

State of the Sector



MAY
2025



Reflecting the
pressing issues
facing councils
after MAV's
State Council



ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS

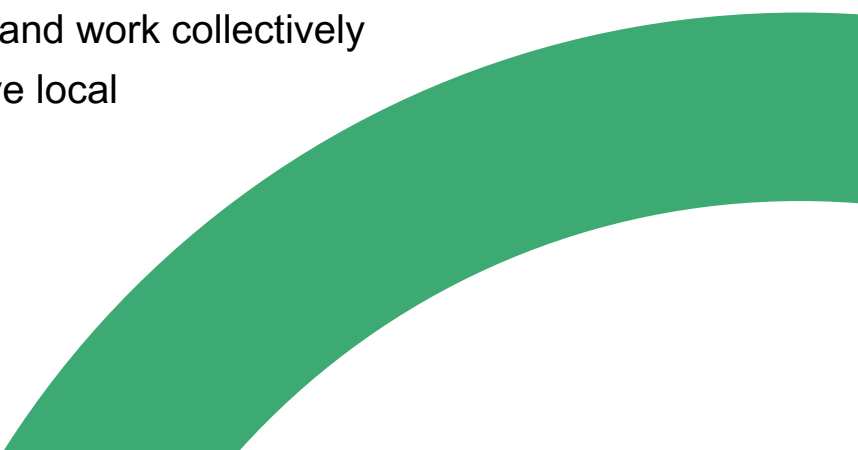
The Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, and culture. We pay our respect to Elders past and present who carry the memories, traditions, cultures, and aspirations of First Peoples, and who forge the path ahead for emerging leaders.

We support local government's commitment to strengthen relationships with Victoria's First Peoples communities and for it to encourage greater unity, knowledge, cultural awareness, and respect for the first occupants of our land — through its strong community links and local representation

MAV STATE COUNCIL

The MAV State Council is a forum where Victoria's 79 councils come together to shape the future of local government. Through their delegates, member councils contribute to important decisions that guide the strategic direction of the MAV, influence sector-wide priorities, and ensure the voices of communities across the state are heard.

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.



FROM PRESIDENT - CR JENNIFER ANDERSON

Our first MAV State Council for 2025 demonstrated the strength of the Victoria's local government sector when it comes together to discuss the important issues impacting communities right across Victoria.

State Council gives our sector the opportunity to identify the key challenges facing communities and shapes the strategic direction of the MAV.

State of the Sector is our new publication, designed to strengthen how we connect, communicate, and advocate for the sector and the communities they represent.

The resolutions voted on today reflect some of our sector's key priorities, including the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF), infrastructure funding, coastal inundation and erosion, planning reform, homelessness, and the financial sustainability of councils.

These decisions address the real challenges facing our communities and provide the MAV with a strong, united mandate.

Thank you to all councils and delegates for your practical and thoughtful contributions.

Together, we have made our voice clear and laid the foundation for advocacy that delivers real outcomes for all Victorians.



FROM CEO - KELLY GRIGSBY

Welcome to our first State of the Sector, a new publication designed to reflect the pressing issues facing councils today.

This document brings together the insights and outcomes of our May State Council 2025, highlighting the challenges our members are confronting and the priorities they've identified.



It captures the collective voice of local government and provides the MAV with a clear mandate to advocate for these issues in partnership with and on behalf of the sector.

As we move forward, State of the Sector will serve as a vital tool in keeping us informed, aligned, and ready to act on behalf of communities across Victoria. It reflects our shared commitment to a coordinated, impactful advocacy strategy that reflects the experiences of our councils and designed to meet the challenges ahead.

MAY 2025 SNAPSHOT



77 councils attending



**74 delegates
Including 60 new delegates**



65 motions debated

KEY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2025

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)

Together, councils have called for:

- Oppose Councils being the collector on behalf of the State Government
- State Revenue Office to collect the Principal Place of Residence (PPR) component of the ESVF, instead of councils
- Fully reimburse costs incurred by the local government sector for the collection, reporting and debt recovery services that it will provide
- Improve transparency and communication
- Ensure that the levy is equitably structured and does not disproportionately burden rural communities or primary producers

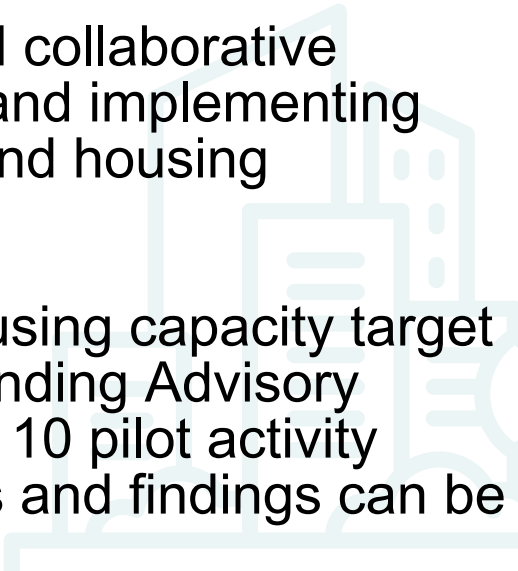
“It is not just some councils, the financial and mental impact on our entire farming community will be exponential”

Mayor, Cr Tanya Kehoe, Pyrenees Shire Council

KEY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2025

Local/State partnership to deliver well planned and connected communities

Together, councils have called for:

- A commitment from the Minister for Planning and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to partner with the MAV and local government
 - Undertake deliberative and collaborative engagement in designing and implementing planning system reforms and housing strategies
 - Transparent sharing of housing capacity target data and releasing the Standing Advisory Committee Reports for the 10 pilot activity centres so that the lessons and findings can be shared state-wide
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“The Government must acknowledge council work on existing structure plans and respect community input.”

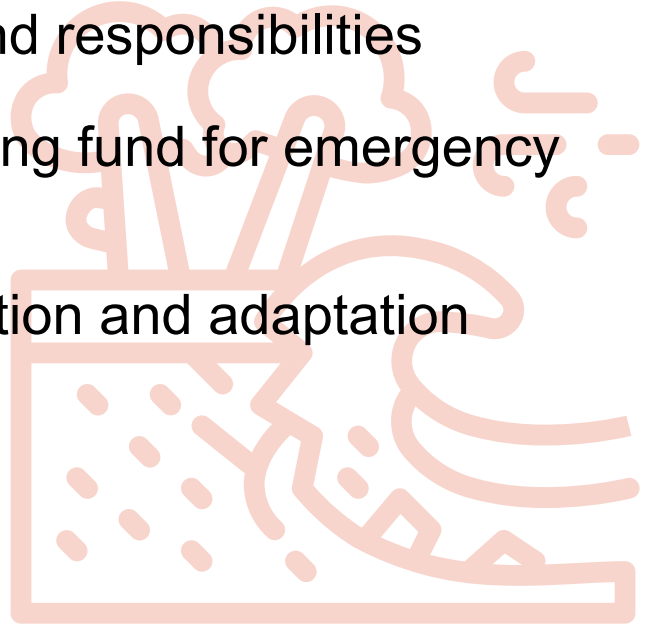
Mayor, Cr Hanna El Mouallem , Bayside City Council

KEY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2025

Coastal inundation and erosion

Together, councils have called for:

- Streamlining environmental and infrastructure management roles and responsibilities
- Establishing an ongoing fund for emergency works
- Funding flood prevention and adaptation measures



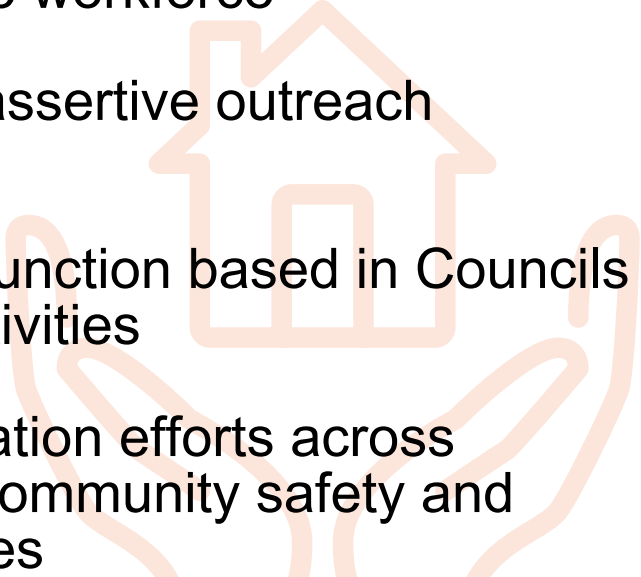
“It’s fantastic to have full sector support as we fight this national problem”

Deputy Mayor, Cr Brett Tesari, Bass Coast Shire Council

KEY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2025

Addressing Homelessness

Together, councils have called for:

- Increase funding for the specialist homelessness service workforce
 - Increase funding for assertive outreach services
 - Fund a coordination function based in Councils to lead prevention activities
 - Lead service coordination efforts across community support, community safety and public amenity services
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“Councils are on the front line when it comes to addressing homelessness”

MAV Director - Metropolitan South Region
Mayor, Cr Kris Bolam, Frankston City Council

KEY RESOLUTIONS MAY 2025

Ensuring financial sustainability of councils

Together, councils have called for the government to:

- Ensure councils are sustainably resourced
- Respond to the issues raised in MAV submissions to State and Commonwealth parliamentary inquiries
- Implement the recommendations of the Legislative Council Inquiry into Local Government funding and services
- Ensure any additional duties and responsibilities placed on local government are accompanied by the resources needed to fulfil them

“Councils Services are critical for our communities, but it’s just as important as the sustainability of their funding”

Cr Chris Jones, Maroondah City Council

OTHER NOTABLE RESOLUTIONS:

- Early years infrastructure funding
- Evidence-based approach to recycling reforms
- Fostering safety and social cohesion
- Natural disaster recovery funding
- Countering misinformation

FULL RESOLUTIONS:

Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund

The MAV expresses the local government sector's disappointment with State Government's approach to levy collection and implementation of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and opposes Local Government being a collector on behalf of State Government, and calls on the Victorian Government that if Local Government is to administer the funding then:

1. Adequate administration funding for local Government to manage the cost of administering the ESVF

2. Victorian Government to undertake the community engagement directly with communities

3. Transferring Levy Collection to the State

A) Transfer the responsibility of collecting the Principal Place of Residence (PPR) component to the State Revenue Office, ensuring streamlined and efficient collection while leveraging existing state resources.

4. Ensuring an Equitable Funding Model

A) Continue efforts to reduce the levy burden on all Victorian residents, ensuring the model remains equitable for all communities, especially rural areas and primary producers, reflecting the adjustments made to the Primary Production Land (PPL) rate.

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6. Improve Transparency and Communication:

A) Implement a comprehensive communication strategy to clarify the levy's purpose, allocation, and impact on ratepayers.

B) Provide a publicly available statement detailing the reasons for changes to the fire services levy, including justifications for any fee increases from 1 July 2025.

7. Conduct an Ongoing Economic Impact Assessment:

A) Undertake periodic economic impact assessments to evaluate how levy changes, including adjustments to the PPR and the primary producer rebate, affect residents, businesses, and the broader community.

B) Release findings publicly to ensure ongoing transparency and facilitate informed decision-making for future policy revisions.

8. Ensure Equitable Fund Distribution:

A) Deliver a needs-based equalization approach for the distribution of ESVF funds, ensuring that rural and regional emergency services, which are disproportionately impacted by natural disasters, receive adequate and timely funding

FULL RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

A local and state government partnership to deliver well planned and connected communities

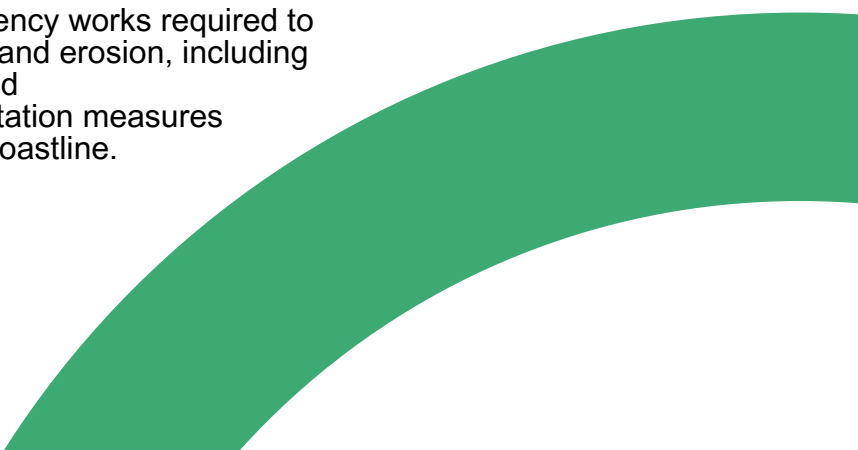
That the MAV, in recognising the ongoing housing affordability crisis and the Victorian Government's commitment in the Plan for Victoria to align the state's settlement strategies with a target of 70% of new homes being built inside established areas, seeks a commitment from the Minister for Planning and the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to partner with the MAV and local government to:

1. Undertake deliberative and collaborative engagement in designing and implementing planning system reforms and housing strategies. Specifically:

- A) support the role of Local Government as the primary decision maker for planning applications
- B) undertake meaningful community engagement, while maintaining broad third-party appeal rights in strategic and statutory planning decisions
- C) ensure the transparent sharing of housing capacity target data.
- D) recognise that meaningful engagement with local government will strengthen the next 50 activity centre plans, noting that engagement on the 10 pilot centre was ineffective
- E) require all future activity centre planning processes to release supporting reports
- F) require that activity centre planning is subject to transparent and rigorous review that enables cross examination of witnesses by councils
- G) support and encourage local government's critical role in delivering context-sensitive planning outcomes across ESD, integration of housing with infrastructure needs and sustainable transport options, and delivery of affordable housing through partnerships
- H) engage with industry and private sector stakeholders to address barriers to construction, such as economic viability and workforce capacity
- I) Acknowledge the unique growth patterns and infrastructure constraints of rural and peri-regional areas and ensure planning strategies are appropriately tailored
- J) Engage with local government, the community housing sector & communities to implement mandatory affordable housing provisions into the Victorian planning system. Minimum mandatory affordable housing provisions must be implemented through relevant legislative & other regulatory changes, informed by research into an appropriate statewide rate higher mandatory percentages for affordable housing must be provided in urban renewal areas.

Coastal inundation and erosion

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to address the impacts of coastal inundation and erosion by:

- 1. Articulating, simplifying and streamlining the environmental and infrastructure management roles and responsibilities of the various agencies operating around Port Phillip Bay and the Victorian coastline;
 - 2. Establishing an ongoing fund for emergency works required to address the impacts of coastal inundation and erosion, including beach repairs and sand renourishment; and
 - 3. Fully funding flood prevention and adaptation measures around Port Phillip Bay and the Victorian coastline.
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FULL RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED

Addressing Homelessness

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to address homelessness across the state by:

1. Increasing the level of funding for the specialist homelessness service workforce, including assertive outreach services based in the social support sector.
2. Fund a coordination function based in Councils to lead prevention activities and guide service coordination efforts across community support, community safety and public amenity services.

Ensuring financial sustainability of councils

1. That the MAV call upon the Victorian and Commonwealth governments to work with Victorian local government to ensure councils are sustainably resourced to continue providing critical services and infrastructure to local communities, including through:
2. Responding to the issues raised in MAV submissions to State and Commonwealth parliamentary inquiries into financial sustainability and service delivery
3. Implementing the recommendations of the Legislative Council Economy and Infrastructure Committee Inquiry into Local Government funding and services
4. Ensuring that additional duties and responsibilities placed on local government are accompanied by the resources needed to fulfil them
5. Increasing the quantum and reviewing the distribution of untied funding provided to local government to achieve the goal of horizontal fiscal equalisation