



THEME 5

Sector capability and good governance

KEY ISSUES: DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

CURRENT SITUATION

The practice of good governance underpins the success of the operations of our 79 Victorian councils.

Our communities rightly expect councils to give priority to achieving the best outcomes for them and future generations and that decisions are made which promote economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Overtime councils have increased engagement with their communities in strategic planning and decision making.

Councils strive to continually improve, collaborate and partner with other levels of Government and organisations. Councils focus on their financial viability and put in place ways to ensure there is a transparency of Council decisions, action and information to ensure they are accountable to their communities.

The Local Government Act 2020 (the Act), the relatively new primary piece of legislation for Victorian councils, provides the basis for how councils practice good governance. The Act requires a suite of interdependent policies and procedures to be adopted.

However, these legislative mechanisms must be supported by acknowledging that good governance does not instantly arise from the adoption of such policies and procedures alone. Good governance also depends on continued investment in capacity building of our councillors and administrations.

New investment in this area is needed to enhance the skills and abilities required to achieve good governance in the local government setting. Supporting the development of such skills and abilities must be a multipronged approach to suit individual circumstances.

WHAT WE NEED FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT

- Establish an accredited Diploma of Local Government for Councillors to enable Councillors to increase their skills and knowledge to confidently lead their community and fulfill their role and responsibilities as defined by the Local Government Act 2020

- Pilot a Councillor Development Fund to provide all Councillors with equal access to participate in a comprehensive training and development program which extends across the domains of leadership experience and capability, councillor journey and early intervention and effective dispute resolution
- Fund the MAV to deliver a Coaching and Mentoring Program for Councillors which is tailored to the needs of individual councillors who identify support they require to carry out their role
- Support establishing an online Council Good Governance Information Hub which has a focus on good governance information through a range of e-learning modules and information resources which are specifically designed to meet the needs of Councillors and potential candidates in the 2024 council elections
- Fund a program of governance and culture reviews which are conducted by an external party to assist councils upon request. The information gathered through this program will enable a deeper understanding of leading frameworks and approaches and the support and training required across the sector to continually improve the standard of good governance practices.

BENEFITS FOR OUR COMMUNITY

- Increased trust in elected representatives and local government as a tier of government
- Improved culture
- Increased transparency and accountability of council decision making processes
- Better equipped councillors and councillor teams to confidently meet the requirements of their roles and responsibilities
- Continued attraction of a diversity of candidates to the position of councillor
- Modern and contemporary approaches to good governance policies and practices by capitalising on the opportunities presented by the Local Government Act 2020.