the local government sector, we will drive long-term change for future generations. These changes will encompass a wide range of initiatives, mobilising people from all backgrounds to reshape our ways of living, working, and future planning.

6. First Peoples local government relations

We will work with the First Peoples' Assembly to connect with councils across the state to build understanding and capacity in treaty negotiations and continue to close the gap.

8. Diversity, equity & inclusion

We will collaborate with local governments, partner organisations, and communities to craft policies and initiatives that enhance representation and participation across diverse groups. Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) spans various ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, genders, religions, cultures, and the LGBTIQ+ community, ensuring a broad spectrum of perspectives and experiences are valued and integrated.

10. Intergenerational infrastructure

We will work with the local government sector to ensure funding is invested by all levels of government into intergenerational infrastructure, ensuring the population is supported by the necessary services and facilities as it grows. By working to ensure the funding of public transport, roads, and community facilities, we will enable economic and productivity growth by reducing congestion and allowing people to move efficiently around their communities and the state.

7. Climate & regenerative design

We will work with the local government sector, civil society, universities and other levels of government to plan and design for climate change, using regenerative approaches, technology, and innovation to create more resilient urban communities.

9. Resilience & recovery

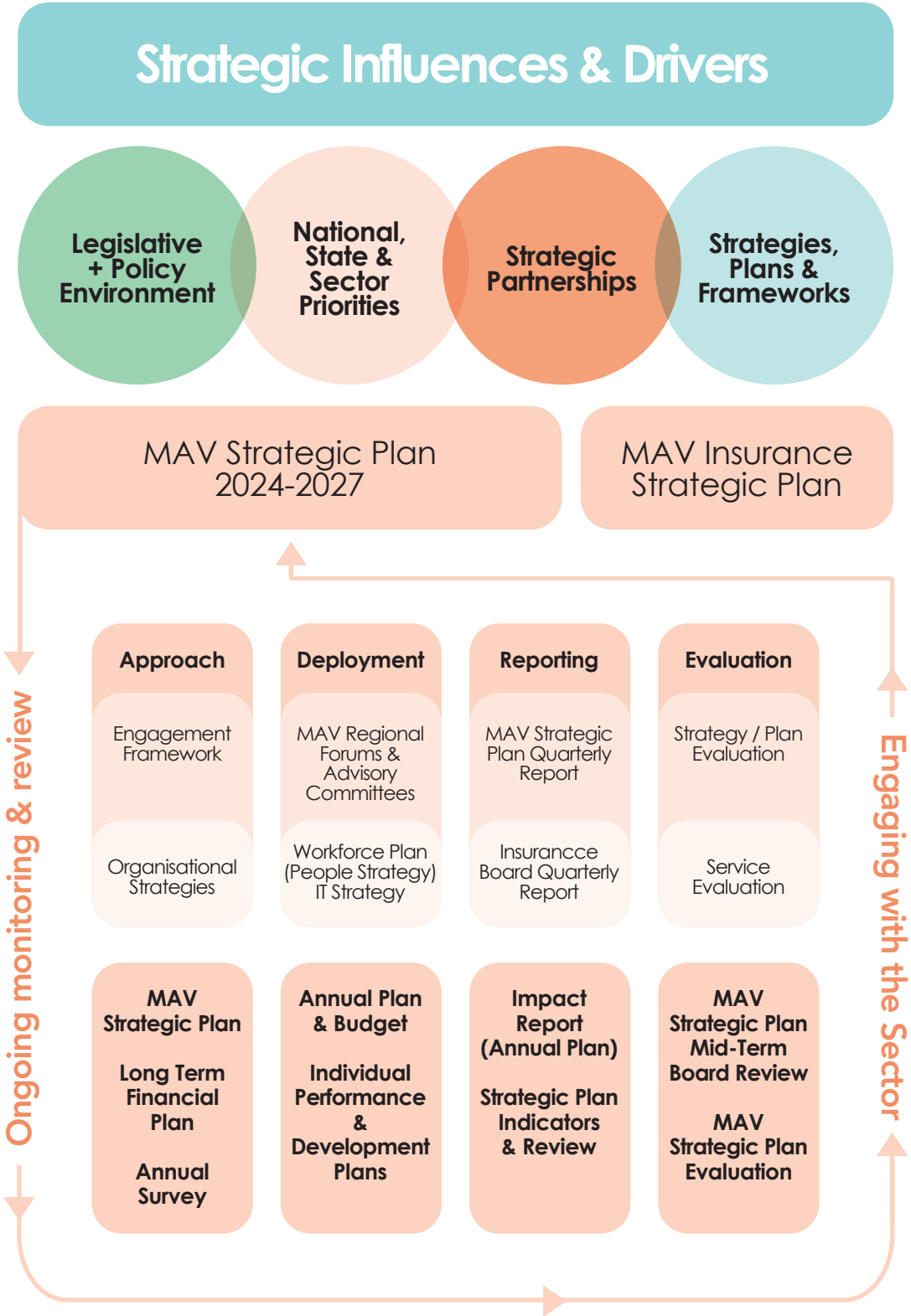
We will work with the local government sector, as well as state and federal agencies, to enhance the economic and social resilience of communities to withstand and recover from disasters, including the effects of climate change. This will involve extensive collaboration on community-identified disaster resilience projects throughout the state, aimed at enhancing local preparedness and resilience against future disasters.

How this plan fits in with our work

Our strategic plan guides all our other strategies and plans, identifying the MAV’s priorities and aspirations for the next four years, along with the actions we’ll take to achieve them.

While our strategic plan is our highest-level plan, it also sits within a framework of associated plans and strategies. Our Integrated Planning Framework provides the mechanism for implementing our strategic plan, and outlines how it and our other plans and strategies fit together.

This diagram shows how the strategic plan fits within the broader Integrated Planning Framework:



Supporting Plans & Strategies.

In addition to our strategic plan, the MAV's work is also guided by these supporting plans and strategies:

Annual plans:

identify the actions we will take each year to deliver the outcomes of our strategic plan. These annual plans include more details of the individual activities we will undertake, and how we will undertake them.

Workforce plan:

identifies the MAV's current and future workforce needs. The plan ensures the MAV workforce has the capacity and capability to create the outcomes in the strategic plan.

Long-term financial plan:

a 10-year plan that identifies current and future financial capacity to act on the aspirations of the strategic plan.

Information & technology strategy:

sets the information and communication technology (ICT) directions and priorities that align with the strategic plan and ensures compliance with government information and data policies. The plan guides ICT-related decision-making, priorities and investment.

Engagement strategy:

establishes how we engage with the sector to collaborate, with, involve and empower communities to take part in shaping the future of their communities.

Conclusion.

As Victoria's local councils embark on this journey of transformation, we feel confident the sector can rely on the MAV to navigate the evolving landscape of governance and changing community needs in the years leading up to 2027 and beyond. Our strategic plan lays the groundwork for a sustainable and prosperous future, deftly navigating the challenges they present and capitalising on the opportunities they bring.

This plan is a call to action for all stakeholders – government bodies, businesses, academia, and community members – to join forces with the MAV in a shared mission to shape a better Victoria. Through collaboration and a shared vision, we will unlock the full potential of our communities, building a foundation for prosperity, sustainability, and wellbeing that will serve generations to come.

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