

## MAV Gender Equity Action Plan 2017 to 2020

### Introduction:

**VISION:** As the peak body representing councils in Victoria, we will undertake activities which progress the achievement of gender equality in the local government sector.

This Gender Equity Action Plan has been developed collaboratively across a number of MAV portfolio areas which cover diverse service, policy and programs areas of interest to local government. It includes actions which deliver on the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter, and builds on the the legacy of the work and advocacy undertaken by women's and local government organisations through the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition during the 1990s and 2000s. It also recognises the leadership local government has demonstrated over the past decade in undertaking initiatives aimed at preventing violence against women and achieving gender equality.

The structure of the action plan has been adapted from the [model](#) developed by the [Male Champions of Change group](#) of 21 CEOs, department heads and non-executive directors from business and the federal government which produced the report "Accelerating the advancement of women in leadership" in 2013. The themes this group identified for where action appears to be most necessary and effective for organisations are:

- Shaping up as leaders
- Creating accountability
- Disrupting the status quo
- Dismantling barriers for parents / carers.

We envisage this plan will be an ongoing work-in-progress and that it will be adapted and grow as we proceed. It will be reviewed annually.

Documenting these activities in this action plan enables us to keep on track with our goals and monitor progress over time. It will be informed by ongoing guidance from a working group and will be the basis for regular progress reports to the MAV Board.

For more information, contact: Rosemary Hancock, Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV)  
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*Victorian Local Government Women's Charter principle for gender equity: Women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions*

## MAV Gender Equity Action Plan 2017 to 2020

### Area of focus for 2017/18:

The MAV will be seeking to implement all the components of this action plan. The headline initiatives listed in this table will receive particular attention in the financial year 2017/18 and will be reported on to councils. The other detailed actions in this Plan will be used for monitoring purposes within the MAV, with a general report on progress and achievements to be provided to the MAV Board for review at the end of each financial year.

	Reportable activity for 2017- 2018	Measurable target
<b>Shaping up as leaders</b> Elected leadership Local government sector MAV internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAV Board re-endorses the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter</li> <li>The gender equity section of the MAV website is revamped and showcases innovative council case-studies</li> <li>MAV acknowledges International Women's Day (8 March) for staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principles endorsed by the MAV Board</li> <li>Website usage increases</li> <li>IWD event held in March 2018</li> </ul>
<b>Creating accountability</b> Elected leadership Local government sector MAV internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage an increase in councils endorsing the Women's Charter from the current number of 68 councils</li> <li>Undertake an annual survey of councils about their preventing violence against women and gender equity activities</li> <li>MAV establishes a gender equity working group to monitor progress with the action plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increase in the number of councils which have endorsed the Women's Charter</li> <li>Survey undertaken</li> <li>Working group established and operating</li> </ul>
<b>Disrupting the status quo</b> Elected leadership Local government sector MAV internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAV hosts a forum for peak women's organisations to identify potential collaborations and networking opportunities that will maximise the number of women standing for election to councils in 2020</li> <li>Advocacy for funding for partnership investment projects for sporting facilities to redress inequity of available sporting facilities for women</li> <li>Work to achieve equal numbers of male and female speakers at events and forums organised by the MAV</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women's organisations invited to participate, and a forum is held</li> <li>Advocacy for partnership projects for sporting facilities is undertaken</li> <li>Female speakers make up 50% of overall speakers at MAV events</li> </ul>
<b>Dismantling barriers for parents / carers</b> Elected leadership Local government sector MAV internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MAV collects examples of child friendly policies of interest to councils</li> <li>MAV collects family violence leave policies to share with councils</li> <li>Changing staff meeting days around to accommodate flexible working hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies collated and circulated to councils</li> <li>Examples of policies are uploaded to MAV website</li> <li>Staff meeting days vary</li> </ul>



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### Shaping up as leaders

1. Shaping up as leaders	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<b>Leadership for councillors</b>  <i>Objective: For the MAV to encourage more women to participate in local government activities and stand for election as future councillors</i>	MAV Board re-endorses the principles of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and encourages councils to endorse or affirm the Women's Charter	MAV's leadership will encourage councils to replicate the action and endorse or re-endorse the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter	Mid 2017	The Women's Charter affirmed at Board meeting 5 May 2017
	Convene a forum of key women's organisations to explore opportunities for collaboration and networking to identify opportunities that will encourage women to consider standing for election to councils in 2020	By speaking directly with state-wide women's organisations, strategic collaborations will be identified. At a minimum, more women will be aware of the leadership opportunities being a councillor provides	End 2017	Planning underway
	Evaluation of the MAV's Stand for Council campaign for the 2016 council elections	Learnings from the MAV's promotional campaign for the 2016 council elections are undertaken so they can inform activities that will be included in the campaign for the 2020 elections	Mid 2017	Evaluation undertaken
	Articles highlighting the experiences of women councillors are profiled in MAV publications, such as the Bulletin	Regular promotion of women in local government will alert more women to consider standing for election to council and to participate in local council activities	June 2018	Ongoing



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1. Shaping up as leaders	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<b>Sector development for council organisations</b>  <i>Objective: The MAV undertakes activities which support local government innovation in achieving gender equality</i>	Maintain relationships with organisations also working to improve gender equity in local government, including LG Pro, VLGA, ALGWA, Local Government Victoria	Collaboration between local government organisations enables consistent messages for councils and avoids duplication of effort	June 2018	In progress
	The MAV's website is a central repository of information and case studies relevant and useful for council staff on gender equity matters	Council officers being able to access information easily will enable them to improve the quality of their recommendations and advice to their council	December 2017	Underway
	Participate on the Australian Local Government Association reference group to share information between state associations	The MAV will be able to alert councils to national initiatives they may be interested in. Victoria will also be able to share its initiatives with other states, and also learn of other examples that may be relevant for Victoria	June 2018	Underway
<b>Internal MAV organisational activities</b>  <i>Objective: To have gender equity embedded in internal organisational practices</i>	The MAV acknowledges International Women's Day through a media statement and staff event	The peak body for local government acknowledging IWD will be influential in encouraging councils to also acknowledge this important date for women's equality around the world. All MAV staff are also alerted to this issue	March 2018	Ongoing



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### Creating accountability

2. Creating accountability	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<b>Leadership for councillors</b>  <i>Objective: For MAV to monitor progress in the number of women standing for council</i>	Maintain a list of the councils which have endorsed the Women's Charter, in liaison with VLGA	To raise awareness among councils and councillors about a statewide local government initiative encouraging them to reflect on, and initiate projects which foster women's leadership in local areas	December 2017	Ongoing
	Monitor usage of the Women's Charter page on the MAV website			Ongoing
	Include questions about the Women's Charter principles in the Preventing Violence Against Women annual gender equity survey			Planning underway
	Include gender in the councillor profile survey that will be undertaken following the November 2016 council elections	That gender is a defined reportable item in the councillor profile survey	December 2017	Underway
	Advocate for Local Government Victoria and the Victorian Electoral Commission to provide information about the numbers of women who stood for election in 2016, and how many were elected	State government data sources provide information for use by local government agencies	December 2017	Underway
Promote the MAV's Commitment to Cultural Diversity statement	Reminding councils of a statewide initiative they can use as an opportunity to raise awareness within their communities	June 2018	Ongoing	



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2. Creating accountability	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<b>Sector development for council organisations</b>  <i>Objective: To establish governance mechanisms for local government input to the MAV's gender equity work and create data which assists councils reflect on the gender equity activities they're undertaking</i>	Gender equity and prevention of violence against women initiatives and issues are incorporated into agendas for MAV committees and networks	Sharing of information will enable coverage of gender equity across a range of policy settings in the local government sector	December 2017	Ongoing
	Liaise with LG Pro about the information it collects about the number of women in first, second and third tier management positions within council organisations	Information about female participation in senior management of councils is aired in MAV communications to enable reflection and application of a gender lens to council executive teams	December 2017	Ongoing
	Undertake annual survey of councils about their preventing violence against women and gender equity activities	Monitoring of the local government sector's engagement with gender equity and prevention of violence against women	December 2017	Underway
	Maintain regular liaison with the VLGA in relation to Women's Charter initiatives	Consistent messages are provided by MAV and VLGA for the Women's Charter	June 2018	Ongoing
<b>Internal MAV organisational activities</b>  <i>Objective: To monitor MAV's internal gender equity profile and practices</i>	MAV staff meetings receive regular updates about the action plan	To raise awareness of gender equity issues among MAV staff	June 2018	Ongoing



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### Disrupting the status quo

3. Disrupting the status quo	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<b>Leadership for councillors</b>  <i>Objective: To stretch the MAV and councils' thinking about activities that will encourage more women to be involved in local leadership roles</i>	Work with VLGA and the "Go Women in LG" campaign as partners to introduce the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter to new councillors	Collaboration between local government organisations enables consistent messages to be provided to councillors about the Women's Charter	June 2018	Ongoing
	Consider how men can be engaged to be champions of greater women's participation in local government	Male councillors and senior executives demonstrate leadership in seeking to achieve gender equality	June 2018	Ongoing
	Promote initiatives from ALGWA(Vic) which encourage women to stand for election	Promotion of events promoting women's participation in local government	June 2018	Ongoing
<b>Sector development for council organisations</b>  <i>Objective: To explore how a gender and diversity lens can be applied to local government fields of practice</i>	Promote the work of councils that are active in promoting leadership opportunities for women, through MAV bulletins, website and committees	Generate greater awareness of councils' work	June 2018	Ongoing
	Encourage councils to adopt the Victorian Local Government Aboriginal Employment Framework so that more Aboriginal people are involved with local government as employees and suppliers of services	The MAV delivers its required action of the Victorian Aboriginal Local Government Action Plan to regularly remind councils about the framework	June 2018	Ongoing
	Seek continued funding for the MAV Prevention of Violence Policy Adviser	MAV has capacity to bring councils together for PVAW initiatives and promote innovation	March 2018	Ongoing



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3. Disrupting the status quo	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
	Explore application of a gender lens to new and emerging fields of practice, building on work in emergency management	Routine policy areas involving local government are explored for potential ways to incorporate gender equity initiatives	June 2018	Ongoing
	Increase the profile of gender equity and prevention of violence against women in library settings by working with the Public Libraries Victoria Network (PLVN)	Gender equity is included as a regular topic in PLVN meeting agendas		Ongoing
	Encourage councils to review their expenditures on sporting facilities to provide greater equity in the funds available to community clubs	MAV raises the profile of women having access to similar levels of sporting facilities as their male counterparts	December 2017	Underway
<p><b>Internal MAV organisational activities</b></p> <p><i>Objective: For the MAV to explore innovative ways to achieve and promote gender equity in local government</i></p>	Develop and deliver an annual Gender Equity Action Plan	The MAV organisation initiates and formally monitors progress with the activities it plans to undertake on an annual basis	June 2017	Underway
	Develop and pilot gender equity training for MAV staff which could then be utilised for councillor and specific policy areas of councils	Participation of MAV staff in gender equity training raises awareness internally, and assists the development of a training program that councils could also utilise	December 2017	Underway
	Encourage suppliers of services to councils to have women in their teams	Council procurers source products and services from businesses which provide opportunities for women's participation	June 2018	Underway
	Ensure there are female speakers at events and forums organised by MAV	Speakers at MAV forums represent the gender balance of councils' communities	June 2018	Ongoing



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### Dismantling barriers for carers

4. Dismantling barriers for carers	Activity	Outcome we're seeking to achieve	Timelines	Progress status
<p><b>Leadership for councillors</b></p> <p><i>Objective: For the MAV to become more involved in policy questions about parents and carers being able to be councillors</i></p>	<p>Promote information about family friendly supports available to councillors</p> <p>Encourage councils to have gender equity policies</p>	<p>Examples are collected and disseminated to councils</p> <p>More councils have gender equity policies</p>	December 2017	Underway
<p><b>Sector development for council organisations</b></p> <p><i>Objective: To share innovative family friendly workplace practices with councils</i></p>	<p>PVAW leave policies are distributed to councils</p>	<p>Examples are collected and disseminated to councils</p> <p>More councils have family violence leave policies</p>	June 2018	Underway
<p><b>Internal MAV organisational activities</b></p> <p><i>Objective: To have gender equity embedded in internal organisational practices</i></p>	<p>Develop and implement MAV flexible workplace policy to celebrate carers and unambiguously encourage staff to return to work</p> <p>Develop and implement an MAV family violence leave policy</p>	<p>Policy developed and implemented</p> <p>Policy developed and implemented</p>	<p>June 2018</p> <p>June 2018</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Underway</p>



# Victorian Local Government Women's Charter – seeking to achieve equal numbers of male and female Victorian councillors

## Context:

Taking up the legacy of the activism of the Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC), this action plan articulates the activities the MAV will undertake that are especially aimed at encouraging more women to stand for election to council.

Promoting the principles of the Women's Charter is a designated work-area in the MAV's 2015-16 Strategic Plan. The MAV State Council also resolved in May 2015 that the MAV Board commit funding and resources towards a campaign to lift female representation on councils after the 2016 council elections.

For further information, visit the Women's Charter section of the MAV website [www.mav.asn.au/womenscharter](http://www.mav.asn.au/womenscharter)

The Women's Participation in Local Government Coalition (WPILGC) was a coalition of women's and local government organisations that developed the Charter and supporting resources and tools for councils. Its signature publications were "A Gender Agenda" (now in its 5<sup>th</sup> edition) and "Now You're a Councillor". The Coalition formally operated for some 18 years from a period when female councillor representation on councils was 24% to the advances in the 2012 elections where women represented 34% of elected representatives.

Following the increased representation in the 2012 local government elections, WPILGC formally ceased with the agreement that the MAV and VLGA would each continue to promote the Women's Charter and its principles as a way of increasing the prospects for more women to be involved with local government decision-making processes and standing for election as councillors.

The graphic features a purple and green header with the title "Victorian Local Government Women's Charter". Below the title, it lists three principles: Gender Equity, Diversity, and Active Citizenship, each with a brief description. At the bottom, it lists three councillors: Dick Gross (MAV), Lyn Gunter (WPILGC), and Beth Davidson (VLGA).

**Supporting Women's Participation in Victorian Local Governments**

Local governments, in their capacity as the governments closest to communities, are in a unique position to contribute to the global goal of gender equity for women.

This Charter is consistent with state, national and international protocols which highlight equal rights and opportunities as central to good local governance including: the Declaration on the Role of Australian Local Government (1997), the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government (1998), the Victorian Code of Good Governance (2000) and the National Framework for Women in Local Government 2007, Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006.

**RECOGNISING** the need for increased women's participation in the key decision making forums in the community and in democratic governance, we, the local governments of Victoria, on behalf of our communities support the following principles:

**GENDER EQUITY**  
That women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.

**DIVERSITY**  
The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Councils and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women.

**ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**  
Local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.

Councillor Dick Gross  
President, MAV

Councillor Lyn Gunter  
Chair, WPILGC

Councillor Beth Davidson  
President, Victorian Local Government Association