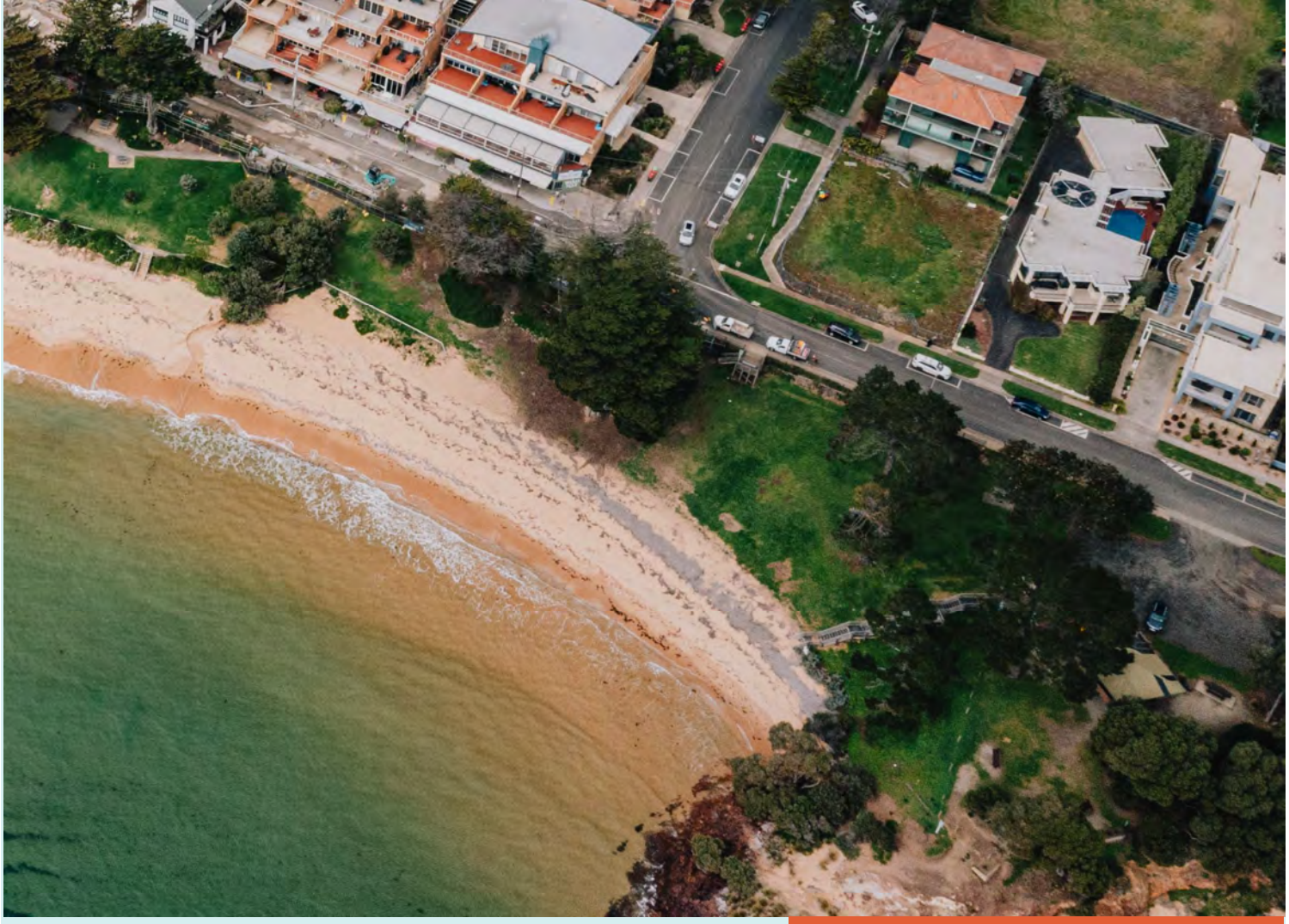


State of the Sector

MAV
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA

October 2026



MAV State Council

The MAV State Council is the governing body of the MAV where Victoria's 79 councils come together to shape the future of local government. Through their elected MAV delegates, each council contributes to important decisions that guide the strategic direction of the MAV, influence sector-wide priorities, and ensures the voices are heard across the state.

Meeting twice a year, State Council plays a key role in strengthening local government by enabling collaboration, informed debate, and democratic decision-making. It provides an opportunity for councils to raise issues, propose solutions, and work collectively toward stronger, more responsive local governance for all Victorians.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Municipal Association of Victoria respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and community.

We pay our respect to Elders past and present who carry the stories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples, and who forged the path ahead for emerging leaders.





MAV STATE COUNCIL STATEMENT

As a sector, local government reaffirms our collective commitment to protecting democratic values, fostering respectful and inclusive communities, and strengthening the trust that underpins our democratic institutions.

The challenges confronting our democracy are real, and we unequivocally condemn political violence, threats and intimidation directed at elected representatives and democratic institutions. Our response must be grounded in compassion, leadership and unity.

Democracy should never be taken for granted. It must be continually strengthened through our actions, our words, and the example we set for future generations.

Representing the level of government closest to our communities, councils and councillors have a unique role in strengthening democracy through respectful dialogue, active citizenship, meaningful community engagement, good governance and access to trustworthy information. We must also ensure a safe environment for all elected representatives.

We may not always agree, but our shared commitment to democracy, mutual respect and the safety of our communities, and the people they elect to represent them, must always unite us.

"State Council is where the sector sets its priorities and speaks with one voice. These resolutions put the issues facing our communities firmly on the political agenda and give the MAV a clear mandate for the advocacy ahead"



PRESIDENT
Cr Jennifer Anderson

State Council continues to play a critical role in strengthening the sector's collective voice, particularly with one month to go until the 2026 State Election.

It is where councils come together to share priorities, elevate community concerns and help shape a practical agenda for the future of Victoria. The resolutions brought forward through State Council provide an important snapshot of the issues facing communities across the state and help set the direction for the MAV's advocacy.

Since May, the MAV has worked to turn our collective priorities into action. State Council motions and the issues raised by councils have helped shape The Future Is Local campaign, ensuring our advocacy reflects what councils are hearing and experiencing in their communities.

Our five campaign pillars, Growing Futures, Local Futures, Productive Futures, Regenerative Futures and Transformative Futures, have provided a clear way to bring these priorities together and take them to the major parties and candidates ahead of the election.

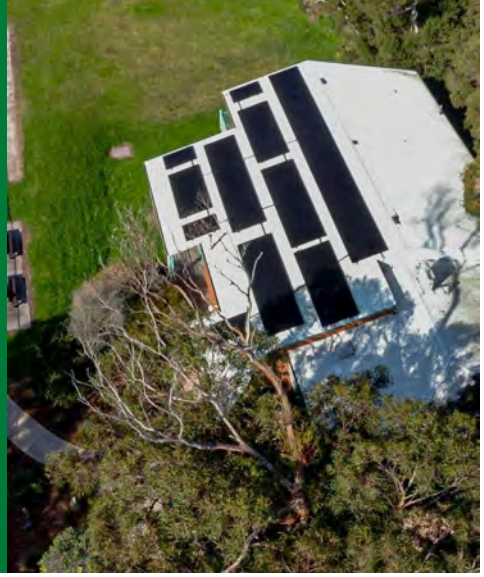
This work has seen the MAV advocate on issues including housing and community infrastructure, safer and more cohesive communities, local roads and transport, climate and resilience, and a stronger partnership between State and local government.

State Council continues to provide an integral part of our advocacy. It captures the collective calls of local government and gives the sector a united voice as we engage with the major policy and reform agendas shaping Victoria's future.

Thank you to all councils and delegates for your practical, thoughtful and future-focused contributions. The MAV's advocacy throughout this campaign has been strengthened by what we have heard through State Council, and we will continue to take those priorities forward to ensure local government remains at the centre of conversations about Victoria's future.



"As Victoria heads to the State Election, State Council is helping shape the agenda for the next Government, setting out the priorities, reforms and opportunities that will define a stronger future for local government"



CEO
Kelly Grigsby

The October State Council comes at a pivotal point for local government, with just one month until Victorians go to the polls.

Since May, the MAV has taken the priorities raised by councils and turned them into a strong, coordinated advocacy agenda through The Future Is Local campaign. State Council resolutions have helped inform the issues we have taken to Government, Opposition, crossbenchers and candidates, ensuring the priorities of local communities are firmly on the state election agenda.

The campaign has provided a platform to bring together the sector's priorities across housing and infrastructure, community safety and cohesion, local roads and transport, energy transition, climate resilience and the future of local government.

With the election now approaching, this work is about more than setting out what councils need. It is about shaping the agenda for the next Government and making the case for a stronger partnership between State and local government.

State of the Sector captures the key outcomes from October State Council, highlighting the issues, reforms and opportunities that councils have identified as priorities for the next Parliament.

Together, these resolutions strengthen the MAV's mandate to advocate for the communities our member councils serve and ensure local government has a strong voice in shaping Victoria's future.





Executive Summary

Since the last State Council in May 2026, Victorian councils have continued to navigate significant and evolving pressures, including the condition of local roads, changes to Victoria's planning system, community safety and cohesion, housing pressures, climate and resilience, and the growing impacts of social and technological change.

Many of the key resolutions highlighted in this report reflect emerging priorities for the sector, including investment in Councillor training and professional development, the implementation of new planning legislation, improved public transport and local connections, affordable housing, community infrastructure, tackling loneliness and strengthening local government's role in supporting thriving communities.

These resolutions reflect the growing expectations on councils to deliver essential services safely, sustainably and effectively, while responding to changing community needs and enabling local solutions to broader social, economic and environmental challenges.

This *State of the Sector* report connects the key resolutions from October State Council with the MAV's *Shaping our Future* strategic priorities, existing research, policy and advocacy work, and the 2026 state election campaign, *The Future Is Local*. Together, they provide a current picture of the issues shaping local government and the priorities councils are taking forward as Victoria approaches the next Parliament.

125+
Event Attendees

47
Motions Considered

47
Resolutions passed

MAV 2026 State Election Campaign Pillar

GROWING FUTURES

Connected Housing



Data Centres Moratorium

Together, councils have called for:

That the MAV 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

MAV Strategic Priority	**Intergenerational Infrastructure**
Related MAV initiatives	Senate Inquiry into Artificial Intelligence and Data Centres

"While data centres are growing rapidly and are essential to our digital future, where and how they are developed is an important consideration. "

- Brimbank

MAV 2026 State Election Campaign Pillar

TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURES

Securing the financial future of Victoria's local government sector



Modernising the Rating System

Together, councils have called for:

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.

"We need a contemporary valuation and rating framework that reflects the true scale and nature of these developments while providing certainty for communities and investors."

- Latrobe City

MAV Strategic Priority	**Sustainable Economy**
Related MAV initiatives	Submission to the 2025 Rate Cap Mechanism Statutory Review

MAV 2026 State Election Campaign Pillar

GROWING FUTURES

Connected Housing



Renewing Victoria's Public Pools and Aquatics

Together, councils have called for:

That the MAV advocates 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.

MAV Strategic Priority	**Connected Places**
Related MAV initiatives	**Belonging Matters - Social Connection**

"Approximately 50% of Victoria's pools are over 50 years old and significant investment is required to upgrade or replace aging aquatic infrastructure. Many of these facilities are Council owned and located in regional areas."

- Bass Coast

MAV 2026 State Election Campaign Pillar

LOCAL FUTURES

Safe and cohesive communities



A Tiered Rural and Regional Mental Health and Wellbeing Model

Together, councils have called for:

That the MAV calls 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.

MAV Strategic Priority	**Health & Wellbeing**
Related MAV initiatives	Belonging Matters - Social Connection

"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."

- Moorabool

MAV 2026 State Election Campaign Pillar

TRANSFORMATIVE FUTURES

Securing the financial future of Victoria's local government sector



Non-Mandatory Glass Bin Requirements

Together, councils have called for:

That the MAV calls 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

"Glass collection cannot be one size fits all across the state. Councils must be provided with the flexibility to provide glass collection as it believes is best for its community and importantly represents value ."

- Southern Grampians

MAV Strategic Priority	**Sustainable Economy**
Related MAV initiatives	Purple Recycle Bin Campaign – Media Engagement

Consolidated Resolutions

Growing Futures
Connected Housing



- Regulating the Social Economy and Environmental Impacts of Data Centres and AI Infrastructure
- State Government Infrastructure Impacts
- Planning and Funding for Equitable Access to Open Space
- Retain Infrastructure Victoria

Local Futures
Safe and cohesive communities



- Funding and Resources for Local Government and First Peoples Partnerships
- Strengthening Community Safety, Visible Policing and Crime Prevention
- Strengthening State-Local Partnerships and Place-Based Responses to Homelessness

Productive Futures
Safer roads and local transport connections



- Infrastructure Funding Formulae
- Visit Victoria: Investing in Places, Events and Regional Communities

Regenerative Futures
Community benefit sharing and better regional engagement

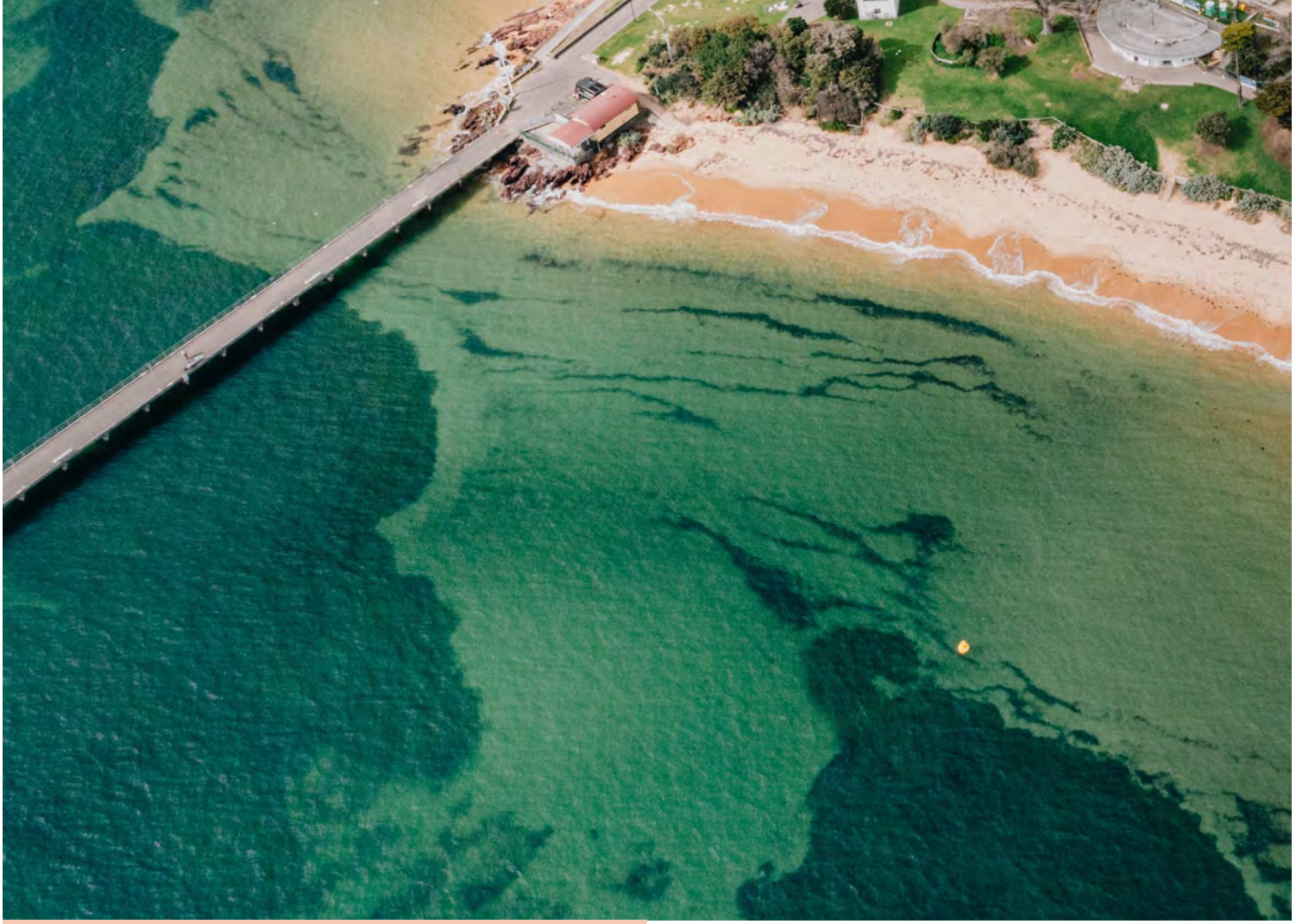


- Securing Victoria's Food System: From Paddock to Plate

Transformative Futures
Securing the financial future of Victoria's local government sector



- A Sustainable Approach to Animal Management: Pounds, Pet Owners in Hardship and Cat Management
- Development Facilitation Program
- Fair Jobs. Fair Say



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