

MAV State Council Resolutions

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MOTIONS LEGEND

Strategic to the MAV

Motion aligns with MAV Strategic Plan priorities, advances advocacy activities, addresses financial need; recognises council leadership.

Significant to the Sector

Consistent with sector roles and responsibilities, Sector-wide significance, relevant to current policy and advocacy initiatives at a State or Commonwealth level.

Block Motion

Motions that reiterate work that is already being undertaken by the MAV (policy/advocacy/research) have be encompassed in a block motion.

Strategic to the MAV

Active local democracy

Motion 1. Best Practice Implementation of Lobbyist Registers for Local Government

Submitting Council: Frankston City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council calls on the Victorian Government to provide definitive advice to local government councils and a definition on what constitutes a 'lobbyist'. In addition, set a mandatory requirement for councils to maintain and provide regular transparent reporting on 'Councillor Interactions with 'Lobbyists Register'.

Submitting Council Rationale:

In July 2023, IBAC released a report on Operation Sandon with 34 recommendations, including changes to improve councillor conduct and set requirements for lobbyists. Work has since been undertaken by Local Government Victoria in collaboration and consultation with other bodies to implement the recommendations.

On 20 January 2025 the Victorian Government provided an update on the lobbying reforms, with the Department of Premier and Cabinet launching public consultation on potential reforms to Victoria's lobbying regulations, which aim to improve transparency, support public confidence in government decisions and keep administrative burden to a minimum.

The Victorian Government website currently provides a Victorian Government Professional Lobbyist Code of Conduct (Code) on the rules of contact between lobbyists, Government Affairs Directors and government representatives. The definition of a lobbyist in the Code is: Lobbyist means any person, company or organisation who conducts lobbying activities on behalf of a third-party client or whose employees conduct lobbying activities on behalf of a third party client. For the avoidance of doubt, a Lobbyist does not include any person, company or organisation, or the employees of such a company or organisation, engaging in lobbying activities on their own behalf rather than for a client, and this Code does not require any such person, company or organisation to be recorded in the Register of Lobbyists unless that person, company or organisation or its employees also engage in lobbying activities on behalf of a client or clients.

Lobbyist interactions became more prevalent in local government when the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission (IBAC) released a report in October 2022 on the corruption risks associated with donations and lobbying members of parliament or a councillor once elected. IBAC's Operation Sandon report, in July 2023, investigated allegations of corrupt conduct involving councillors and property developers in the City of Casey. It also examined the effectiveness of Victoria's systems and controls for safeguarding the integrity of the states planning processes.

This motion recommends that Victoria's lobbying regulations set mandatory requirements for councils to report on Councillor interactions with lobbyists.

Motion 2. Vice-Regal engagement with the Local Government Sector

Submitting Council: Frankston City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to consider ways to formalise greater engagement with the Office of the Governor of Victoria and the Local Government sector.

The role of the Governor in Victoria is ceremonial and functional, serving as the representative of the Crown and the head of the Victorian Executive Council. Traditionally, the Governor's engagement with local government affairs has been limited, focusing primarily on state-level functions. However, given the increasing significance of local governments in Victoria, there is a compelling case for enhanced interaction between the Governor's office and the local government sector.

To bridge the gap between the Office of the Governor and local government, several initiatives could be considered:

Increased Municipal Tours: The Governor and Lieutenant Governor could undertake more frequent visits to various municipalities. These tours would provide insight into local issues, projects, and community dynamics, fostering a deeper understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities within each council area.

Cluster Meetings with Mayors: Organising regular meetings with groups of Mayors from different regions would facilitate dialogue between the Governor's office and local government leaders. This would promote the exchange of ideas, collaborative problem-solving, and the strengthening of relationships between state and local governance.

Dedicated Forums or Advisory Mechanisms: Establishing an advisory body or hosting forums that include representatives from the local government sector would create structured opportunities for the Governor to hear from councils. This platform could be used to discuss pressing local issues, share best practices, and align efforts to serve the Victorian populace more effectively.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Victoria's 79 local Councils deliver vital services, infrastructure, and community support. They play a crucial role in shaping the state's economic, social, and environmental landscape. Given this contribution, a stronger relationship between the Office of the Governor and local governments would enhance representation and foster greater collaboration. Local Government in Victoria plays an essential role, inclusive of:

- **Democratic representation:** Victoria's councils are governed by 618 democratically elected Councillors, ensuring that decision-making reflects the needs of local communities. These representatives act as direct liaisons between residents and government institutions, playing a crucial role in advocacy, local planning, and community development.

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- **Employment and economic contribution:** Local government collectively employs approximately 45,000 full- and part-time staff. This makes the sector a significant employer, particularly in regional and rural areas where council jobs are vital to local economies.
- **Financial Impact:** The combined annual revenue of Victoria's councils exceeds \$13.5 billion, funding critical services such as infrastructure maintenance, waste management, public health programs, and community development initiatives.

Currently, engagement between the Office of the Governor and local government remains limited, primarily focused on ceremonial duties. However, given the increasing importance of local government in economic development, climate adaptation, public health, and emergency management, a stronger connection between the Governor and councils could provide a number of benefits, including:

1. **Greater recognition of local governance** - by engaging directly with Councils, the Governor can elevate the status and visibility of local government, reinforcing its role in Victoria's governance system.
2. **Enhanced communication and collaboration** - regular interactions would facilitate the exchange of insights between local and state representatives.
3. **Strengthening regional representation** - with many rural and regional councils facing unique challenges, the Governor's increased presence in these communities would provide a stronger voice for local governments in state discussions, helping to address disparities in funding, services, and infrastructure development.

Victoria's local councils are critical drivers of community well-being, economic stability, and regional development. The scale and complexity of their responsibilities highlights the need for a more structured and meaningful engagement with the Office of the Governor.

Motion 3. Support to ensure sustainable volunteerism in rural Victoria

Submitting Council: Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government including meeting with Minister Blandthorn, the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers:

1. For the development and implementation of a coordinated and funded approach targeted at Local Government to support and enable volunteerism across the Victorian communities
2. To provide support, leadership and resources to local government to assist the latter in playing an expanded role in re-energising this vital element of society.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Volunteers are a key part of the Victorian community, particularly in regional and remote communities. Unfortunately, there has been a reduction in volunteerism in Victoria over recent decades. With an older cohort of the population making up volunteer numbers, this reduction may be contributed to an aging population in regional areas combined with a reduction in population growth. For Moyne Shire, this is evident in the declining annualised growth rate of population with 0.76% rate in population by 2026, dropping to 0.46% annualised growth rate by 2046, resulting in an expected population total of 20,048 people (REMPPLAN 2024). With a population age spread across Moyne Shire showing 29.5% of its population in the 55-69 year age bracket, there is a risk that aging population along with reduction on population growth will impact volunteer numbers.

This in turn has an impact on individuals and on our communities. Volunteers support our economy by providing essential services at a very low cost. Volunteerism also provides educational and skill development opportunities, particularly for young people and for those seeking a change in career direction. Being a volunteer helps provide a sense of purpose the volunteer and it often mental health benefits. A major benefit of volunteerism is its contribution to community cohesion and civic engagement.

The governance principles enshrined in the Local Government Act 2020 give Councils a priority to achieve the best outcomes for the municipal community including future generations, and also to promote economic and social sustainability. Many Councils in Victoria (particularly regional and rural councils) face significant financial challenges and the engagement of volunteers can reduce the financial burden on Councils in their mandate to support local communities. For these and other reasons it is vital that volunteerism is re-energised.

Motion 4. Programs to encourage more women and young people to seek election to councils in 2028

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government for a commitment and funding towards education and support programs, such as the 2022-24 Women Leading Locally program to encourage and support more women, including women with caring responsibilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and young people, particularly in regional areas, to run for elections to councils in 2028.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Victorian Government has had a target of 50/50 gender representation in councils by 2025. While the trend is heading in the right direction, parity has not been reached. In the 2024 elections, 44.8% of people elected to local councils in Victoria were women, which is a small increase from 43.2% in 2020, and a sharp increase from 38% in 2016.

Currently, it is in rural and regional areas where there are the lowest numbers of women councillors. The previously delivered Women Leading Locally program was developed through Local Government Victoria with funding support from the Victorian Government and with the input of local government councillors, professionals and supporters. This ran from 2022 to 2024.

According to the 2024 Victorian Councillor Census by the VLGA, the average age of councillors in Victoria is 57.5 years, with very few under 30. A program to educate and encourage young people to participate in local leadership opportunities and seek election to councils would be beneficial. The development of younger candidates to increase diversity, ensure inter-generational representation and future-proof governance would enhance our local democracies.

Funding in the 2026-2027 Victorian Budget would enable programs to target areas with low female representation or participation by young people to support and encourage women and young people to run for elections to councils in 2028.

Motion 6. Enhance the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework through alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for the enhancement of the Local Government Performance Reporting Framework (LGPRF) through alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to better reflect the strategic leadership and impact of councils.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Local governments are uniquely positioned to drive meaningful progress across social, environmental, and economic dimensions. The current LGPRF, while valuable, presents an opportunity for evolution toward a more holistic, future-focused framework that fully captures the breadth of councils' contributions. Key opportunities for improvement include:

- **Strategic Alignment:** Councils are more than service providers—they are leaders in climate adaptation, community resilience, and democratic governance. Aligning the LGPRF with the SDGs would better reflect this broader mandate and support councils in demonstrating their strategic value.
- **Legislative Synergy:** The Local Government Act 2020 champions integrated strategic planning and performance reporting. An SDG-aligned LGPRF would strengthen this intent by enabling councils to measure and communicate progress against long-term objectives, including climate action and equity.
- **Climate Leadership:** Councils are at the forefront of climate response. A modernised performance framework that incorporates SDG indicators would empower councils to showcase their leadership in building resilient, low-carbon communities.

The SDGs offer a globally recognised, comprehensive framework comprising 17 goals, 169 targets, and 231 indicators. Already endorsed by the MAV through its 2024–2027 Strategic Plan, the SDGs align closely with councils' statutory responsibilities, including sustainability, governance, and community wellbeing. The City of Melbourne's Voluntary Local Review demonstrates the practical benefits of SDG-based reporting, setting a benchmark for innovation and transparency in local government. This reform represents a powerful opportunity to position Local Government Sector as delivering measurable, community-centred impact.

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Connected Places

Motion 7. Reforms to Rooming House Regulations

Submitting Council: Brimbank City Council

Motion:

The MAV calls on the Victorian Government to implement rooming house regulatory reform to ensure that the regulator of rooming houses, Consumer Affairs Victoria, is adequately resourced to monitor and inspect registered rooming houses, thereby improving safety, dignity, and housing justice outcomes for rooming house tenants.

Submitting Council Rationale:

While rooming houses in Victoria serve as a form of emergency or low-cost accommodation, they are often home to some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community. In the context of the housing crisis, rooming houses are the only option for many people experiencing homelessness, including families.

Although there are legal requirements for registration, inspections, and minimum standards, the regulatory framework governing rooming houses is complex. Responsibility for enforcement is shared across multiple agencies, including local councils and Consumer Affairs Victoria, which can result in gaps and inconsistencies. In practice, these regulations do not offer adequate protection for tenants, who are often exposed to overcrowding, exploitative practices, and unsafe living conditions such as fire hazards. To adequately support the Victorian Government's monitoring and compliance actions in relation to rooming houses, it is crucial that the regulator of rooming houses is adequately resourced to monitor and inspect registered rooming houses to ensure the prescribed standards are met and to investigate and respond to reports of unregistered rooming houses.

Many tenants live under informal or short-term rental agreements, leaving them at risk of sudden evictions or forced relocations with minimal notice. While rooming houses may fill a gap in the housing system, they fall short of delivering safe, dignified, and just housing outcomes. Without stronger oversight and increased investment in alternatives such as dedicated tenant advocacy as well as transitional and social housing, rooming houses risk perpetuating cycles of poverty, trauma, and exclusion across Victoria.

Motion 8. Advocacy for increased public and community housing in rural Victoria

Submitting Council: Campaspe Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV write to the Victorian Government requesting:

1. Financial investment in public and community housing for rural Victoria.
2. Advocate for construction and maintenance of public and community housing to create jobs and stimulate local businesses.
3. Support expanding public and community housing to reduce homelessness and provide safe exits from family violence.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Rural Victoria faces a housing shortage due to years of underinvestment. As the population increases in regional areas, it is acknowledged that the Victorian Government is increasing its investment in social housing, however more public and community housing is needed to support our most vulnerable and sustain employment and economic development in rural communities.

Many households in rural Victoria are experiencing housing stress, with housing costs exceeding 30% of the total income. This financial burden is particularly acute for low-income families, older residents, and those recovering from domestic violence, highlighting the urgent need for public housing to provide stability and security for these vulnerable groups. Expanding housing availability is key to reducing homelessness and providing safe exits from family violence.

Motion 10. Affordable Housing

Submitting Council: Frankston City Council

Motion:

The MAV calls on the State Government to provide incentives and targeted support to unlock surplus government-owned land (at local, state, and federal levels) for the delivery of diverse housing options, including affordable housing for key workers who need to live close to their place of employment. This should be supported by reforms to taxation, the construction industry, and interest rates, alongside measures that encourage residential development in Activity Centres and enable viable construction outcomes.

Submitting Council Rationale:

There is an urgent need to address the shortfall of affordable housing across Victoria, especially in areas that serve as critical employment and service hubs. Frankston City highlights the urgency of a targeted and coordinated State Government response to affordable housing needs in Metropolitan Activity Centres.

SGS Economics and Planning modelling shows Frankston City requires 7,752 affordable dwellings to meet current demand, representing 14% of all households. With only 1,545 social housing dwellings in place, there is a shortfall of 6,207 homes, mostly for very low-income households experiencing rental stress. Without intervention, this gap is expected to grow to 8,292 dwellings by 2036.

Frankston has a significant key worker population, with approximately 16,770 employed locally in education, health, and care sectors. Sixty-five percent are women, above the state average, reflecting the gendered nature of housing stress. Around 2,600 households (4% of all) include key workers on very low to moderate incomes, making them eligible for subsidised affordable housing—a higher rate than Greater Melbourne overall.

As a major employment hub for Melbourne's southeast, Frankston employs about 15,800 key workers. Many commute from Mornington Peninsula and Casey, with over 40% travelling more than 20km. Increasing affordable housing supply near employment precincts would reduce commuting, improve worker wellbeing, and support retention in essential services.

To meet housing targets, the State Government should prioritise planning system improvements and targeted incentives that enable affordable housing delivery within Activity Centres and significant public service precincts, such as hospitals, universities, and education hubs, to support local key workers' housing needs. This should be complemented by unlocking public land, integrating affordable housing into state-led infrastructure projects, and empowering councils to negotiate fair and reasonable development contributions.

Motion 11. Planning Reform

Submitting Council: Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network

Supporting Councils: Alpine Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, Indigo Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Moira Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Towong Shire Council, Wangaratta Rural City Council and Wodonga City Council.

Motion:

That Municipal Association of Victoria, in collaboration with representation of rural and regional local government networks, calls on the Victorian Government to ensure that the review of the Planning and Environment Act 1987 has due regard for all Victorian Councils and maintains the ability of Local Government to do the following:

1. Keep it Country (including Local Towns and Rural Character) - Ensure that any changes allow Councils to continue to protect local vision, values and character, heritage significant areas and natural areas, including the protection of large trees.
2. Keep it Local – Ensure that any changes allow Councils to continue to make decisions for the community at a local level and that Council is not removed as the determining authority.
3. Keep it Transparent – Ensure that any changes allow Councils to continue to provide the community with information and the ability to advertise planning proposals and consider and respond to community input.
4. Keep it Fair – Ensure that any changes continue to allow balanced and fair third party objection and appeal rights in planning and development assessment, including for major projects that have an environmental impact on rural and regional communities.
5. Keep it Simple - Ensure that any changes to the Act minimise complexity so that anyone can engage in the planning system without undue cost.

Submitting Council Confirmation and Rationale:

To advocate to the Victorian Government and raise awareness in the community in relation to the Planning Reform currently being undertaken by the State, to highlight that changes should be made with input from all stakeholders, including Local Government and the communities they serve, and that local values and input into the planning system should remain strong in Victoria.

Motion 12. Advocate for Further Changes to Policy and Funding Arrangements to Better Support Housing

Submitting Council: Mount Alexander Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocates to the State and Federal Governments for:

1. The development of housing-related policy frameworks and associated funding streams that are unique to each of the four settings of remote, rural, regional and metropolitan Victoria and Australia. Such frameworks and funding streams must:
 - a. Integrate policy responses across domains including housing, agriculture, mining, tourism, health, education and economic development.
 - b. Individually address the planning, development and delivery contexts of housing in remote, rural, regional and metropolitan areas of Victoria and Australia, with particular emphasis on the different needs, dynamics and challenges that exist in each area.
2. The creation of mechanisms within Treasury and Housing Australia (Federal) and the Department of Transport and Planning and Homes Victoria (State) to facilitate simpler and more equitable access to funding and finance for appropriate and affordable housing development. Such mechanisms must include:
 - a. Support and resources to assist Councils to apply for funding through Housing Australia and Homes Victoria.
 - b. The creation of housing fund models that enable the aggregation of housing proposals across multiple Council areas and joint consideration for funding.
3. Policy, legislative and funding support for innovative models of affordable and appropriate housing delivery such as trusts, co-housing and community land models.

Submitting Council Rationale:

For many years, Mount Alexander Shire Council has been at the forefront of Victorian Local Government efforts to deliver more affordable and appropriate housing into its community.

In addition to working closely with housing providers, such as Haven Home Safe and Wintringham Housing, to re-purpose Council land for more housing, Council has developed strong relationships and partnerships with multiple parts of the State Government to unlock surplus State-owned land.

Significant progress has also been made on the creation of a housing trust that will deliver affordable and appropriate rental housing, in perpetuity. Numerous privately led developments that might not otherwise be progressed in the Shire are also occurring.

The above initiatives have only been made possible by Council's industry leading commitment to fund the ongoing role of Housing Solutions Broker. Without having this singular focus on connecting housing needs and opportunities with those who can offer a solution or response, the gap between what is available and what is needed would continue to widen.

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So too, this role has enabled Council to gain a deep understanding of the many reasons for the lack of alignment between supply and demand for housing at a local, state and national level. This, in turn, has enabled Council to develop and make numerous submissions to inquiries at a State and Federal level. In each, it has called for change to housing policy and funding streams for housing development, and for new support systems to enable all Councils to play a greater role in responding to this national challenge.

Despite this work, government policy continues to lack discernment in how it considers the very different challenges, needs and opportunities for housing in remote, rural, regional and metropolitan areas of Victoria and Australia. In turn, funding programs persist with little consideration given to the materially different supply and cost equations that apply in these markets. Similarly, no recognition of the relative social and economic impact that the addition, or loss, of a home in a rural or remote area, compared to a regional or metropolitan area, can provide has been factored into such policies or programs.

One contributing reason for this ongoing situation is that Councils are working substantially in isolation to each other. That said, there has been strong work by Rural Councils Victoria, Regional Cities Victoria and the MAV to raise awareness with governments of the various challenges being experienced across the State in the supply of housing.

Motion 13. State Government Financial Incentives to Support Increased Private Investment in Housing

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to explore and implement targeted financial incentives and support mechanisms to stimulate increased private sector investment in housing across Victoria, with a particular focus on:

1. Encouraging diverse housing typologies including affordable, build-to-rent, and key worker housing.
2. Providing fiscal tools such as tax rebates and concessions and/or co-investment models to catalyse development in strategic locations.
3. Partnering with local government to identify priority precincts and align incentives with local housing strategies and infrastructure planning.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Financial incentives can play a critical role in de-risking projects, accelerating delivery, and ensuring housing supply meets community needs.

Motion 14. Innovative Models for Affordable Housing Targets

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to ensure:

1. Provision of funding for councils to engage dedicated housing officers to liaise between government agencies, councils, community, community sector providers, financiers, and landowners to facilitate projects.
2. Promotion and supporting alternative housing delivery models that increase affordability and provide social and environmental benefits (including deliberative development, community-led development, self-build, modular, prefab and tiny houses/units).
3. Facilitation of partnerships and collaboration to set up pilot projects, especially providing opportunities for Housing Associations and Disability providers.
4. Support for community-led housing groups seeking to develop housing for themselves and their communities through provision of seed funding for feasibility studies and other preliminary project costs.
5. Provision of public land for projects that support the social, cultural and urban planning goals.
6. The requirement for innovative models of affordable housing should be included when selling public land on the open market (e.g. air rights and co-locating with public community infrastructure).

Submitting Council Rationale:

Access to secure, affordable housing is a basic human need and key to a prosperous and equitable society. A lack of affordable housing compounds intergenerational inequality and harms social cohesion. The development sector is often not delivering the housing quality, diversity, and lifestyle attributes communities need. The speculative housing delivery model often does not deliver community benefit such as affordable housing.

'Business as usual' models of government land sales to private developers are failing to achieve timely, diverse and sufficiently affordable housing outcomes. Meeting community aspirations for housing diversity, pro-social communities, and formal and informal community amenity requires innovation, collaboration, and participation. Councils are well placed to become drivers of genuine innovation in housing and deliver outcomes for communities that reach far beyond housing (e.g. healthy, diverse and thriving communities). Being directly affected by the negative aspects of the housing crisis, local councils have the understanding to ensure well-planned, connected and resilient built environment that promote community resilience and community scale sustainability.

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Victoria has seen multiple innovative housing proposals emerge from both industry and community in the past decade. A small number of these proposals have led to realised housing outcomes while others have been either paused or cancelled due to a lack of resources or systemic constraints. Community-led housing proposals in which community members act collectively to realise housing suitable to their specific local needs face the most significant systemic constraints. Seed funding, access to public land, and supported collaboration with Housing Associations and Disability providers can support community-led housing groups to realise their desire for more suitable local housing.

This requires working across agencies and sectors, particularly those focused on community scale sustainability and resilience and collaboration with sector experts. Multiple international jurisdictions have implemented systems for the provision of support and resources to community-led and sectoral housing innovators in recent years. These examples offer insights which can guide future actions in Victorian Councils.

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Motion 15. Equitable Funding for Community Infrastructure in Activity Centres

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government for a dedicated and recurrent funding stream to support the delivery of essential community infrastructure, such as libraries, community hubs, recreation facilities, and cultural venues, in municipalities experiencing rapid population growth, beyond what is achievable through Development Contributions Plans alone.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The current funding model places undue pressure on local governments to bridge the gap, risking delays or underinvestment in critical infrastructure. A state-led funding mechanism—complementary to DCPs—would ensure that growth is matched with timely and equitable infrastructure delivery across Victoria.

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Climate & regenerative design

Motion 16. Guided approach to AI involvement in Local Government

Submitting Council Wyndham City Council

Motion:

That MAV calls on the State Government to work collaboratively with Councils across Victoria in developing a framework around best practice use of AI and exploring new opportunities around AI in the work of Local Government.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming the way Australia works, produces and utilizes information. AI will impact on all forms of work, including the work of local government with the potential to change how our services are designed and delivered and how assets are managed. Its long-term benefits and the daily role it will play in delivering our services and on our legislative responsibilities to the community remain opaque. MAV has already led the way in engaging AI to improve planning work in local government. MAVlab's Advancing AI Innovation in Local Government (AAIL) project is producing guidance and recommendations for the use and procurement of AI for use in statutory planning in councils.

However, AI will impact every function of local government. As such, an important opportunity exists to create guidance and recommendations for the use of AI in all areas of responsibility for Local Government. These include community engagement, waste management, road resurfacing, but also in the collection of data and Council reporting. AI poses important functional and ethical questions around its usage in a local government setting, and establishing agreed guidance will foster an environment where AI's benefits are maximized by Council Officers, Councillors and our municipalities.

Motion 17. Reintroduction of Independent Assessment for Renewable Energy Projects

Submitting Council: Campaspe Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV write to the Victorian Government requesting they:

1. Reintroduce an independent assessment process for renewable energy projects, including wind, solar, battery, and transmission infrastructure, to ensure transparency, accountability, and community confidence.
2. Require strategic land use assessments and project approvals to be reviewed by independent advisory bodies such as Planning Panels Victoria, with opportunities for public comment and stakeholder input.
3. Ensure environmental, agricultural, cultural heritage, and socio-economic impacts are rigorously evaluated through publicly accessible and independently verified processes.
4. Reinstate local government involvement in the assessment and decision-making process for renewable energy developments to reflect community values and planning priorities.
5. Oppose the use of accelerated approval pathways that bypass independent scrutiny and override reasonable community concerns.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The removal of councils from the assessment process and the use of fast-track approvals for renewable energy projects have undermined community trust and social licence. Independent assessment is essential to ensure that projects are well-sited, environmentally sustainable, and aligned with local strategic planning. This motion supports a balanced approach to Victoria's renewable energy transition that respects local communities and promotes long-term sustainability.

Consolidated Motion 1 - Support for local initiatives to accelerate climate action

Motion:

That the State Council of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to partner with local government in responding to the climate emergency through:

1. Fast-tracking electrification and emissions reduction initiatives for essential community infrastructure, such as neighbourhood centres, aged care facilities, public housing, and community centres.
2. Expanding opportunities for councils to upgrade local infrastructure and improve resilience to extreme weather events, with attention to the differing needs of urban, regional and rural municipalities.
3. Improving household and business access to:
 - a. Electric retrofitting alternatives
 - b. Renewable energy (including off-grid systems)
 - c. Insulation and energy efficiency upgrades
 - d. Conversion from gas and woodfire heating to electric systems
 - e. Solar PV panels and batteries tailored to local conditions.
4. Ensuring these programs are equitable and accessible, particularly for low-income earners, renters, First Nations communities, and other vulnerable groups across metropolitan, regional, and rural area.
5. Additional support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to access information about what is available to them.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Support for local initiatives to accelerate climate action	Glen Eira City Council
Support for local initiatives to accelerate climate action	Port Phillip City Council

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Consolidated motion 1.1 - Support for local initiatives to accelerate climate action

Submitting Council: Glen Eira City Council

Motion:

That the State Council of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to partner with local government in responding to the climate emergency through:

1. Fast-tracking electrification and emissions reduction initiatives for essential community infrastructure, such as neighbourhood centres, aged care facilities, public housing, and community centres.
2. Expanding opportunities for councils to upgrade local infrastructure and improve resilience to extreme weather events, with attention to the differing needs of urban, regional and rural municipalities.
3. Improving household and business access to:
 - a. Electric retrofitting alternatives
 - b. Renewable energy (including off-grid systems)
 - c. Insulation and energy efficiency upgrades
 - d. Conversion from gas and woodfire heating to electric systems
 - e. Solar PV panels and batteries tailored to local conditions.
4. Ensuring these programs are equitable and accessible, particularly for low-income earners, renters, First Nations communities, and other vulnerable groups across metropolitan, regional, and rural area.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Local government has a vital role in driving climate action and building community resilience. Councils are already leading on-the-ground initiatives to reduce emissions and support sustainable infrastructure, but further progress requires strong state partnerships and equitable funding.

Energy poverty continues to affect households across Victoria — particularly low-income residents who face higher energy bills and limited options to improve their homes. Whether in metropolitan suburbs or regional towns, many communities are struggling to keep up with the cost of living and the impacts of climate change. This motion seeks to ensure that no community is left behind in the clean energy transition.

MAV's leadership in advocating for this motion positions local government as a unified and strategic partner in Victoria's climate transition, driving systems-level change that benefits all councils. By adopting inclusive, place-based funding models and expanding access to rebates, loans, and retrofitting support, the Victorian Government can empower councils to deliver practical, targeted solutions that reduce emissions, improve public health, and strengthen climate resilience across the state. This includes ensuring that essential public infrastructure — such as aged care facilities, community centres, and public housing — is future-ready and energy efficient.

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Consolidated motion 1.2 - Support for local initiatives to accelerate climate action

Submitting Council: Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the State Council of the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to partner with local government in responding to the climate emergency through:

1. Fast-tracking electrification and emissions reduction initiatives for essential community infrastructure, such as neighbourhood centres, aged care facilities, public housing, and community centres.
2. Expanding opportunities for councils to upgrade local infrastructure and improve resilience to extreme weather events, with attention to the differing needs of urban, regional and rural municipalities.
3. Supporting household and business access to:
 - a. Electrification of their property
 - b. Power purchase agreements that fund the creation of new renewable energy systems
 - c. Insulation and energy efficiency upgrades Solar PV panels and batteries tailored to local conditions.
4. Ensuring these programs are equitable and accessible, particularly for low-income earners, renters, and other groups experiencing vulnerability in metropolitan, regional, and rural areas.
5. Additional support for culturally and linguistically diverse communities to access information about what is available to them.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Local governments are on the frontline of responding to the climate emergency, yet they require stronger support and partnership from the Victorian Government to accelerate action. Councils also need expanded opportunities to upgrade local infrastructure, tailored to the diverse needs of urban, regional, and rural communities.

Additionally, households and businesses must be empowered to transition to clean energy through access to electrification, renewable energy systems, and energy efficiency upgrades. These programs must be equitable and accessible, particularly for low-income earners, renters, and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, ensuring no one is left behind in Victoria's climate response.

Consolidated Motion 2 - Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocate to the Victorian Government, including the Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister for the State Electricity Commission, for:

1. The implementation and communication of a standard approach to the Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan.
2. The mandating of legacy infrastructure provision for local communities as part of the Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan, including but not limited to:
 - a. Upgrading Single Line Earth Return distribution lines.
 - b. Energy bill offset programs for residents and businesses.
 - c. Telecommunications upgrades.
 - d. Energy efficiency improvements for community facilities.
 - e. Planning and development of key worker housing.
 - f. Power supply upgrades for businesses.
 - g. Local training and employment programs.
3. The incorporation of tailored engagement strategies, impact assessments and funding mechanisms that reflect the unique vulnerabilities and contributions of host communities and provide legacy benefits as part of the Victorian Transmission Plan and Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan.
4. The inclusion of commercial fishing communities as eligible stakeholders in the Renewable Energy Zone Community Benefits Plan to enable investment in marine infrastructure, workforce transition programs, and co-designed mitigation strategies that ensure a fairer and more inclusive energy transition.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Standardized and Fair Renewable Energy Community Benefits Framework	Moyne Shire Council
Victorian Transmission Plan and Renewable Energy Zone Benefit Plan	East Gippsland Shire Council

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Consolidated Motion 2.1 - Standardized and Fair Renewable Energy Community Benefits Framework

Submitting Council: Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government including meeting with Minister D'Ambrosio, the Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister for the State Electricity Commission:

1. For the implementation and communication of a standard approach to a Community Benefits Plan that will form part of the proposed Renewable Energy Zones;
2. That the Community Benefits Plan be mandated to include legacy infrastructure provision for local communities, including but not limited to:-
 - a. Upgrading Single Line Earth Return (SWER) distribution lines.
 - b. Energy bill offset programs for residents and businesses.
 - c. Telecommunications upgrades.
 - d. Energy efficiency improvements for community facilities.
 - e. Planning and development of key worker housing.
 - f. Power supply upgrades for businesses.
 - g. Local training and employment programs.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Implementation of the Victorian Renewable Energy Zones is the opportune time for MAV to further advocate on behalf of Councils to the Minister for Climate Action, Minister for Energy and Resources and Minister for the State Electricity Commission, The Hon. Lily D'Ambrosio for a mandated, standardized community benefit framework.

MAV, is well placed as the key agency representing Councils in Victoria and can advocate for a consistent approach across the sector for upfront assurance to communities and renewable energy project developers.

The ad-hoc applicability to current renewable energy projects and related community benefits is difficult to administer, lacks strong communication to local communities and often doesn't achieve a net community benefit for all.

A consistent framework approach across the new Renewable Energy Zones will provide assurances to the local communities and upfront understanding by project developers.

Timing for implementation of a consistent framework is optimum, as the new renewable energy zones are formed and an accompanying community benefits plan being developed.

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Consolidated Motion 2.2 - Victorian Transmission Plan and Renewable Energy Zone Benefit Plan

Submitting Council: East Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That future iterations of the Victorian Transmission Plan and Renewable Energy Zone Benefit Plan must incorporate tailored engagement strategies, impact assessments and funding mechanisms that reflect the unique vulnerabilities and contributions of host communities and provide legacy benefit to these communities.

The REZ Benefit Plan is amended to explicitly include commercial fishing communities as eligible stakeholders, enabling investment in marine infrastructure, workforce transition programs, and co-designed mitigation strategies that ensure a fairer and more inclusive energy transition.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Victorian Transmission Plan and the Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) Benefit Plan are critical mechanisms guiding the State's transition to renewable energy.

Without explicit inclusion in the Victorian Transmission Plan and REZ Benefit Plan, impacted communities risk being sidelined in decision-making processes and excluded from benefit-sharing arrangements.

Industries can and should coexist, but this requires a deliberate, collaborative and well-resourced approach. The respectful support for, and protection of, one of important maritime industries must be a priority as Australia transitions to a renewable energy future.

Consultation has often been delayed or deprioritised with some sectors (e.g. commercial fishing), with consultation processes designed for the public not industry. Some proponents have been advised not to engage during feasibility stages.

A lack of early and ongoing direct consultation has led to mistrust, missed opportunities for collaboration and proposals that fail to consider the operational realities of impacted industries. Tailored engagement strategies should include the funding of independent facilitation to ensure transparent dialogue and build trust between all parties, and formal consultation protocols at each project stage, with clear mechanisms for feedback to influence planning decisions and minimise impact.

Community benefit sharing involves the sharing of benefits with communities that host renewable energy generation, transmission and storage projects. The equitable distribution of benefits and impacts is a key method for gaining and maintaining social license. Community benefits should address community needs, mitigate impacts and deliver tangible, lasting outcomes where disruption occurs. This can be addressed through:

A formal, enforceable national compensation framework developed in collaboration with the fishing industry, incorporating assessments of both direct and indirect economic impacts. A framework that includes financial support for lost access, disruption during construction, and business continuity planning to ensure the sector remains viable throughout the offshore wind lifecycle. A Fisheries Benefit Fund with transparent governance is established to provide equitable compensation for all affected parties.

Diversity, equity & inclusion

Motion 18. Tackling vilification, hate, and prejudice

Submitting Council: Yarra City Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. condemns vilification, hate speech, and prejudice against all marginalised groups;
2. commits to working with local councils to ensure the safety and inclusion of all Victorians regardless of their race, religion, ability/disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation or migration status; and
3. calls on the Victorian Parliament and Government to implement a positive duty for organisations to take reasonable and proportionate steps to prevent vilification, as is currently the case for discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation matters under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

Submitting Council Rationale:

This motion calls on the Victorian Government to introduce a positive duty to prevent vilification under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010. This reform would strengthen protections against hate-based harm and support councils in fostering inclusive and respectful communities.

While vilification is currently unlawful in Victoria, the legal framework is largely reactive. Action typically occurs only after an incident has taken place and a complaint has been lodged. There is no legal requirement for organisations to take steps to prevent vilification before it happens. This contrasts with existing provisions in the Equal Opportunity Act, which already impose a positive duty on organisations to prevent discrimination, sexual harassment, and victimisation.

Introducing a positive duty to prevent vilification would require organisations such as councils, service providers, and employers to take reasonable and proportionate steps to stop vilifying conduct before it occurs. This would shift the focus from responding to complaints towards preventing harm in the first place. It would involve clear organisational policies, staff training, cultural risk assessments, and early intervention measures. It would also provide greater clarity and accountability for organisations in fulfilling their obligations to protect community safety and cohesion.

There is clear precedent for this approach. Victoria already applies a positive duty in relation to discrimination and related harms. At the federal level, a similar duty has been introduced under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 following the Respect@Work recommendations. Extending this framework to vilification would align Victorian law with best practice and ensure consistency across areas of harm.

Local governments are already playing a key role in promoting inclusion and preventing hate-based conduct through policy leadership, service design, and community engagement. However, the current legal framework does not provide sufficient support for prevention. A positive duty would give councils and other organisations a clearer mandate to act early and decisively.

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Motion 19. Advocacy for Department of Education School Focused Youth Service Funding

Submitting Council: Knox City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government to maintain the Department of Education funding for School Focused Youth Services grant program.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Department of Education (DE) has provided the School Focused Youth Services (SFYS) grant program for more than 25 years. Approximately \$12M is allocated to the current grant program due to expire in December 2025. These funds support vulnerable young people across Victoria, delivered by no less than 12 local governments, including Knox City Council.

SFYS funding is used to provide targeted interventions to students who are vulnerable to or showing signs of disengagement from school. The Department of Education specifies the schools within a catchment area for focus each calendar year. The SFYS Coordinators support identified schools to tailor the needs and interventions to their school students. Providing these programs helps to address current and emerging areas of need for young people within their municipality before they become entrenched.

In the current two-year funding period, 16 schools within Knox City Council alone will have been supported (eight Primary, seven Secondary and one K-12 College); delivering 20 separate interventions that addressed barriers to educational engagement for 418 students; as well as building the capacity of 135 school staff, parents or carers to support young people.

This program is having a profound impact on vulnerable young people within Knox and across the state. Without such a program, vulnerable young people are likely not to receive the support to prevent disengagement from education. The rising incidence of youth crime may be further exacerbated without tailored support aiding educational engagement for young people most in need.

If SFYS not be renewed beyond the current grant program which concludes in December 2025, this statewide program, will impact 12 LGAs who receive funding directly to deliver the SFYS program (no less than 8 in the eastern metro area), and indirectly by all other LGA's that are serviced by community health and NGO's across Victoria.

SFYS program objectives help mitigate the root causes of disengagement from school through programs that provide targeted and individualised support to individuals and small groups of students, further building the capacity of teachers and parents to provide a wholistic model of support to keep young people engaged in education.

This program is unique, in that it links schools to external local agencies and providers to address current or emerging areas of concern within local communities.

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Other Department of Education funding such as the Mental Health Fund, provides funding directly to schools, resulting in it often being absorbed into more generalised whole school programs.

Vulnerable students supported by SFYS are often missed by other supports – they are too disengaged to benefit from whole school programs, but they are not disengaged sufficiently to require solely individual case work or 1:1 supports and funding.

The SFYS program provides for students in this gap. SFYS Coordinators can work with directly with school staff to develop bespoke and tailored interventions that will target the specific needs of this group.

Advocacy for SFYS funding to be continued past December 2025 is required to inform the DE of the statewide impact should this program conclude, and implications for young people who are vulnerable to or showing signs of disengaging from education in all LGA's across Victoria.

Motion 20. Reinstatement of Funding for the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation

Submitting Council: Darebin City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government to reinstate funding for the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation, including the Change Our Game initiative and the Preventing Violence Through Sport Grants Program, recognising their significant role in promoting gender equity and inclusion, supporting women and girls in sport and leadership, and contributing to the prevention of gender-based violence in our communities.

Submitting Council Rationale:

All Victorian Councils have been required to commence implementation of Fair Access Policy provisions and actions, supported by the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation

- Whether the issue relates to a current or emerging federal or state-wide policy, legislative, or funding priority Through the Change Our Game initiative, the State Government's Fair Access Policy Roadmap is in early stages of implementation and will require support and monitoring to ensure its impact is maximised for women and girl's participation in sport.
- Why the issue cannot be resolved at a single council or regional level Advocacy from MAV would bring a concerted statewide focus on this important work and would be significantly more effective than advocacy from individual councils

As outlined in the State Government's Fair Access Policy [p7], "when our entire community does not benefit from this [community sport and recreation] infrastructure in an equitable manner, this important pillar of our health, our culture and our identities as Victorians and Australians is contributing to unequal outcomes in sport and active recreation, and a wider culture of gender inequality in our communities".

All Victorian Councils must demonstration progress against fair access policies through the implementation of action plans over time. Many Councils require and benefit from the support of the expert resources in the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation to shape their actions and impact with and for their community.

Advocacy efforts are stronger together and coordination by the MAV on behalf of all Victorian Council's would demonstrate powerful, cohesive and comprehensive support for the Office for Women in Sport and Recreation by the local government sector for gender equity and sport and recreation.

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Health & wellbeing

Motion 21. Review of municipal Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) caps

Submitting Council: Greater Dandenong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV write to the Victorian Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation urging a review of the Electronic Gaming Machine (EGM) caps, with consideration of the balance between EGM densities permitted under the caps, and municipal income levels. Communities with lower income levels should have lower EGM caps, so they are afforded some protection against higher EGM densities and the elevated gambling losses which result.

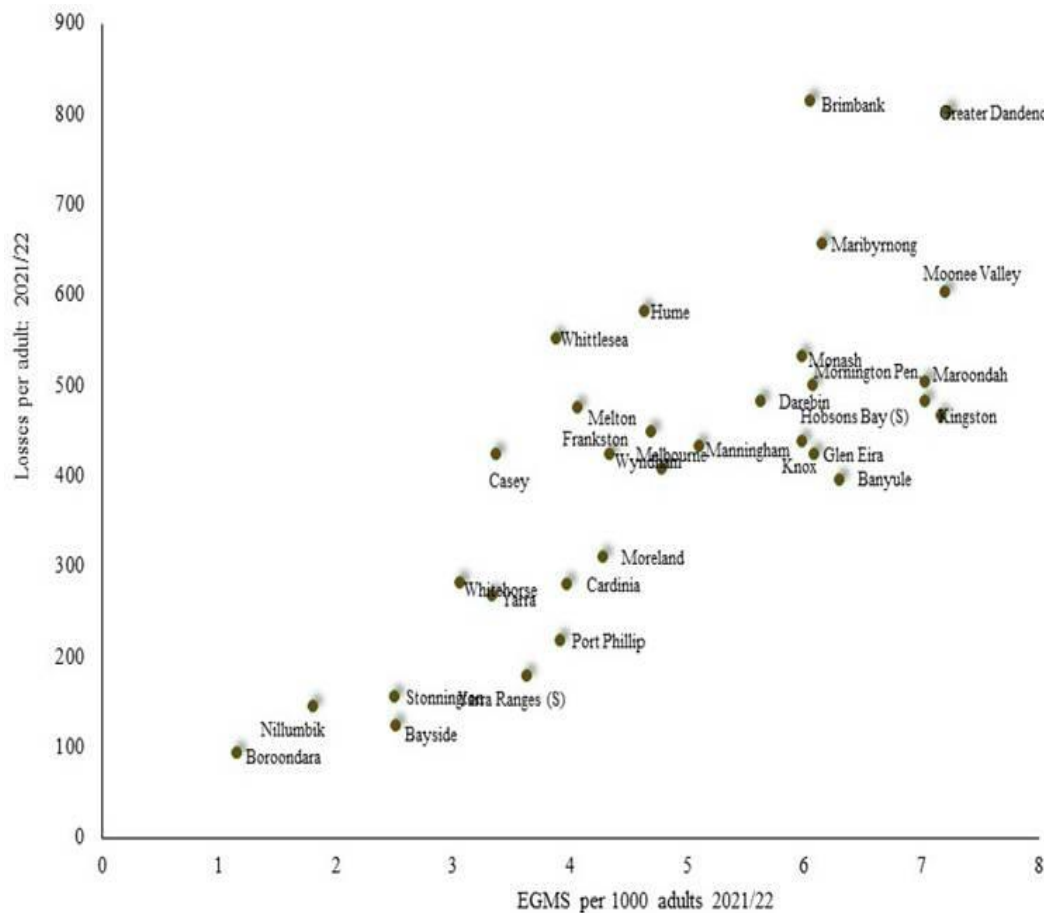
Submitting Council Rationale:

Current and recent trends show that municipalities with lower incomes tend to experience higher rates of losses to EGMs. In 2021/22, the most affluent five municipalities - measured by median personal income levels in the 2021 Census - experienced average EGM losses of \$191 per adult, while average losses were over three times higher in the least affluent five municipalities, at \$687 per adult (losses in 2021/22 are cited here, as they may be matched to 2021 Census records of municipal income).

Such differences in losses per adult across metropolitan municipalities are closely associated with EGM density, as the accompanying chart illustrates. Notably, municipalities with the highest densities (depicted in the upper-right-hand side of the chart) also tend to feature the higher rates of EGM losses.

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EGM Losses per adult 2021/22, by EGMs per 1,000 adults 2022: metro Melbourne



It follows that the current caps, however well intentioned, have not exerted sufficient influence upon the number and density of EGMs in the more vulnerable communities, to protect their residents from the impact of elevated densities of EGMs and resulting high rates of gambling losses.

It is desirable to establish a balance between municipal incomes and EGM caps, with the maximum number of EGMs permitted in each metropolitan municipality proportional to its share of total metropolitan incomes. Accordingly, the maximum number of EGMs in a metropolitan municipality would be determined as that percentage of the EGMs permitted in the metropolitan area, which is equal to its percentage of metropolitan income (subject to limits upon EGMs per 1,000 adults).

To illustrate its impact, the current number of EGMs Greater Dandenong is capped at 989, representing 4.5 per cent of the maximum number of EGMs which may be installed in metropolitan Melbourne. However, the 2021 Census shows that Greater Dandenong residents accrue just 2.34 per cent of metropolitan income. Under this proposal, the cap would be revised to limit upon the number of EGMs at 2.34 per cent of the maximum number permitted in Melbourne, equaling 511 machines, thereby entailing a reduction in its cap of 478 EGMs.

Motion 22. Buy-Back Scheme for Electronic Gaming Machines

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

The MAV calls on the Victorian Government to fund, design, and implement a buy-back scheme for Electronic Gaming Machines (EGMs) to prevent and reduce gambling harm and support venues in transitioning away from EGM reliance

Submitting Council Rationale:

Gambling can cause significant harm to individuals, families and their communities, with impacts including family violence, physical and mental health impacts, financial hardship, social isolation, and drug and alcohol dependence.

EGM's play a significant role in gambling in the community and it is acknowledged that gaming venues may need financial support to encourage and facilitate their transition from this form of revenue.

To encourage gaming venues to transition away from EGM's, the State Government is encouraged to implement a financial scheme that allows gaming venues to divest their EGM licenses via a buy back scheme that then allows the gaming venues to not suffer a financial penalty.

Victoria's hotels and clubs had a total of 26,284 EGMs in 2022-23 and a total loss from EGMs of \$3.03 billion. On average, an EGM represents approximately \$145,292 revenue per annum which would be lost to the venue.

A venue transitioning from EGMs need to incur this cost per EGM as well as:

- Administrative costs of licence surrender • Venue refurbishment and removal of machines
- Lost revenue streams beyond gaming, for example drinks and meals
- Staff redeployment costs, such as for gaming room attendants, etc.; and
- Payouts for remaining entitlements. The minimum price for gaming machine entitlements is \$5,170 per entitlement for approved club entitlements (unused club entitlements can be surrendered at no cost) and \$32,714 per entitlement for hotel entitlements.

To encourage gaming venues to transition away from EGM's, the State Government is encouraged to implement a financial scheme that allows gaming venues to divest their EGM licenses via a buy back scheme that then allows the gaming venues to not suffer a financial penalty.

Motion 23. Expending the application of the Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Bill 2020 to include workers involved in water safety and rescue across Victoria.

Submitting Council: Frankston City Council

Motion:

That MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review and consider

1. the possible expansion of the Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Bill 2020 to include other workers such as those responsible for water safety and rescue across Victoria.
2. A change to the ESVF (Emergency Services and Volunteers fund) arrangements to allow funding of Life Saving Victoria for both volunteers and paid life guards.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Play it Safe by the Water is a collaborative program between the Victorian Government and the aquatics and safety sectors. Established in 1998, it aims to increase safety around water and reduce the number of fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents in Victoria.

Unfortunately, the risks to our workers involved in water rescue and water safety are increasing. The recent past lifeguard assault at the Casey Aquatic and Recreation Centre has highlighted the growing challenge with keeping our aquatic facilities safe for everyone to enjoy. In March 2020, the State Government announced it will be even harder for people who assault emergency workers to use "special reasons" to avoid a jail term under new laws introduced into Parliament. It is proposed that the application of the Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Bill 2020 be extended to cover workers involved in water safety and rescue across Victoria.

The Sentencing Amendment (Emergency Worker Harm) Bill 2020, requires courts to impose a sentence of imprisonment in all cases where an offender recklessly or intentionally injures an emergency worker on duty, except in very narrow circumstances of mental impairment. Under the Bill, offenders are not able to rely on a special reason of impaired mental functioning, even where they have an underlying condition, if a substantial cause of their impairment at the time of the offence is self-induced intoxication.

For complicit offenders involved in an attack on an emergency worker by encouraging or directing another offender to cause the injury, the onus will shift to alleged offenders to produce evidence to prove their involvement was minor, such that their culpability was low enough to justify an exception to the minimum sentence.

The reforms also ensure that interstate emergency workers on duty in Victoria are protected under the legislation.

In the Magistrates' Court, 1,278 charges of assault an emergency worker on duty were sentenced in the three years to 30 June 2023. The most common sentence for a charge of this offence was imprisonment (49.2%, or 629 of 1,278 charges).

Motion 24. Continuation of tobacco service agreement funding beyond 30 June 2026 and planning reform relating to tobacconists

Submitting Council: Frankston City Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council calls on the Victorian Government to: Continue to fund an opt-in tobacco service agreement for local councils beyond 30 June 2026. This would enable councils to continue supporting the regulator's work at the local level, particularly in enforcing laws aimed at reducing the sale of tobacco to minors.

There is an absence of a specific land use definition and planning controls for tobacco retail (tobacconists) in Victorian Planning Schemes limiting Council's ability to prevent the establishment of tobacco retailers near or within areas where minors frequent, such as near schools. Calling for the state government to investigate a state-wide planning scheme amendment to implement planning controls for tobacconists using the definition of "harm" similar to that introduced under the Liquor Control Reform Act 1998.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Council Environmental Health teams have made significant and long-standing contributions in delivering education and regulatory functions under the Tobacco Act 1987, particularly in maintaining smoke-free environments, regulating tobacco retailers, and reducing the sale of tobacco products to minors.

Local councils play a key role in ensuring compliance with laws prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors, particularly through the long-standing Tobacco Test Purchasing Program delivered under the service agreement between councils and the regulator. Whilst the new tobacco licensing regulator will regulate tobacconists and in particular the sale of illicit tobacco, with funding, Councils can still undertake the vital role of assisting with the regulation of the Tobacco Act 1987 and continue contributing to the health of their communities. Some of the benefits of continuing these activities include reducing the uptake and use of tobacco and e-cigarettes products, achieving ongoing reductions in exposure to secondhand smoke, community awareness and compliance with tobacco laws.

The continuation of funding under the tobacco service agreement for local councils beyond 30 June 2026 will ensure these important education and enforcement activities continue.

Additionally, there is an absence of a specific land use definition and planning controls for tobacconists in Victorian Planning Schemes. Similar to the specific definition and controls relating to 'Adult sex product shop' a distance condition to a residential zone or, land used for a hospital or school, could assist with preventing the establishment of tobacconists in inappropriate locations, such as near schools and hospitals, reducing access to and uptake of smoking by minors.

Motion 25. Resourcing to support health and social support agencies

Submitting Council: East Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to increase resourcing support for agencies and local government that work with communities around the drivers that lead to homelessness.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Community agencies and health partners continue to deliver initiatives and programs - domestic violence intervention, drug intervention, health and financial sustainability services - aimed at addressing systemic issues that have a high cost on society: homelessness, youth suicide, family and domestic violence, substance addiction. Resourcing is well short of matching the demand.

Increased demand for services has resulted in longer support periods, with the median duration of service support rising and placing additional strain on already stretched services. Regional areas across the state also face service delivery challenges, including geographic dispersion, fewer crisis accommodation options, limited public transport for accessing services, seasonal workforce, and natural disaster impacts.

Homelessness does not discriminate and can occur to anyone at any time throughout their lives. Individual impacts of homelessness include but are not limited to:

1. Exposure to violence and victimisation
2. Development of chronic health conditions
3. Increased likelihood of mental illness
4. Poor physical health (dental, nutritional, substance use)
5. Higher rates of premature mortality, disability, and chronic illness
6. Limited access to specialist health and support services
7. Greater distances to travel for assistance / reduced public transport options
8. Limited emergency accommodation options

More than three-quarters of homelessness services are finding it significantly harder to secure housing for clients.

Some social housing properties can sit vacant for months on end, and there is a community perception of a lack of urgency and/or support to get vacant properties filled.

Motion 26. Support for the introduction of a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) in Victoria.

Submitting Council: East Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to urgently introduce and implement a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, known elsewhere as Clare's Law, empowering individuals at risk to access information about a partner's past violent or abusive behaviour. This proactive measure has the potential to save lives, reduce harm, and support victim-survivors of family violence in making informed and safe decisions.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Every day, behind closed doors, lives are shattered by domestic violence. It robs individuals of dignity, autonomy and safety - often leaving scars that never fully heal. Now is the time to act.

Clare's Law, named after Clare Wood, who was murdered by a partner with a known history of violence, allows individuals to request police-held information about a partner's history of domestic abuse.

This disclosure scheme is a practical, life-saving tool that has already been implemented in the United Kingdom and is currently being petitioned for implementation in New South Wales.

We cannot accept a reality where fear, control, and violence dominate relationships. Clare's Law offers a vital lifeline - empowering people with the knowledge they need to make decisions about their safety before it is too late.

Victorian communities have a right to the same protections being pursued in other jurisdictions. Local government has a responsibility to advocate for measures that improve community safety and support our most vulnerable.

Clare's Law supports vulnerable populations, addresses trauma and long-term safety, and builds trust between communities and institutions.

It is recommended that the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Introduce and pass legislation establishing a Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law) in Victoria, following national and international best practice.
2. Ensure the scheme is developed with input from survivors, legal experts, police, and frontline family violence services, with safeguards to protect privacy, prevent misuse, and connect individuals to support.
3. Fund training, support services, and public awareness to ensure the scheme is implemented effectively and compassionately across the state.
4. Monitor and evaluate the program's impact to ensure continuous improvement and survivor safety.

An ePetition calling for Clare's Law has gained traction in New South Wales, urging the government to rise above political divides and act decisively in the face of Australia's ongoing domestic violence crisis. It is time Victoria also shows leadership. By adopting Clare's Law, we can take a critical step toward justice, compassion, and a safer future for all. A personal experience of using Clare's Law in the UK can be found [here](#)

Motion 27. Increasing State investment in preventive and public health

Submitting Council: Melbourne City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to increase its investment in preventive health measures by at least 5 per cent of the total state health budget, and to work in partnership with local governments to deliver community-based preventive and public health programs.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Preventive health is a vital yet underfunded component of Victoria's health system. In the 2025–26 Victorian State Budget, the State Government committed a record \$31 billion to health. However, analysis of budget allocations suggests that less than 2 per cent of this funding is directed toward preventive health and early intervention initiatives.

This limited investment contrasts sharply with the growing burden of chronic disease, which accounts for between 66 per cent and 90 per cent of Victoria's disease burden. Conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and mental health disorders are largely preventable through early intervention and community-based health promotion.

Councils are well-positioned to implement and promote preventive health programs tailored to local needs. Increased state investment would enable expansion of initiatives such as:

- active transport infrastructure, promoting physical activity through recreation facilities, parks and gardens,
- boosting healthy eating literacy, supporting community to grow their own produce,
- mental health and wellbeing initiatives, offering opportunities for social connection, • awareness of access to a range of preventive health screenings: and
- early childhood health programs, including the promotion of breast feeding.

The City of Melbourne (CoM) faces unique public health challenges due to its high population density, transient populations, and vulnerable communities including international students and rough sleepers. CoM's Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021–2025 outlines a strong commitment to preventive health, equity, and resilience. However, local governments require greater support to scale these efforts and ensure effective delivery across all municipalities.

This motion aligns with the national call (at the ALGA's National General Assembly) for a 5 per cent increase in federal preventive health funding and urges the Victorian Government to lead by example. A minimum 5 per cent allocation of the state health budget to prevention would significantly improve population health outcomes, reduce long-term healthcare costs, and relieve pressure on hospitals and emergency departments.

Motion 28. Improving acute mental health response programs

Submitting Council: Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to improve mental health response programs by:

1. Continuing to support and adequately fund service providers demonstrating effectiveness, particularly those working with high-impact cohorts;
2. Increasing the resources of Police, Ambulance, and Clinical Early Response (PACER) and Homeless Outreach Psychiatric Service (HOPS);
3. Ensuring implementation of Mental Health Royal Commission recommendations including transfer of first response to mental health emergency services calls from Police to Ambulance Victoria; and
4. Tackling the service gap for responding to people experiencing acute mental health episodes in public places, particularly the gap in culturally appropriate supports.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Improving mental health response programs is critical to addressing a growing and complex public health challenge. Individuals experiencing acute mental health episodes often fall through the cracks of fragmented service systems, particularly when these episodes occur in public settings.

Police and ambulance services are frequently the first responders to mental health incidents and require greater support to manage these situations safely and appropriately. Expanding resources for programs such as PACER and HOPS, and implementing the recommendations of the Mental Health Royal Commission, are essential steps toward building a more compassionate and effective system.

There is an urgent need to address the current service gap in responding to acute mental health episodes in public places. This includes ensuring that supports are accessible, appropriate, and responsive to diverse community needs.

Through this motion, MAV can advocate for a more integrated, adequately funded, and inclusive mental health response framework that strengthens early intervention and crisis support across Victoria.

Consolidated Motion 3 - Protect the future of our public pools

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Recognises the critical importance of public pools and aquatic/leisure centres to our communities as:
 - a. hubs of social connection;
 - b. places for people to exercise and be healthy;
 - c. places for people, particularly children, to learn the life skill of swimming; and
 - d. places for people to cool down during extreme heat events, which will only become more frequent with worsening climate change.
2. Notes that:
 - a. the high cost of maintaining, upgrading and building new public pools and aquatic/leisure centres present huge financial challenges for Councils, particularly in the context of continued cost-shifting by other levels of government and rate-capping and ageing facilities that require replacement;
 - b. many Councils' public pools and aquatic/leisure centres are ageing assets that require high levels of investment to maintain and upgrade in order to continue; and
 - c. notes that demand for public pools and aquatic/leisure centres will only increase as Victoria's population and population density grow.
3. Calls on the Victorian and Federal Governments to work with Councils to protect the future of our public pools by providing ongoing funding streams to support Councils to maintain, upgrade and build new public pools and aquatic/leisure centres in order to meet community demand, including a new and recurrent dedicated aquatic centre fund.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Protect the future of our public pools	Merri-bek City Council
A new and recurrent grant program to support the development of aquatic centres in Victoria	Wyndham City Council
Renewal aged pools - Pool Infrastructure Renewal	Southern Grampians Shire Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated motion 3.1 - Protect the future of our public pools

Submitting Council: Merri-bek City Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Recognises the critical importance of public pools and aquatic/leisure centres to our communities as:
 - a. hubs of social connection;
 - b. places for people to exercise and be healthy;
 - c. places for people, particularly children, to learn the life skill of swimming; and
 - d. places for people to cool down during extreme heat events, which will only become more frequent with worsening climate change.
2. Notes that:
 - a. the high cost of maintaining, upgrading and building new public pools and aquatic/leisure centres present huge financial challenges for Councils, particularly in the context of continued cost-shifting by other levels of government and rate-capping;
 - b. many Councils' public pools and aquatic/leisure centres are ageing assets that will require high levels of investment to maintain and upgrade in order to continue operating; and
 - c. notes that demand for public pools and aquatic/leisure centres will only increase as Victoria's population and population density grow.
3. Calls on the Victorian and Federal Governments to work with Councils to protect the future of our public pools by providing ongoing funding streams to support Councils to maintain, upgrade and build new public pools and aquatic/leisure centres in order to meet community demand.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Public pools and aquatic/leisure centres are vital pieces of community infrastructure that deliver wide-reaching social, health, educational and environmental benefits. They are community hubs that play a critical role in supporting public health and social wellbeing across all demographics. However, the financial cost of building, maintaining, upgrading, and renewing these facilities is beyond the reach of many local governments, particularly in a context of rate capping and continued cost-shifting. MAV advocacy for a sustainable ongoing funding partnership could protect these valuable community assets into the future.

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Consolidated motion 3.2 - A new and recurrent grant program to support the development of aquatic centres in Victoria

Submitting Council: Wyndham City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the State Government to recognise the social and health benefits of increased aquatic centre provision by creating a new and recurrent dedicated aquatic centre fund.

Submitting Council Rationale

Studies have found that Aquatic and Recreation Centres (ARC) improve physical and mental health and wellbeing and help build strong social networks. A recent study by PWC also showed that there is a \$4.87 social return on investment for every dollar spent on an aquatic facility in capital cities. However, an analysis conducted by Infrastructure Victoria found that there is disparity in Council areas in the provision of aquatic facilities. For instance, Wyndham has one aquatic and recreation centre (ARC) for approximately 150,000 people, with comparable neighboring Councils having one ARC for approximately 75,000 people.

Modern Aquatic Centres require significant upfront expenditure for their delivery and Councils are incurring significant debt to continue to provide these important recreational opportunities for their residents. Two aquatic centres under construction in Metropolitan Melbourne are \$90 million and \$100 million. The financial impact of modern aquatic facilities is affecting Council's financial sustainability across Victoria. With the known social and health benefits of aquatic centres, and to alleviate the need for Councils to significantly increase borrowings, the State Government is urged to deliver a new and recurrent dedicated aquatic centre fund, supporting the growth of aquatic facilities where they are needed most.

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Consolidated motion 3.3 - Renewal aged pools - Pool Infrastructure Renewal

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to State and Federal Governments for greater renewal investment in aquatic facilities in regional and rural Victoria to assist local government to replace aquatic facilities that are end of life.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Across the state there are 250 Council owned pools that are 50 or more years old. It is beyond the financial capacity of regional and rural Council to replace these pools as they reach end of life and strong funding support is needed from the state government. Existing state government grants do not support like-for-like replacement.

Southern Grampians Shire Council, like many rural and regional communities, has ageing aquatic infrastructure that is reaching the end of its lifecycle. The Shire had six outdoor pools and one indoor aquatic facility which require significant investment over the next five years to support our community to be active, connected and to participate in community.

Royal Life Saving Australia outlined in the 'The State of Aquatic Facility Infrastructure in Australia – Rebuilding our Aging Public Swimming Pools' report that the average public pool was built in 1968 and that 40% are at the end of their lifespan this decade. It estimates that \$8 billion is needed to renew and replace those pools.

The report further advises that Local Government are bearing the cost of renewing or new aquatic facility construction with little to no opportunity to seek funding from State and Regional funds. With increasing financial pressure local governments are struggling to afford to maintain pools and increasingly councils are considering closing their pools. Regional and remote communities are most at risk of missing out on updated or new facilities.

The Southern Grampians Shire Council is calling on the MAV to advocate to government to increase funding for regional and rural Councils to support the renewal of aquatic facilities. This motion is in consistent with the MAV priorities outlined in the Shaping our Future 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, of Connected Places, Health and wellbeing, Sustainable economy and Intergenerational Infrastructure.

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They are one of the few truly intergenerational, multicultural, and accessible spaces where people of all ages and backgrounds can gather, connect, and participate. They support community cohesion and mental wellbeing by offering a welcoming and affordable environment for recreation and interaction.

Public pools support healthy, active lifestyles and prevent chronic illness by enabling physical activity in a safe and supportive setting. For many people—particularly older adults, people with disabilities, and those recovering from injury—aquatic exercise is one of the most accessible forms of movement.

Swimming is a critical life skill, and public pools are essential for ensuring that all children, regardless of socio-economic status, have the opportunity to learn to swim. In a country surrounded by water and home to thousands of inland waterways, this is a matter of public safety as much as equity.

As the impacts of climate change intensify, public aquatic facilities will become increasingly important as designated cool zones during extreme heat events.

However, the financial cost of maintaining, upgrading, and renewing these facilities is beyond the reach of many local governments, particularly in a context of rate capping and continued cost-shifting. More than half of Victoria's 260 council-run public swimming pools are over 50 years old and considered beyond their end-of-life date. On a national level, a report has indicated that up to 40% of local government-run public pools would likely need serious refurbishment or outright replacement at a cost of more than \$8 billion within a decade. At the same time, demand for public pools is rising due to population growth and urban density.

Without support from state and federal governments, many Councils will be forced to make difficult decisions about the future of these much-loved assets. A sustainable, ongoing funding partnership is essential to protect the future of public pools and ensure they continue to meet the needs of growing communities.

Consolidated Motion 4 – Funding of Sleep and Settling Programs

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Uphold the partnership principles of the Maternal and Child Health Memorandum of Understanding by ensuring that any future changes to program delivery or funding are co-designed with local government and the MAV and communicated with appropriate notice.
2. Ensure that all changes to MCH program delivery reflect the roles of local government and the MAV as genuine partners with the Department and are communicated in accordance with the service agreement.
3. Commit to transparent and consistent investment in early years and parenting supports, ensuring that policy and funding decisions align with the Government’s broader health and wellbeing priorities and its recognition of the critical role these services play in supporting Victorian families.
4. Reconsider the cessation of funding for the group-based component of the MCH Sleep and Settling program.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Advocacy for ongoing funding of sleep and settling programs	Hobsons Bay City Council
Maternal and Child Health sleep and settling program	Manningham City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated motion 4.1 - Advocacy for Ongoing Funding of Sleep and Settling Programs

Submitting Council: Hobsons Bay City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Uphold the partnership principles of the Maternal and Child Health Memorandum of Understanding, signed by the MAV on behalf of local government MCH services in Victoria, by ensuring that any future program changes of funding adjustments are co-designed with local government and communicated with appropriate notice.
2. Commit to transparent and consistent investment in early years and parenting supports, aligning policy and funding decisions with the Government's own public recognition of the importance of Sleep and Settling programs, such as in the June 2025 announcement regarding Early Parenting Centres.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The decision to withdraw funding for group-based Sleep and Settling programs from 19 August 2025 will have a significant negative impact on families and MCH service delivery across Victoria. These programs provide essential early intervention, particularly for families experiencing vulnerability, with their removal to increase pressure on already stretched universal and enhanced MCH services. The sudden announcement for this funding cut undermines established partnership principles outlined in the service agreement. It also contradicts the Victorian Government's own public acknowledgement of the importance of sleep and settling support, including in its 2 June 2025 media release.

Local government has invested in these programs in good faith, based on assurances of ongoing funding. A coordinated sector-wide response is needed to call for the reinstatement of this critical support and to protect the integrity and sustainability of the MCH system.

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Consolidated motion 4.2 - Maternal and Child Health Sleep and Settling Program

Submitting Council: Manningham City Council

Supporting Councils: Monash City Council and Yarra Ranges Shire Council.

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:

1. Urgently reconsider the cessation of funding for the group-based component of the Maternal Child Health (MCH) Sleep and Settling program.
2. Further to the request for a review of this decision, we also ask that any future changes to MCH program delivery:
3. occur through a process that reflects the roles of Local Government and the MAV as genuine partners with the Department in the delivery of Maternal and Child Health service to the Victorian community; and
4. be communicated with sufficient notice according to the service agreement.

Submitting Council Rationale:

On 20 May 2025, the State Government Department of Health (DOH) advised Maternal and Child Health (MCH) providers that:

“From 1 July 2025, the information session support group component of the Sleep and Settling program will no longer be funded. This decision reflects a broader effort to streamline program delivery and ensure the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) workforce is focused on core service provision.”

The notification provided by DOH did not meet the requirements of the service agreement and has since been revised to August 2025.

The funding was initially introduced in July 2020 as ongoing. In Manningham this delivers three days per week of outreach and education sessions providing crucial support for families when they are at their most vulnerable. The outreach part of the sleep and settle program continues to be funded, albeit one day per week.

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Local government has a long-standing partnership with the Victorian Government in delivering MCH services. This partnership is built on shared responsibility, trust, and a mutual commitment to supporting the wellbeing of Victorian families. However, the manner and timing of this decision is not reflective of a genuine partnership approach.

The DOH believes Early Parenting Centres provide adequate support for young families, along with the regular Key Ages and Stage visits by parents to their MCH nurse. Manningham Council does not have any Early Parenting Centres, and our residents must therefore leave the area to access services if they are available. Regular appointments for Key Age and Stage visits are already constrained by the 45-minute appointment time and are unlikely to be an adequate replacement for specific sleep and settling information. This significantly reduces any option for our MCH service to offer flexibility, as well as seriously limiting accessibility for our community.

This is a deeply valued service within the community, and we believe it provides essential support for families at their most vulnerable.

Manningham Council remains committed to working constructively with the Victorian Government and all relevant departments alongside the MAV to support strong, sustainable MCH services for all Victorian families.

Consolidated Motion 5 – Early Child education and care reforms

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) urgently advocate to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to:

1. Urgently implement stronger protections for children in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, including:
 - a. Requiring strengthened oversight of all staff employed in ECEC services, including:
 - (i) urgent re-verification of Working with Children Checks (WWCC), qualifications and employment history, alongside annual compulsory training for all staff and providers in child safety obligations and mandatory reporting
 - (ii) establishment of a standardised national WWCC database
 - b. Increase resourcing to the state's early education regulator to:
 - (i) increase the frequency and depth of service assessments and investigations, with a stronger focus on compliance, risk management and early intervention where safety standards are not being met
 - (ii) more frequent compliance checks on site at services
 - (iii) stronger enforcement of consequences for failing to meet requirements
 - c. Mandate ongoing training for:
 - (i) all staff in child safe standards and mandatory reporting:
 - (ii) all educators in accredited safe sleep and rest practices with a requirement for refresher courses.
2. That the MAV advocate for state and national investment in a strong long-term workforce across the sector to ensure quality care and education by developing long-term strategies that attract quality educators, support their training and ongoing professional development, and increase their retention across the sector.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Early Child Care Education and Care Reforms	Latrobe City Council
Addressing Child Safety in Early Childhood Education and Care	Hobsons Bay City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated motion 5.1 - Early Child Care Education and Care Reforms

Submitting Council: Latrobe City Council

Motion:

That Council advocate for reforms to the early Childhood Education and Care (ECE&C) sector that address ongoing issues regarding child safety, staffing, and quality of care and education by calling on the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments to:

1. ensure child safety by:
 - a. Reforming Working with Children Checks (WWCC) through the establishment of a standardised national WWCC system and a centralised national WWCC database.
 - b. Increase educator to child ratio requirements and funding services at levels to ensure these costs are not incurred by families.
 - c. Better resourcing regulatory bodies to ensure services are maintaining a safe environment and quality care and learning through:
 - (i) Proactive monitoring and assessment of services;
 - (ii) More frequent compliance checks on site at services; and
 - (iii) Stronger enforcement of consequences for failing to meet requirements.
 - d. Mandating ongoing training for:
 - (iv) All staff in child safe standards and mandatory reporting;
 - (v) All educators in accredited safe sleep and rest practices with a requirement for refresher courses.
2. Enable greater public provision of early childhood education and care by developing strategies and providing funding that will ensure the ongoing viability and sustainable delivery of Council-run ECE&C services;
3. Invest in a strong long-term workforce across the sector to ensure quality care and education by developing long-term strategies that attract quality educators, support their training and ongoing professional development, and increase their retention across the sector.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Local Government plays a vital role in the planning and provision of early childhood education and care (ECEC). Council-run ECEC services are highly valued in communities. However, many councils have ceased to deliver these services or have drastically reduced their delivery of services due to funding, impacting families and staff members, and resulting in the loss of high-quality, and community-focused care.

Continued allegations of child abuse in ECEC services across Australia, especially in for-profit settings, have highlighted the urgent need for significant and long-lasting sector-wide reform.

Children are among the most vulnerable members of society. It's imperative that there are structures in place to ensure their safety, and that their welfare is not sidelined by business interests and profit margins.

High-quality ECEC is paramount to childhood development. These services benefit not just children, but their families and carers, and the whole community by supporting the active participation of parents, grandparents, and carers in our society through both work and volunteerism.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

This motion looks to:

- Ensure greater oversight and stricter regulations of ECEC services so every child is safe, well cared for, and has the best opportunities for learning and development.
- Address financial challenges faced across the local government sector in delivering ECEC services due to underinvestment so councils can sustainably provide these essential community services.
- Ensure educators are well-resourced, supported, and have the training they need to provide the highest quality of care to our children, while also increasing the retention of high-quality staff.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated motion 5.2 - Addressing Child Safety in Early Childhood Education and Care

Submitting Council: Hobsons Bay City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) urgently advocate to the Victorian Government for stronger protections for children in early childhood education and care (ECEC) settings, including:

1. Requiring strengthened oversight of all staff employed in ECEC services, including urgent re-verification of Working with Children Checks, qualifications and employment history, alongside annual compulsory training for all staff and providers in child safety obligations and mandatory reporting.
2. Increase resourcing to the state's early education regulator to increase the frequency and depth of service assessments and investigations, with a stronger focus on compliance, risk management and early intervention where safety standards are not being met.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Recent revelations of serious abuse in early childhood settings have undermined community trust and exposed systematic gaps in the way children are protected in care. Local governments play a vital role in delivering and supporting early years services, but we rely on robust state systems to ensure safety standards are enforced and upheld across the sector.

Inconsistent staff vetting, gaps in mandatory training, under-resourced regulations and a lack of nationally integrated screening tools are vulnerabilities which need to be addressed and have been made worse by persistent workforce shortages and growing demand for childcare in Victoria.

Consolidated Motion 6 – Best Start, Best Life Infrastructure Investment

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government to:

1. Deliver on its commitment to the Best Start, Best Life reforms for free three and four year old kindergarten and planning for the implementation of 30 hours of pre prep by increasing its infrastructure investment.
2. Provide urgent funding and policy support to address the infrastructure pressures facing local government as a result of the 30-hour Pre Prep kindergarten delivery model.
3. Plan and deliver a coordinated, long-term, and transparent approach to early years infrastructure investment that reflects accurate population growth forecasts, demographic need, and service access equity across metropolitan, regional, and rural councils.
4. Provide greater clarity on the role and expectations of local government as infrastructure providers and managers under the Best Start, Best Life reform agenda, with co-designed planning frameworks and delivery partnerships between State and local government.
5. Explore other alternative models of education and care such as Bush Kinder which provide quality outcomes for children and could alleviate demand pressures in some areas.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Increased investment in delivering on the State Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms	Maribyrnong City Council
The funding infrastructure gap created by the Best-Start; Best Life Pre-prep reform	Moyne Shire Council

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Consolidated motion 6.1 - Increased investment in delivering on the State Government's Best Start, Best Life reforms.

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to deliver on its commitment to the Best Start, Best Life reforms for free three and four year old kindergarten, and planning for the implementation of 30 hours of pre prep by increasing its infrastructure investment into Early Years facilities, and committing to expand and enable other models of education and care such as Bush Kinder that provide quality outcomes for children in the years before starting school.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Whilst the Kinder on School Sites (KOSS) models have been explored, these are generally only available in community areas outside of demand where available school land can be utilised. Evidence has highlighted the benefits of 'Bush Kinder' and other outdoors placed models of education and care, which could alleviate demand pressures in some areas, subject to a review of regulatory environments.

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Consolidated motion 6.2 - The funding infrastructure gap created by the Best-Start; Best Life Pre-prep reform

Submitting Council: Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for:

1. Urgent funding and policy support to address the infrastructure pressures facing local government as a result of the 30-hour Pre-Prep kindergarten delivery model.
2. A coordinated, long-term, and transparent approach to early years infrastructure investment that reflects accurate population growth forecasts, demographic need, and service access equity across metropolitan, regional, and rural councils.
3. Greater clarity on the role and expectations of local government as infrastructure providers and managers under the Best Start, Best Life reform agenda, with co-designed planning frameworks and delivery partnerships between State and local government.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Best Start, Best Life reforms are driving rapid change across the early years sector. The transition to 30-hour Pre-Prep will more than double current kindergarten hours and require substantial capital investment in buildings, outdoor spaces, staffing amenities, and parking infrastructure—most of which fall within council's remit.

Councils are essential delivery partners in early years but are facing uncertainty around their responsibilities, funding expectations, and access to long-term infrastructure support. The additional burden of funding infrastructure to support pre-prep reform puts many councils at risk of being unable to sustain an imperative community service.

The MAV can play a pivotal role in advocating for a fair, strategic and funded approach to infrastructure, and in convening a shared voice across the sector.

Some advocacy has commenced through joint work between MAV and LGPro, and the State Government has released initial funding guidelines, but these fall short of the scale and transparency needed. This motion will strengthen MAV's mandate and ensure councils are not left to carry the burden of reform delivery without appropriate support.

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Intergenerational infrastructure

Motion 29. A per-kilometre road funding model that supports rural councils to meet their asset renewal demands.

Submitting Council: Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian and Commonwealth Governments for the development and implementation of a per kilometre funding model for local roads—sealed and unsealed—that is directly informed by each council’s measured renewal gap, with the objective of enabling councils to meet their long-term asset renewal demand.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Current federal programs such as Roads to Recovery—distributed solely on each council’s share of national local road length—and the Financial Assistance Grants – Local Roads Component—which take into account road length, traffic volumes, and cost modifiers—do not measure actual asset condition or renewal gaps. As a result, even high-performing Councils investing well above depreciation face substantial renewal shortfalls. While the doubling of R2R from \$500 million to \$1 billion annually and the \$800 million FAG-LR pool are welcome, the Grattan Institute has identified a further \$1 billion annually as necessary to meet renewal demand. A per-kilometre model linked to each council’s documented renewal gap would ensure funding is directed in proportion to the true cost of maintaining safe and reliable local road networks.

Councils are increasingly unable to meet local road renewal needs, even where strong renewal investment is occurring. Moyne Shire Council’s investment rate of 156% of depreciation demonstrates sector leadership, yet it still faces millions in annual road renewal shortfalls due to the vast length of its network, with a combined annual renewal gap of over \$3.5 million for its 2,600+ km road network—equating to \$1,575 per km for sealed roads and \$906 per km for unsealed roads.

This is not an isolated case. Across rural Victoria, councils are constrained by funding models that fail to consider asset scale. A per kilometre funding model based on actual renewal demand would provide a fairer, evidence-based framework to address this growing challenge.

A per kilometre funding model tied to documented renewal gaps would ensure investment aligns with true demand. MAV should lead a sector-wide approach to developing consistent methodologies for calculating and benchmarking renewal demand across Victoria’s local road networks.

MAV’s leadership in coordinating sector data, establishing a consistent methodology, and advocating to State and Federal Governments is critical to achieving this reform.

Motion 30. Ensuring local allocation of development contributions

Submitting Council Melbourne City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government that any amendments to the Planning and Environment Act 1987 and associated Ministerial Directions include a requirement that all contributions collected through future Development Contributions Plans and Infrastructure Contributions Plans:

1. Be collected by the Council (for the local component)
2. Be invested in the Local Government Area from which they were collected (for the state component).

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Victorian Minister for Planning issued a Ministerial Direction (effective 28 March 2025) which provides for use and allocation of development contributions. Although the reforms provided through the Ministerial Direction emphasise place-based planning and community infrastructure, there is no current legislative requirement that contributions must be spent in the Local Government Area (LGA) from which they were collected.

The City of Melbourne believes that development contributions should be reinvested in the communities directly impacted by development. Local infrastructure such as roads, parks, and community facilities, bears the immediate burden of population growth and urban intensification. Ensuring that contributions are retained within the originating LGA will:

- Promote fairness and equity by aligning infrastructure investment with the source of development pressure.
- Improve transparency and accountability, enhancing community trust in the planning system.
- Support tailored infrastructure delivery, allowing councils to respond to local needs and priorities.
- Avoid resource dilution, ensuring that high-growth areas are not underfunded due to redistribution of contributions.

This motion seeks to strengthen the legislative framework to ensure that development contributions are used where they are most needed, within the communities that generate them.

Motion 31. Increasing collaboration in implementing the Development Facilitation Program

Submitting Council: Yarra City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to use a more collaborative approach in implementing the Development Facilitation Program, specifically:

1. That Council officers be provided with the opportunity to participate in pre-application meetings.
2. That Council officers be involved in the review of draft planning permit conditions prior to a permit being issued, particularly in relation to matters over which Council has jurisdiction (including public realm works, matters requiring Council approvals, construction management, and compliance, heritage and environmental stewardship).
3. Implement mechanisms for sharing fees or covering Councils' costs associated with reviewing proposals and providing critical local technical and planning advice.
4. Ensure Councils are provided with adequate time to:
 - a. Review and respond to referrals, including time after the public notification period to consider community submissions prior to finalising Council positions.
 - b. Review plans and documents relevant to Council-related conditions and areas of responsibility.
5. Provide Councils with copies of final decisions and summaries of any objections received.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Yarra supports a collaborative approach to planning and welcomes development that delivers good design, community benefit, and improved public spaces. However, the current implementation of the Development Facilitation Program (DFP) limits Councils' role, often excluding officers from critical early discussions and decision-making processes. This can lead to missed opportunities to improve outcomes and address local issues early.

This motion seeks to strengthen the effectiveness and transparency of the DFP by ensuring that Councils, as the level of government closest to the community, are genuinely involved in planning decisions that impact their municipalities.

Practical improvements will enhance collaboration without undermining the efficiency goals of the DFP. Involving Council officers in pre-application meetings and review of draft conditions allows for timely input on key local matters, particularly in areas where Councils hold responsibility, such as public realm works, construction impacts, and post-permit compliance.

Importantly, Councils incur significant costs in reviewing these proposals and providing technical advice to the Department. Implementing mechanisms to share fees or reimburse costs would recognise this work and support resourcing of high-quality planning outcomes.

Fairer timeframes would also allow Councils to review community submissions and relevant plans before finalising its position, helping to ensure decisions are better informed and community views are properly considered.

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Finally, access to final decisions and objection summaries will improve accountability and assist Councils in responding to community concerns and tracking outcomes.

This motion seeks to achieve better planning outcomes, enhance community confidence, and support a more respectful and balanced partnership between local and State Government in the planning process.

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Resilience & recovery

Consolidated Motion 7 - Consolidated State Council Motion on the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF)

Motion:

The MAV calls on the Victorian Government to review and reform the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) by:

Repeal and Reinstate Fair Levy Framework

1. Ongoing advocacy to introduce legislation to fully repeal the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2025 and reinstate the previous Fire Services Property Levy framework.
2. Immediately transferring full responsibility for levy administration to the State Revenue Office, with no role for local government.

Urgent Amendments if Repeal is Not Supported

3. Advocate to extend partial levy rebates for primary producers (farmers) beyond the 2026–27 financial year, ensuring rebates are independent of eligibility under government drought support programs.
4. Advocate to introduce partial levy rebates (via a capped variable rate or flat partial rebate) for regional businesses, recognising the comparable economic pressures they face alongside farmers.

Equity, Transparency, and Economic Impact

5. Advocate for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the equity, transparent financial impact assessment, and proposed distribution of ESVF funds, ensuring that levy structures do not disproportionately burden rural communities or regional businesses.
6. Calls for a formal review of the levy's impacts within 24 months of implementation, with findings to be made public.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (Levy)	Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network
Emergency Services & Volunteer Levy	Wodonga City Council
Emergency Services & Volunteer Levy	Macedon Ranges Shire Council
Emergency Services & Volunteer Levy	Southern Grampians Shire Council
Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund	Merri-bek City Council
Opposing the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy	Loddon Shire Council
Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund – Cost Shifting	Knox City Council

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Consolidated Motion 7.1 - Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (Levy)

Submitting Council: Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network

Supporting Councils: Alpine Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, Indigo Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Moira Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Towong Shire Council, Wangaratta Rural City Council and Wodonga City Council.

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), in collaboration with representation of rural and regional local government networks, urgently seek a meeting with the Premier of Victoria, the Treasurer, and the Minister for Emergency Services to secure a commitment from the Victorian Government to:

1. As a first priority, introduce legislation to fully repeal the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act 2025 and reinstate the Fire Services Property Levy framework previously in place
2. Should a full repeal not be supported, advocate for urgent amendments to the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Act to:
 - a. Extend partial levy rebates for primary producers (farmers) beyond the 2026–27 financial year, removing any linkage to eligibility under the government's drought support programs
 - b. Introduce partial levy rebates (capped variable rate or flat partial rebate) for regional businesses, recognising that rural and regional businesses face similar economic pressures as farmers
 - c. Transfer administration and collection of the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund to the State Revenue Office from the 2026–27 financial year onward, to ensure consistency, efficiency, and reduce the burden on local government.

Submitting Council Rationale:

On 1 July 2025 the Victorian Government replaces the Fire Services Property Level (FSPL) with the new Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF). The ESVF represents a significant increase over the current FSPL, particularly for primary producers, where the main variable component of the levy will rise significantly. This is not fair for our farmers who are the backbone of our economy.

It is important to note that the increase in payments resulting from the shift from the FSPL to the ESVF could affect ratepayers' ability to pay this higher levy. As well as the property's usual Council rates which will impact Councils as payment to, and receipts by, Council are required to be apportioned evenly across Council rates and the ESVF levy, despite how a ratepayer might direct their payment.

Local councils will bear much of the impact of this tax, not only in terms of the reputational fallout from collecting additional funds from ratepayers, and complaints about the increases, but also in the resource burden of administering the tax on behalf of the State Government.

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For smaller councils like those in the Hume Regional Local Government Network, the resources required for rate collection are already stretched. The responsibility for collecting the ESVF should rest with the State Revenue Office, which has the infrastructure and capacity to manage tax collection effectively, as it already does with Land Tax, ensuring a fair distribution of administrative duties across the state. It is widely believed that the reputational, resource, and administrative burden should be carried by those implementing the tax.

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Consolidated Motion 7.2 - Emergency Services & Volunteer Levy

Submitting Council: Wodonga City Council

Motion:

That the MAV work with Regional Cities Victoria and Rural Councils Victoria to advocate to the Victorian Government against the implementation of the proposed Emergency Services and Volunteer Levy, and in particular oppose any proposal for the levy to be collected by local governments on behalf of the State.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The proposed motion opposing the implementation of the Emergency Services and Volunteer Levy by local government aligns strongly with the focus area of a sustainable economy. Shifting the responsibility for levy collection to councils places an unfair reputational burden on local government, and also disregards the community's capacity to pay—particularly during a cost-of-living crisis—by introducing an additional, compulsory charge that households and businesses may struggle to afford. Furthermore, the funds raised through the levy are not guaranteed to be reinvested locally, meaning money collected from local communities could be redirected elsewhere, undermining efforts to strengthen local industries and economic resilience. By opposing the levy, councils are protecting their community's capacity to invest in locally-driven, socially and environmentally sustainable growth, support circular economy outcomes, and create the right conditions for innovation and resilience in their communities.

It appears previous work by MAV has concentrated on administration and reducing impact rather than directly requesting the levy be removed.

While Councils are supportive of the great work done by emergency service personnel and volunteers, the proposed levy places an undue financial burden on local communities at a difficult financial time, and risks undermining community trust in councils through cost-shifting from State to Local Government in the collection of the funds for a purpose not assigned to local government.

The State Government should be the responsible authority for collection and administration of the funds that is core business of the State.

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Consolidated Motion 7.3 - Emergency Services & Volunteer Levy

Submitting Council: Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria:

1. Strongly reaffirms its opposition to Local Government being used as a collection agent for the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund Levy (ESVF);
2. Demands the Victorian Government immediately transfer full responsibility for levy administration to the State Revenue Office, with no role for local government;
3. Calls for an urgent review of the levy model to address the disproportionate and inequitable burden placed on rural communities, farmers and small businesses;
4. Insists that any levy imposed by the State must be accompanied by transparent impact assessments, full State-funded administration support, and direct State-led community engagement;
5. Calls for a formal review of the levy's impacts within 24 months of implementation, with findings to be made public; and
6. Commits to ongoing advocacy until the levy is either withdrawn or fundamentally restructured to remove the unfair burden on local government and rural communities.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The issue relates to the EVSF and advocacy to the State Government.

This issue relates to the transfer of full responsibility for levy administration to the State Revenue Office, with no role for local government.

MAV has the ability to advocate for the sector

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Consolidated Motion 7.4 - Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (Levy)

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

The MAV advocate to all political parties and independents to call for a Parliamentary Inquiry into the equity, financial impact and proposed distribution of funds raised from the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The ESVF will be an impediment for investment in rural and regional economies due to unfair burden placed on farmers. Parliamentary enquiry will enable the unpacking of the impact of this legislation from all aspects.

The ESVF has been implemented without any public engagement or scrutiny. It particularly lacks equity, with an intolerable financial burden being placed on farmers. A Parliamentary Inquiry is our sectors best chance to have this tax fully investigated, and provide an opportunity for our communities to be heard. This investigation should also examine the proposed distribution of this tax and the amount of funds that will come back to the regions in support of our volunteer fire brigades, whose name has been attached to this tax.

Inquiries are an opportunity for the public to have input into issues being considered by Parliament. The inquiry process is managed by a committee and inquiries are referred to a committee through a terms of reference. The work of inquiries facilitates an in-depth investigation of issues to assist with better legislative decisions, direct public input into parliamentary and policy processes, public debate and awareness of issues.

The Parliamentary Inquiry will provide a forum to appropriately investigate the merits of the ESVF. It will examine the public issues and concerns with this tax. A Parliamentary Inquiry will gather evidence, receive expert advice, and provide a forum for those affected by the tax to speak.

Importantly, a Parliamentary Inquiry will add transparency and accountability, public involvement and awareness, and support future evidenced based decision making, all of which have been lacking in the implementation of this new tax.

This motion is in consistent with the MAV priorities outlined in the Shaping our Future 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, of Connected Places, Health and wellbeing, Sustainable economy and Intergenerational Infrastructure.

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Consolidated Motion 7.5 - Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund

Submitting Council: Merri-bek City Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Call for the State Government:
 - a. To immediately implement a moratorium on collecting the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) in order to allow a public inquiry to examine the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and its implications.
 - b. Note that the previous Fire Services Property Levy (FSPL) was implemented following the Black Friday Bushfire Royal Commission. The ESVF was implemented with minimal consultation and without input or oversight of a Parliamentary Committee.
 - c. If any kind of emergency services levy is implemented, to not use the levy to fund non-core activities and not use the levy to disguise cuts to funding for emergency services.
 - d. If any kind of emergency services levy is implemented, to use the State Revenue Office to collect it, not local councils.
2. Begins a public campaign to advocate for transparency on what the funding recipients included in Government Gazette s269 received in 2023/24 to enable the public to understand the level of funding recipients are receiving under the new levy (increasing or decreasing).

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Fire Services Property Levy was a recommendation from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (2009-2010) prior to its introduction.

Unlike the Fire Services Levy, the proposal for an Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF) was announced in December 2024, without any public inquiry to justify it.

The ESVF is intended to cover an expanded number of services - Triple Zero Victoria, Emergency Management Victoria, the State Emergency Service as well as Fire Rescue Victoria and the CFA.

These emergency services are currently paid for out of taxes on the community that are paid into consolidated revenue.

The State Government claims that the ESVF is needed to fund Emergency Services.

There is legitimate concern that the ESVF won't be used exclusively for core needs of emergency services such as replacing fire trucks and maintaining minimum staffing levels for fire and other emergency services. There is also concern that emergency services funding levels will decrease under the ESVF.

There needs to be an immediate moratorium on collecting the ESVF in order to allow a public inquiry to examine the Emergency Services and Volunteers Fund (ESVF) and its implications.

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Consolidated Motion 7.6 - Opposing the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund Levy

Submitting Council: Loddon Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Reiterates our objections to the abhorrent Emergency Services Volunteer Fund (ESVF) Levy, due to the significant, unfair and inequitable impacts it will have;
2. Calls on the State Government to listen to the community and immediately repeal the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy, replacing it with a fair and equitable funding model for emergency services that does not disproportionately burden regional and rural municipalities; and
3. Requests that the Municipal Association of Victoria continue to unite Victorian councils in a coordinated opposition to the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy and to strongly oppose and lobby the State Government to rescind this tax in its entirety.

Submitting Council Confirmation and Rationale:

Renewed MAV advocacy will unite the sector's voice to the State Government and build on prior resolutions.

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Consolidated Motion 7.7 - Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund – Cost Shifting

Submitting Council: Knox City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to and calls upon the Victorian Government to provide adequate and ongoing administrative funding to local governments for the collection and management of the Emergency Services and Volunteer Fund (ESVF), reflecting the true cost of delivery and ensuring councils are not financially disadvantaged through cost shifting.

Submitting Council Confirmation and Rationale:

In July 2025, Councils received confirmation from the Victorian State Government that it will receive a once-off increase in administrative funding for the 2025–26 financial year. While additional support is welcome, the amount provided falls significantly short of what is needed. Specifically, it represents a 65% shortfall for Knox compared to Council's estimated cost to adequately administer the fund in its first year.

This funding gap places substantial pressure on Council resources and is a clear example of continued and unacceptable cost shifting from the State Government to local government. Councils are being asked to deliver increasingly complex programs and services without the necessary financial support to do so effectively.

Of further concern, the correspondence received contains no commitment to establishing a sustainable or adequate level of ongoing administrative funding beyond this once-off payment. Without clarity or assurance of future resourcing, councils are left with uncertainty and potential exposure to long-term budgetary risk.

We urge the State Government to recognise the true costs of program delivery at the local level and to commit to a transparent, adequately funded model moving forward. This is essential to ensure councils can continue to deliver services effectively and equitably in their communities.

Sustainable economy

Motion 32. Funding for Waste Management

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV write to the Ministers for the Victorian Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action (DEECA) to:

1. Call on the Victorian Government to review the kerbside waste reform as proposed by Recycle Victoria and the anticipated costs to Council.
2. Seek assurances for funding opportunities to Councils for kerbside collection infrastructure and ongoing support for processing requirements.
3. Call on the Victorian Government to provide greater investment for the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) with direct financial support to VicReturn for more regional infrastructure.
4. Call on Victorian Government to increase reinvestment of landfill levy funds collected by the State back into development of long-term and other waste processing infrastructure in regional areas.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The State Government Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is currently assessing Transition Plan applications from local government as part of its kerbside reform funding program, which includes the transition to a new four-bin waste and recycling service mode.

The delay in the State Government adopting and releasing the proposed kerbside Service Standard has created uncertainty across Councils, specifically on the type and level of service required. The State Government proposal mandates a four-bin system by the 1st of July 2027, however the regulations on how this will operate remain unclear and are likely to drive an increase in costs for Councils to provide this service.

The Sustainability Fund (Landfill Levy) provides an opportunity for the State to assist local government transition towards the proposed waste reforms, and an opportunity to expedite the potential consideration of Alternative Waste Processing solutions and options, as landfill alternatives for Regional Victoria.

Councils need to also consider the impact of the introduction of the Container Deposit Scheme (CDS) in Victoria on the kerbside recycling collection services. The increase in local CDS collection points would decrease the distance travelled by residents and facilitate better access to glass recycling services, resulting in increased income generated remaining within the community. In addition, this would limit the costs and emissions generated by bulk haulage of glass to metropolitan processing facilities.

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After funding State environment agencies, the remainder of the levy costs goes into the 'Sustainability Fund' to foster sustainable use of resources within rural/regional communities including stewardship programs for producers in responsible disposal of waste to support behavioral change and best practice waste management and facilities in the regions. Decentralization of processing facilities will encourage innovation whilst reducing the overall costs in transport and the associated environmental impact on greenhouse emissions by growing our sub-regional capacity to process and repurpose materials, whilst offsetting the current requirement for long distance haulage to MRFS.

This motion is in consistent with the MAV priorities outlined in the Shaping our Future 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, of Connected Places, Health and wellbeing, Sustainable economy and Intergenerational Infrastructure.

Motion 33. Municipal and Industrial Waste Levy

Submitting Council: Corangamite Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Calls for a halt to the increase in the State Government's Municipal and Industrial Waste Levy for the 2026/2027 financial year.
2. Calls for an immediate review of the terms of the levy.
3. Calls for a return of levy contributions to the municipal area where they are derived to enable implementation of waste management, recycling and sustainability measures.
4. Writes and meets with the Minister for Environment to develop the detail of the review.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Municipal and Industrial Waste Levy increased substantially by 27% as at 1 July 2025. In metropolitan municipalities the levy increased from \$132.76 to \$169.79. For rural areas, the municipal levy increases from \$66.30 to \$84.78/tonnes and industrial waste increases from \$116.76 to \$149.33 per tonne.

Council transfer station and landfill base fees increased only by CPI of 2.5% to cover costs of providing the service, but the levy increase means overall fees will increase by around 10-14%. As an example, in Corangamite in the 2025-2026 financial year a level tandem trailer of municipal waste will pay over \$20 in levy which is a \$4.45 increase from last year.

Only a small portion of the levy contributions come back to local government for waste management, recycling and sustainability support via the Sustainability Fund.

This year, Corangamite Shire Council alone will pay around \$4 million into the Municipal and Industrial Waste Levy Trust which is worth \$601 million in the State Government's 2025-2026 Budget. This is up from \$493.4 million in 2024-2025.

Council asserts that this Fund should not be used to accumulate excess funds to prop up the State Budget at a time when Victorians are battling with cost-of-living crisis, lost income due to drought and the substantial increases from the introduction of the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund levy. Consequently, an immediate review and halt to the increases in the Municipal and Industrial Waste Levy is required.

Motion 34. Releasing Final Report on Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards

Submitting Council: Yarra City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to release its Final Report on Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards to enable councils to develop waste strategies with more certainty.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Currently, all councils have different acceptance lists within their recycling, glass and food and garden organics (FOGO) bins. Council has been awaiting the release of the Final Report on Household Waste and Recycling Service Standards to create consistency between councils.

The delay is causing some councils to not prioritise education and contamination management, given what is communicated in such programs will need to change when the service standards are implemented.

There are also significant costs incurred by councils in the development of practical materials involved in the delivery of waste services including signage, bin lid stickers and bin contamination stickers/tags. For many councils, these materials are currently being delayed or will be created only to be replaced once the standards are released, incurring a double cost.

All councils are required to introduce a glass and FOGO bin by 2030. The introduction of these services is coupled with an education campaign to teach residents how to use these services. Councils that are currently introducing these services may unwittingly be teaching their communities rules that will be inconsistent with the final standards, resulting in the need for additional education campaigns and higher rates of contamination.

Changing behaviour can be challenging, and residents are more likely to sort their waste correctly if the instructions are consistent and accurate. Frequent changes to the list of accepted materials in each waste stream will lead to:

1. Increased confusion and apathy about sorting household waste
2. Increased kerbside contamination rates
3. Lower resource recovery rates
4. Increased council costs
5. More material sent to landfill

Motion 35. Fee Increases for Mining and Quarry Sector

Submitting Council: Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network

Supporting Councils: Alpine Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, Indigo Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Moira Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Towong Shire Council, Wangaratta Rural City Council and Wodonga City Council.

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria, in collaboration with representation of rural and regional local government networks, meet with the Victorian Minister for Energy and Resources to seek action on the following matters relating to the fee increases for the mining and quarry sector:

1. Reconsider the scale and structure of the proposed fee increases.
2. Introduce a tiered or scaled fee structure that considers the size and capacity of the operator
3. Provide a transition period or staged implementation to support business and community adaptation
4. Undertake further economic impact analysis on local government and regional operators before finalising the changes.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Hume Region Local Government Network supports the need for effective and well-resourced regulation of the mining and extractive sectors. However, we are concerned that the scale and structure of the proposed fee increases will have significant unintended consequences for rural communities like ours, consequences that risk outweighing the intended benefits.

The Hume region is home to several various sized extractive industry operators that supply vital materials for road construction, maintenance, and civil infrastructure projects. These local quarries:

- Employ local residents and support regional economic activity
- Enable Councils and local contractors to access gravel, road base, and other essential materials at historic manageable prices
- Reduce reliance on long-haul freight, lowering both costs and emissions.

The proposed increases could place these businesses under serious financial pressure, potentially forcing some to close or drastically reduce operations.

If this occurs, each Council would be required to source materials from further afield, resulting in:

1. Increased transport costs
2. Higher emissions
3. Delays in project delivery
4. Reduced scope of critical works due to financial implications
5. Increased costs for disaster recovery to State and Federal Governments and
6. Reduced value for ratepayer funds.

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Road maintenance and upgrades are among our highest service obligations, particularly given the size and condition of our rural road network and the essential role of agriculture and freight in our local economy. Sharp increases in quarry supply costs would directly affect our capital works program and road maintenance schedule. This could result in:

1. Fewer kilometres of road maintained each year
2. Deferred upgrades
3. Greater long-term costs due to infrastructure degradation.

This outcome would not only compromise community safety and connectivity but also undermine the objectives of the regulatory regime itself, as Councils are forced to triage maintenance and stretch limited funds further.

Hume Region Local Government Network is concerned that a “flat” fee structure will disproportionately impact small regional operators that do not have the scale or margin to absorb large cost increases. A one-size-fits-all model risks accelerating the loss of regional suppliers, contrary to broader government priorities such as:

1. Strengthening regional supply chains
2. Supporting local industry and employment
3. Reducing transport emissions and costs.

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Consolidated Motion 13 – Landfill rehabilitation

Motion:

That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to provide councils with the funding required to undertake necessary landfill rehabilitation works, through the Sustainability Fund or other measures.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Funding for landfill rehabilitation	Colac Otway Shire Council
Landfill levy to support landfill rehabilitation	Surf Coast Shire Council

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Consolidated Motion 13.1 - Funding for Landfill Rehabilitation

Submitting Council: Colac Otway Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV:

1. Notes that the income received by the Victorian Government from the Waste Levy is significant, placing a substantial cost burden on Councils for their waste management services.
2. Notes that very little funding is returned to Councils from the funds collected by the Victorian Government to assist with waste management.
3. Notes that many rural Councils have a number of legacy closed landfills with rehabilitation obligations that have not yet been met. The cost of rehabilitating these landfills poses a significant cost burden to Councils due to current day EPA landfill rehabilitation standards, adversely impacting their financial sustainability.
4. Notes that rural Councils have limited capacity to allocate or raise funding for this purpose, especially under rate capping, particularly when it compromises the capacity to provide other community infrastructure and services to meet the community's needs.
5. Writes to the Treasurer of the Victorian Government to make available some of the funds held in reserve from the Waste Levy paid by Councils for disposal of municipal waste, to financially support Councils to undertake expensive landfill rehabilitation works arising from legacy landfills, and/or to make available interest free loans for this purpose.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Landfill rehabilitation is an intergenerational infrastructure requirement (renewal, maintenance, monitoring and servicing for generations into the future) for most Victorian Councils, especially rural (albeit major incidents in Metro areas have occurred) to ensure safety and wellbeing of communities and the proper environmental outcomes. Priority 10 states: "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." The cost of this infrastructure and service will impact local government municipalities' ability to remain financially sustainable and have discretionary funds to deliver other vital infrastructure and capital work projects.

It is commonsense and practical for the State Government to utilize the substantial Waste Levy collection fund to assist Councils to rehabilitate old landfill sites for the betterment of all Victorians through direct funding or no interest loans. The release or use of such funding would improve the livability and environment for all local government areas.

Councils across Victoria have a number of closed landfills which were not rehabilitated during the time they were in operation. Best practice is that modern landfills are rehabilitated as they are developed and ultimately closed. This burden falls on local Councils, particularly in Rural and Regional locations.

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The obligations to cap and rehabilitate these landfills to meet the requirements is set out in the EPA's publication 788.3 – 'Siting, Design, Operation and Rehabilitation of Landfills'. The cost of landfill rehabilitation is substantial, particularly with the large increases to the cost of materials and transportation in the post COVID period.

Smaller rural Councils are most affected by these rehabilitation liabilities given their more limited rates base, and will struggle to fund the required works, particularly in a time frame that is satisfactory to the EPA. These financial obligations place upward pressure on their financial sustainability. Councils contribute significant revenue to the State Government with the Waste Levy paid for disposal of waste to landfill, and this cost is increasing by 30% in 2025-26. This levy is a significant cost burden to Councils' waste management service costs.

It is considered equitable that some of the funds received by the State Government from the Waste Levy be provided back to Councils to assist them with undertaking rehabilitation of old landfills to meet EPA requirements. This would free up critical funds to be able to be focused on key areas that Councils are struggling to fund such as asset renewal and road maintenance. Similarly, the Government could offer interest free loans to support Councils to undertake these works.

In a rate capped environment, Councils have limited capacity to raise the revenue required to meet these infrastructure and service needs, and this becomes progressively more challenging as time goes by.

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Consolidated Motion 13.2 - Landfill levy to support landfill rehabilitation

Submitting Council: Surf Coast Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV calls on the Victorian Government to allocate funding from the Municipal and Industrial Levy, or another appropriate funding source, to enable Councils to meet EPA requirements and objectives for landfill rehabilitation.

Submitting Council Confirmation and Rationale:

There are an estimated 90 landfills in Victoria each of which will required a comprehensive rehabilitation plan once closed. Without proper management there is a risk of emissions and leachate being released which pose a threat to human health, be a source of greenhouse gas emissions and threaten the health and sustainability of eco-systems.

Landfill rehabilitation is a legacy issue for communities throughout Victoria. Requirements for landfill rehabilitation have become more stringent since most landfills were originally opened, with the aim of managing risks associated with leachate and emissions. Individual site conditions determine the length of time required for rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation costs have escalated at a higher rate than waste fees and higher than the rate cap. The challenge is exacerbated for rural Councils as their small rate base means the high cost of landfill rehabilitation has a significant impact on their ability to fund other important community services and facilities.

Landfill operators do have discretion on the amount charged through gate fees but it's a delicate balance. Setting higher gate fees runs the risk of an increase in dumped rubbish, which ultimately adds costs to Councils. Higher gate fees can also lead to commercial clients shifting their operation to other more competitive providers.

The Victorian Government imposes a Municipal and Industrial Landfill Levy on landfill operators. Funds collected through the levy are partly used to cover the costs of government agencies responsible for managing recycling, waste and pollution.

The balance of the proceeds from the levy is allocated to the Sustainability Fund, which is used to fund projects aligned to the fund's strategic priorities.

Significant to the Sector

Motion 36. Illegal Dumping Cleanup Order – Support to Moorabool Shire Council

Submitting Council: Latrobe City Council

Motion:

Latrobe City Council expresses its strong support for Moorabool Shire Council in relation to the recent Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) decision that requires Moorabool Shire Council to cover the full cost of the clean-up of illegally dumped industrial waste on land under its management by an operator known to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) and calls on the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to:

1. Publicly support Moorabool Shire Council in its response to the VCAT decision; and
2. Advocate to the Victorian Government for urgent policy reform that clarifies and shifts the financial responsibility for illegal dumping on public land away from councils to the perpetrators

Submitting Council Rationale:

This issue is growing in urgency, with councils facing increasing incidents of illegal dumping on public land, particularly in peri-urban and regional areas. The current approach effectively penalises councils and their communities for actions outside their control, diverting scarce local resources away from core services.

Without statewide reform, this sets a dangerous precedent—where public landowners are held liable by default, despite the EPA having the powers and authority to pursue offenders or intervene directly. A unified MAV-led advocacy campaign is essential to achieve legislative clarity, fairer application of enforcement responsibilities, and long-term protection for local government finances and community assets.

Motion 37. Increasing funding for the provision of weather-proof bus shelters across Victoria

Submitting Council Wyndham City Council

Motion:

That MAV calls on the State Government to support increased funding towards the installation of weather-proof bus shelters in high demand areas.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Under the Road Management Act 2004, public transportation infrastructure including facilities connected with bus stopping points such as shelters, seats, signage and disability access platforms, are the responsibility of Public Transport Victoria and the Victorian Government. Bus Patronage across Victoria continues to grow and it's important that bus infrastructure is maintained and improved to promote increased usage of the network. Often, many bus stopping points will not have a bus shelter, but rather a platform and a timetable sign. This can leave patrons exposed to the elements on hot and rainy days. This ongoing challenge is affecting many Councils and there have been instances of Councils that have taken on the management of additional bus shelters, to provide more protection for patrons from coastal weather conditions. The State Government is urged to support increasing funding for weather-proof bus shelters in high demand areas.

Motion 38. Enabling Equitable Access to Disability Services Through "Get Started Disability Australia"

Submitting Council: Mitchell Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government and the Australian Government to:

1. Support the state-wide and national expansion of the "Get Started Disability Australia" program to ensure that people with disability across all Local Government Areas (LGAs) have access to consistent, community-based disability information, locally delivered peer support, emergency preparedness, and capacity-building initiatives.
2. Provide targeted funding to bridge the resource gap between existing local government disability inclusion budgets and the operational costs of delivering the "Get Started Disability Australia" program across participating councils.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Disability Royal Commission highlighted the significant barriers that people with disability face in accessing information, services, and community participation. These barriers often lead to isolation, exclusion, and missed opportunities for empowerment. "Get Started Disability Australia" is a trusted, evidence-informed program that addresses these challenges by providing local, community-led supports for people newly experiencing disability—regardless of their eligibility for the NDIS.

The program embeds the University of Sydney's Person-Centred Emergency Preparedness (PCEP) framework into its delivery, offering a practical way to strengthen individual readiness and community resilience. Previous efforts by councils to introduce PCEP in isolation have had limited uptake. By integrating it within a broader, person-centred support model, GSD Australia offers a more effective and accessible approach for communities.

Local governments, particularly in regional, rural and peri-urban areas, play a critical role in supporting inclusion, but often do not have the financial capacity to deliver programs like GSD Australia at scale. Without state and federal support, access to this model will remain inequitable, limited to those councils that can afford it.

Motion 39. Keep in-home aged care services in Council hands

Submitting Council: Merri-bek City Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Notes the meaningful and important work of Council aged care workers supporting older residents in our local communities to live good lives and remain independent in their own homes.
2. Notes that while this work is predominantly funded by the Federal Government's Commonwealth Home Support Program (CHSP) block funding, Councils do subsidise this work through their own budgets.
3. Writes to the Federal Ministers and Assistant Ministers for Aged Care and Health advocating to make permanent the Commonwealth Home Support Program block funding that are currently scheduled to end mid-2027 to give certainty to the 28 Councils in Victoria still delivering these services in-house, to older residents who currently access the program and to Council workers employed through the program.

Submitting Council Rationale:

For decades, councils have provided in-home aged care support services to older residents. These services include in-home personal care, delivered meals, social connection and leisure activities and on-demand community transport.

Council in home aged care services are delivered by dedicated and skilled workers and are much-loved by older residents in the community. In some cases, our aged care workers have supported local older residents for decades, building deep trust and rapport with them. This is critically important as it is a big ask for people to let someone else into their own home to provide personal care, like assistance with showering. These services support older people to remain living independently in their own homes for longer.

Councils' aged care services are funded in large part through the Federal Government's Commonwealth Home Support Program block funding, however councils do subsidise this work too.

CHSP block funding is scheduled to end mid-2027. This looming deadline and funding uncertainty has seen many Victorian Councils withdraw from providing aged care services in-house.

Making CHSP block funding permanent would mean many councils could continue to provide these important services to our older residents. This would also provide certainty to older residents accessing these services and Council aged care workers across the state.

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Motion 40. Matched 50/50 Funding for School Crossing Supervisors

Submitting Council: Wyndham City Council

Motion

That MAV calls on the State Government to provide 50/50 funding to Councils for the delivery of the School Crossing Supervisors Program

Submitting Council Rationale:

Annually for Wyndham, the School Crossing Supervisors Program costs, on average, \$4.1 million, with \$1.3 million being allocated by Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to deliver the program.

The original nature of the school crossing program was a partnership with a 50/50 funding model between Council and the State. However, the current funding allocated by the DTP demonstrates a 70/30 split in funding. This funding does not cover the comprehensive costs of commissioning and delivering school crossings, including staff salaries and associated expenses.

Like all Councils, Wyndham is experiencing significant fiscal strain due to the rate cap, raising concerns about the sustainability of services and activities performed by Council and with the school crossing program, Council is covering a substantial deficit against the intended funding model.

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Motion 41. Greater protection for property purchases

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

1. That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to provide greater protections of property purchasers in the property transactions. This should focus on setting clearer identification of building work conducted without necessary approvals by:
 - a) Making vendors responsible to obtain the necessary permits prior to settlement, or
 - b) The purchaser is made aware and accepts that the property fixtures and structures require permits transferring the responsibility to the buyer
2. That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to undertake a community education program to inform all members of the community of their responsibilities with respect to property purchases.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Greater protections should be in place for purchasers of both residential and commercial properties as the cost of fixing issues they are not responsible for.

There are opportunities to investigate ways to better protect purchasers through the property transaction process. This includes exploring that Conveyancers are responsible for ensuring that fixtures and structures have the necessary permits before settlement of properties or at least advise the purchaser to know that certain structures have no permits and that it is their responsibility to rectify.

This may involve greater emphasis on disclosure of any illegal work undertaken or work that has occurred, without necessary approvals in place so that purchasers are better informed when making such investment.

Motion 42. State Policy and Framework to Support Citizens' Assemblies in Local Government

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to develop a state-wide policy and implementation framework to support the use of Citizens' Assemblies by local governments, including:

1. Dedicated funding streams to enable councils to design and deliver Citizens' Assemblies on complex or high-impact local issues.
2. Design and governance standards to ensure assemblies are inclusive, transparent, and deliberative.
3. Training and capacity-building programs for council staff and community facilitators to support effective implementation.
4. Guidance on integration of assembly outcomes into council decision-making processes and strategic planning.
5. Evaluation tools and shared learnings to build a knowledge base and improve practice across the sector

Submitting Council Rationale:

A state-supported framework would empower local governments to embed participatory democracy in their governance practices.

Motion 43. State-Led Action to Address Wildlife Displacement Due to Drought and Urban Encroachment

Submitting Council: Mitchell Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV State Council calls on the Victorian Government to take an active and coordinated role in addressing the increasing displacement of native and non-native wildlife – including kangaroos and deer – resulting from urban expansion, land development, and prolonged drought conditions. In particular, the State is urged to:

1. Recognise wildlife displacement as a significant environmental, animal welfare and land use planning issue;
2. Lead the development of a coordinated, humane, and regionally responsive approach to wildlife management, including appropriate population control measures where necessary;
3. Provide support and guidance to councils, landowners, and communities affected by increased wildlife presence; and
4. Consider the current and worsening impacts of drought as a critical factor requiring immediate State-led intervention and resource allocation.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Across Victoria, councils are witnessing increasing displacement of wildlife such as kangaroos and deer, leading to growing community concern about animal welfare, public safety, environmental degradation, and impacts on agriculture. These challenges are being further exacerbated by ongoing drought conditions, which are reducing food and water sources, forcing wildlife into populated and peri-urban areas.

Without a coordinated, state-led response, councils are left managing complex and often controversial issues without clear policy direction, consistent practice, or sufficient resources. There is an urgent need for the State Government to acknowledge this growing problem and demonstrate leadership in planning, resourcing and managing wildlife displacement in a humane, consistent, and effective way.

Motion 44. Wildlife Roadstrike

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to:

1. Implement the actions outlined in the Victorian Government's Living with Wildlife Action Plan, including development of a Victorian Kangaroo Management Strategy.
2. Designate Victoria's Department of Transport as the lead agency for wildlife roadstrike mitigation, with responsibility for research, proactive incident management, and infrastructure planning.
3. Mandate integration of wildlife considerations into all planning, development, and road infrastructure projects, both state and local.
4. Invest in centralised data systems, wildlife rescue funding, and innovation in mitigation technologies.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Wildlife roadstrike is a growing concern in Victoria, with serious implications for road safety, community wellbeing, animal welfare, and biodiversity. In Hume City, where urban growth is occurring amongst critically endangered grassland ecosystems, wildlife roadstrike is rapidly escalating - particularly involving Eastern Grey Kangaroos.

Wildlife roadstrike is a systemic issue that demands a coordinated, well-resourced, state-led proactive approach.

Wildlife roadstrike has far-reaching impacts that extend well beyond the initial collision. The consequences are deeply felt by the wildlife involved, the community members who witness or are affected by these events, and the volunteers and carers who bear the emotional and physical burden of response. While roadstrike is often measured in numbers, the broader impact on welfare, safety, and wellbeing is significant and growing.

Motion 45. Supporting Peri-Urban Councils to implement, monitor and review Green Wedge Management Plans

Submitting Council: Nillumbik Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to the State Government to provide a dedicated and ongoing funding commitment to better support the preparation of Green Wedge Management Plans and the ongoing implementation, monitoring and review of these plans to ensure long-term objectives are delivered.

Submitting Council Rationale:

There are 17 metropolitan-fringe local government areas with Green Wedge Zones.

Green Wedge councils carry out significant day-to-day management of Melbourne's Green Wedge, but also manage significant threats to Victoria's biodiversity including managing deer and other pest animals, and significant weed proliferation.

Green Wedge Councils responsibilities in engaging, preparing and implementing their Green Wedge Management Plan have broader implications than simply local outcomes. These responsibilities and resourcing/cost implications set Green Wedge Councils apart from Metropolitan Council's. As the State Government continues to implement its planning reform to address the housing shortage, and as populations in urban areas become higher in density, protecting our Green Wedge areas for their biodiversity and agricultural values and as 'the lungs of Melbourne' will become even more critical.

Green Wedge Councils have increased responsibility to meaningfully engage with Traditional Owners for their values to be included and actions implemented to enhance management of Country. To achieve this, Councils need appropriate support and resourcing to undertake this level of work, alongside engagement with the growing community interest to produce robust, inclusive plans.

Additionally, there is a need for State Govt to accelerate work on tools to operationalise the Green Wedge Ministerial Direction and ensuring resources are available for Councils to develop, monitor and review Green Wedge Plans.

At a time when Councils are grappling with broader systemic issues - such as the impacts of climate change, bushfire risk, and infrastructure gaps, many of which extend beyond local government's direct control. It is essential that the State Government shares responsibility and provides additional resources for Green Wedge areas.

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Motion 46. Providing better connectivity to urban areas

Submitting Council: Nillumbik Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to the State Government to: Prioritise a bus network review in council areas to identify where to improve services and expand bus infrastructure to provide better connectivity to townships and existing rail infrastructure.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Buses provide essential transport for many people in our community, particularly for the many younger and older residents who don't drive and do not live close to a train station. These community members rely on buses to access health services, employment and education.

However, the current availability of services, particularly in outer suburbs and rural areas, makes those trips longer and in most cases isolates and disconnects the community from public transport.

Upgrading bus infrastructure, including bus shelters and features that improve accessibility, and increasing the volume and frequency of bus services would achieve better coordination of bus and rail transportation, while also reducing the overall reliance on motor vehicles.

This action would play a critical role in providing better connections across municipalities and improving outcomes for currently isolated and vulnerable communities, while easing congestion on our roads.

Motion 47. State Government Action to Improve Air Quality and Environmental Health in Traffic-Affected Communities

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to work collaboratively with local councils to address the environmental health impacts of high traffic volumes through residential neighbourhoods, by:

1. Developing and funding a state-wide air quality monitoring program focused on urban corridors with high vehicle emissions.
2. Supporting local government initiatives to reduce exposure to traffic-related air pollution, including green buffers, low-emission zones, active transport infrastructure and anti-idling programs and initiatives.
3. Investing in traffic calming and diversion strategies to reduce congestion and improve liveability in affected communities.
4. Providing public health guidance and resources to councils for community education and mitigation strategies.
5. Incorporating environmental health criteria into transport and land use planning decisions.
6. Subsidies and incentives for purchasing e-bikes/e-cargo bikes and incentives for bike commuting.
7. Review of e-bike technology and regulation regarding fire safety and advocate against the banning of e-bikes from trains as they are an important enabler for active and public transport connectivity and accessibility.

Submitting Council Rationale:

High traffic volumes in residential areas contribute to poor air quality, increased noise pollution, and adverse health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly.

Local governments are on the frontline of managing these impacts but require stronger support and coordination from the State to implement effective, evidence-based solutions.

<https://www.cityofadelaide.com.au/about-council/grants-sponsorship-incentives/incentives-for-sustainability/>

https://www.weride.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/WeRide_e-Bike_Subsidy_Report_FINAL-lores.pdf

<https://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/>

Motion 48. State Strategy to Locate Data Centres within Circular Economy Precincts

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to develop a state-wide strategy to guide the location and development of data centres within designated circular economy precincts, including:

1. Strategic land use planning to co-locate data centres with recycling, energy recovery, and advanced manufacturing facilities.
2. Infrastructure investment to support energy efficiency, renewable energy integration, and heat recovery systems in data centre design.
3. Policy and regulatory frameworks that incentivise circular practices in data centre operations, including e-waste management and resource reuse.
4. Collaboration with local government to identify suitable precincts and align with regional circular economy plans.
5. Funding and innovation support for councils and industry to pilot circular data centre models and share best practices.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Victoria's circular economy strategy and infrastructure planning already emphasise co-location of recycling and industrial activities. A targeted approach for data centres would align with these goals and support sustainable economic development.

Motion 49. Advocating for Improved Water Sensitive Urban Design Infrastructure in Local and State Government Road Reserves

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government for a coordinated and well-resourced approach to the planning, design, and delivery of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) infrastructure within both local government and state government-managed road reserves. This approach should address critical urban challenges including water management, flooding, air quality, urban greening, urban heat island mitigation, biodiversity enhancement, habitat creation, visual amenity, and community health and wellbeing, including:

1. Development of a State-wide WSUD Framework collaborating with councils to create a suite of design resources, technical guidelines, and best practice standards for WSUD infrastructure in road reserves.
2. Establishment of a Dedicated WSUD Grants Program introducing targeted funding to support councils in retrofitting and upgrading WSUD infrastructure, prioritising areas with high flood risk, urban heat vulnerability, low canopy cover and air pollution.
3. Cross-Government Collaboration facilitating partnerships between local councils, Department of Transport and Planning, Melbourne Water, and other relevant agencies to ensure integrated planning and delivery of WSUD across jurisdictional boundaries.
4. Capacity Building and Training providing training and capacity-building programs for council staff, engineers, and planners to support the implementation and maintenance of WSUD assets.
5. Monitoring and Evaluation establishing mechanisms to monitor the performance of WSUD interventions and evaluate their impact on environmental, social, and economic outcomes.

Submitting Council Rationale:

A coordinated state-wide approach will empower councils to deliver these benefits effectively and equitably

Motion 50. Voluntary Handback of Crown Land Assets

Submitting Council: South Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for the development of a clear, streamlined process to facilitate both the voluntary handback of Crown land and assets from councils to the State, and transfer of Crown land to councils where it supports strategic growth and delivery of community services. This acknowledges the significant financial pressures currently facing local governments, due to factors such as rate capping, rising cost-of-living impacts, and escalating construction and maintenance costs.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Local governments across Victoria are facing increasing financial pressures due to a combination of systemic and economic factors, including rate capping, rising cost-of-living impacts on communities, and significantly increasing construction and asset maintenance costs. These challenges are placing a strain on councils' ability to sustainably manage the full range of assets and services expected of them.

Among the most resource-intensive responsibilities for councils is the management of Crown land and associated assets, which are often held on behalf of the State but maintained at the expense of local government. In many cases, these assets no longer align with council priorities or community needs, yet there is currently no clear, consistent, or streamlined process for voluntarily returning them to State ownership. In some cases the sheer number of properties can also be overwhelming.

Establishing a transparent and coordinated framework for the voluntary handback of Crown land and assets would:

- Provide councils with a sustainable mechanism to reduce financial and operational burden.
- Ensure that assets are retained by the level of government best positioned to manage them in the long term.
- Support councils in redirecting limited resources toward core community priorities and essential infrastructure.

Given the growing pressure on council budgets and service delivery capacity, this advocacy is both timely and necessary. A formalised handback process would reflect a more equitable approach to intergovernmental asset management and demonstrate the Victorian Government's commitment to supporting local government sustainability.

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Motion 51. Workcover Premiums

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to review and reduce Workcover premiums which have significantly increased across Victoria.

Submitting Council Confirmation and Rationale:

The steep increase in WorkCover premiums that has created an unsustainable financial strain on councils which impacts their ability to deliver vital community services.

That unlike private businesses that may increase prices to absorb cost pressures, local Councils are subject to rate capping, limiting their capacity to offset rising operational expenses through additional revenue.

That Non-for-profit organisations and Councils operate in the public interest and should not be penalised by a one-size-fits-all WorkCover structure that fails to recognise the constraints and obligations under which we operate. The increase in premiums is occurring at a time when councils are also dealing with higher service demands, increased inflationary pressures, and recovery from major economic and social shocks.

Motion 52. Amendment to the Domestic Animals Act 1994

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to amend the Domestic Animal's Act 1994 to:

1. Provide Council authorised officers with a clear power of entry onto residential land where there is a reasonable belief that a dog involved in a serious attack is being kept at that location; and
2. Authorise the reasonable use of force by Council authorised officers when entering land, executing a search warrant, or seizing an animal under the Act.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Council's have an obligation to facilitate community safety for local communities. The current provisions under Government legislation restrict the ability of Councils to support safe households and communities.

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Motion 53. Victoria Police Resourcing

Submitting Council: Knox City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call on the Victorian Government to allocate additional resourcing to Victoria Police to appropriately resource community policing to previous levels as minimum, increasing both proactive and responsive policing.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Knox City Council falls within the Eastern Region – Division 2 for Policing alongside Maroondah City Council and Yarra Ranges Council. Across the three municipalities, Knox criminal incidents rate is approximately 24.4% higher than Maroondah and 43.3% higher than Yarra Ranges. Despite this, Knox has the lowest number of Police Officers (full time FTE equivalent) across the three municipalities and was the only municipality to see a decrease in Police numbers from June 2024-2025.

Additionally, the 2025 Annual Community Satisfaction Survey highlighted that safety was the second highest priority for Knox residents. There has also been a significant decline in perceptions of safety within the Knox community, falling below both the metropolitan average and the Eastern Metro region. Perceptions of safety is measured by people's feelings of safety; during the day, at night, and in and around your local activity centre. Knox residents score all indicators at a neutral to somewhat safe level.

While this is the experience of Knox City Council and the Eastern Region – Division 2 (ED2), we understand that other regions in the state may be similarly affected.

This Motion calls on the Victorian Government to increase Police resourcing for the Knox Municipality to accurately reflect the increased need within this municipality of the Eastern Region – Division 2 and commit to resourcing being allocated to both proactive and responsive Policing.

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Motion 54. E bikes

Submitting Council: Kingston City Council

Motion:

That MAV State Council

1. Urges the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure to review arrangements for the importation of E bikes to reduce the harms associated with the use of dangerously fast and illegal E Bikes on suburban streets, footpaths, parks and other public areas.
2. Informs the Victorian Minister for Police and Minister for Transport of our advocacy to the Commonwealth Minister for Infrastructure and of the need to reduce the harms associated with the use of illegal E bikes.
3. Urges the Victorian Minister for Police and Minister for Transport to work together with the Commonwealth to ensure co-ordinated national enforcement of enforcement of illegal E bike distribution, sale and usage.

Submitting Council Rationale:

All metropolitan councils are impacted by the proliferation of illegal E bikes.

In Victoria, an E bike is regarded as legal if it meets the international design standard for Electrically Power-Assisted Cycles (EPACs) known as EN15194:2017. This standard defines an E bike as one which cannot exceed 25km/h and whose motor/s cannot produce more than 250 watts of power. Power assistance can only be available when the rider is pedalling.

In Victoria, an illegal E bike is one which has one or more of these features:

- Can be ridden using the throttle alone (no pedalling required)
- Can exceed 25 km/h on level ground
- Has no functional pedals
- Has a power rating in excess of 250 watts.

There is now a proliferation of illegal E bikes in Victoria, the reasons for which can be traced back to two events over the past four years:

- In January 2021, the Morrison Government removed the requirement for E bike importers to declare that their bikes complied with EN15194:2017. This has let importers assert compliance without having to prove it, and consequently, thousands of illegal E bikes and modification kits have entered Australia - and continue to do so.
- In February 2023, the Perrotet Government in NSW increased the maximum legal power output for pedal assisted E bikes to 500 watts, clearing the way for even more powerful E bikes to become legally available everywhere, since it not possible to restrict trade between states.

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Inconsistencies between state rules on E bikes make it difficult to enforce compliance and even if an E bike begins life as a compliant EPAC, it can be modified into an illegal E bike with available, illegally imported kits.

Council has identified a range of harms which have arisen with E bikes, including:

- Significant growth in injuries among E bike users on roads, shared use pathways and footpaths - frequently the result of speed or inexperience.
- Hazards to pedestrians and bicycle riders caused by excessive E bike speeds, inexperience or illegally riding on footpaths and in shopping centres, parks and playgrounds.
- Damage to council infrastructure such as sports fields, parks and playgrounds caused by riders on heavy and powerful E bikes.

Riders of E bikes are subject to the same laws as bicycle riders. Enforcement of rider behaviour and E bike compliance is the responsibility of Victoria Police.

While injuries and damage are also observed among riders of EPACs, illegal E Bikes are faster, heavier and likely to cause more serious injuries and damage.

The proliferation of illegal E bikes is an issue requiring intervention at the Commonwealth level. Illegal behaviour is mostly a matter for Victoria Police, and MAV State Council could urge more enforcement focus on E bike users, although there is evidence to suggest this is happening.

Council's jurisdiction on E bikes is related to their use on Council land. (Clause 158.9 of Kingston Local Laws: "A person must not, without a permit ... while in or upon any Council land or foreshore reserve: ride, drive or use any horse, motor vehicle, motor cycle, recreation vehicle, bicycle, wheeled recreational device, wheeled toy or other vehicle."

The proposed motion for MAV State Council focuses on urging tighter import controls, more consistency between states and territories on E bike standards, and penalties for the distribution and sale of illegal E bikes and power upgrade kits.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 8 – Litter and Illegal Dumping

Motion:

1. That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government for the development of a coordinated, state-wide response to litter and illegal dumping, including:
 - a. Increased resourcing for education and enforcement.
 - b. Support for enhanced surveillance and data collection.
 - c. Greater support for clean-up efforts, particularly in known hotspots.
 - d. An immediate review of the penalty amounts assigned to littering and dumping offences under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (The Act) to include:
 - (i) Significant increases to the penalty amounts currently assigned to all littering and dumping offences included under the Act; and/or
 - (ii) Establishing a mechanism that would enable individual Councils to be able to set penalties amounts within defined parameters to reflect our community's local circumstances and zero tolerance approach towards littering and rubbish dumping.
2. That the MAV considers the establishment of a taskforce with a combination of elected representatives and officers.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Addressing the growing problem of litter and illegal dumping across Victoria	Mitchell Shire Council
Increased fines for illegal dumping	Hume City Council
Illegal dumping taskforce	Hume City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 8.1 - Addressing the Growing Problem of Litter and Illegal Dumping Across Victoria

Submitting Council: Mitchell Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Government for the development of a coordinated, state-wide response to litter and illegal dumping, including:

1. Increased resourcing for education and enforcement.
2. Support for enhanced surveillance and data collection.
3. A review of current penalties and enforcement powers available to councils.
4. Greater support for clean-up efforts, particularly in known hotspots.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Litter and illegal dumping is increasing across the State and the impact for local governments is increasing. Litter contaminates land and water, harms wildlife, introduces pests and weeds, creates fire hazards, and costs communities and governments vast sums of money for cleanup. In addition, it can degrade land values and make areas unsightly and unsafe, impacting the aesthetic appeal of communities and negatively impact residents' mental health and well-being.

The Victorian Government needs to better assist local government to tackle this ongoing and increasing problem in its municipalities and provide better education, surveillance and enforcement powers to support them to better their communities.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 8.2 - Increased fines for illegal dumping

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV call upon the Victorian Government to undertake an immediate review of the penalty amounts assigned to littering and dumping offences under the Environment Protection Act 2017 (The Act) to include:

1. Significant increases to the penalty amounts currently assigned to all littering and dumping offences included under the Act; and/or
2. Establishing a mechanism that would enable individual Councils to be able to set penalties amounts within defined parameters to reflect our community's local circumstances and zero tolerance approach towards littering and rubbish dumping.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Penalties under the Environment Protection Act 2017 remain low. Councils are only able to issue fines of up to \$396 for individuals dumping less than 50 litres, and up to \$1,983 for corporations, amounts far below the actual cost of collection and clean-up, which often exceeds three to four times that infringement. These penalties fail to reflect the true cost to the community and ratepayers and don't allow local governments to be able to set or customise their own infringement penalties to better reflect the actual costs of disposing of waste in geographically larger municipalities.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 8.3 - Illegal Dumping Taskforce

Submitting Council: Hume City Council

Motion:

That the MAV consider establishing a taskforce with a combination of elected representatives and officers focused on addressing issues of illegal dumping in municipalities.

Submitting Council Rationale:

To build capacity of Councils to cope.

Consolidated Motion 9 – Joint Use Agreements with Department of Education

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the Victorian Minister for Education to simplify the process of creating Community Joint Use Agreements with the Department of Education to unlock public land for community use to:

- 1. Encourage more partnering between schools, local councils and sporting associations to achieve greater community utilisation of school facilities that lay idle outside of school hours.
- 2. Expand the program of allowing community use of school sporting facilities outside of school hours.
- 3. Offer greater certainty to local councils and/or sporting clubs who enter into shared use agreements by requiring the approval of the Department of Education before a new principal or school council can withdraw from an existing agreement for use.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Community Joint User Agreements	Whitehorse City Council
Community after hours access to Victorian Government school facilities	Kingston City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 9.1 - Community Joint User Agreements

Submitting Council: Whitehorse City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocates to the State Government to simplify the process of creating Community Joint Use Agreements with the Department of Education to unlock public land for community use .

Submitting Council Rationale:

Simplifying the process for creating Community Joint Use Agreements would assist to result in increased access to sporting facilities to provide community access to essential sporting facilities as part of council commitments to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

Unlocking underutilised sporting facilities sooner would be mutually beneficial because of Council investing in school upgrades.

This approach is a solution for Victoria's growing population given the limited land availability in many areas across Victoria to develop new sites.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 9.2 - Community after hours access to Victorian Government school facilities

Submitting Council: Kingston City Council

Motion:

That State Council:

Advocates to the Victorian Minister for Education to:

1. Encourage more partnering between schools, local councils and sporting associations to achieve greater community utilisation of school facilities that lay idle outside of school hours.
2. Expand the program of allowing community use of school sporting facilities outside of school hours.
3. Offer greater certainty to local councils and/or sporting clubs who enter into shared use agreements by requiring the approval of the Department of Education before a new principal or school council can withdraw from an existing agreement for use.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The growing densification of suburbs and loss of open space makes many schoolgrounds the largest and most flexible open spaces available in a neighbourhood.

There are a growing number of schools entering into agreements with sporting clubs and community groups for the use of school facilities outside of school hours.

On application to the Principal, schools are used for everything from sporting competitions to farmers markets and community gardens - and have been for decades. It is at the discretion of the Principal and School Council.

When councils/local groups enter into agreements for use of school facilities it is not uncommon for issues to arise such as public liability, damage, access to secured buildings and competing priorities.

A major issue is that an agreement entered into by a principal can be repudiated by a new one, which introduces undesirable risk and uncertainty for potential users.

This motion calls on the Minister and department to prioritise making school facilities available and to provide transparency and centralised review of contract changes to provide parties with greater certainty. This will ensure ensure external users are not placed at risk of losing access simply because there is school personnel change. It will also give local councils greater confidence that any co-investment in facilities will provide guaranteed community use.

Access to Victorian schools could provide much-needed sporting facilities and open space to community. By entering partnerships, Victorian Councils could cost-effectively deliver community access to open space/sporting facilities. MAV coordination could ensure this issue is addressed holistically, rather than at a piecemeal local level.

Consolidated Motion 10 – Drought Support and Realities

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria, in collaboration with representation of rural and regional local government network, seeks a commitment from the Victorian Minister for Agriculture and Minister for Natural Disaster Recovery to:

1.

Reassess current drought criteria.

2.

Revisit the eligibility criteria for drought support packages.

3.

Extend drought support to all affected LGAs, including meaningful day-to-day operational support going forward.

4.

Acknowledge the financial distress caused by the current drought means farmers will require continued support beyond the package announced on 4 July 2025.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Drought Support	Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network
Drought Long Term Realities	Southern Grampians Shire Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 10.1 - Drought Support

Submitting Council: Strathbogie Shire Council / Hume Region Local Government Network

Supporting Councils: Alpine Shire Council, Benalla Rural City Council, Greater Shepparton City Council, Indigo Shire Council, Mansfield Shire Council, Mitchell Shire Council, Moira Shire Council, Murrindindi Shire Council, Strathbogie Shire Council, Towong Shire Council, Wangaratta Rural City Council and Wodonga City Council.

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria, in collaboration with representation of rural and regional local government network, meet with the Premier of Victoria and the Victorian Minister for Agriculture to gain a commitment from the Government to:

1. Reassess current drought criteria across the entire Hume region
2. Revisit the eligibility criteria for drought support packages
3. Extend support to all affected LGAs, including all municipalities in the entire Hume region
4. Include meaningful day-to-day operational support in the drought support packages offering.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Dry and near-drought conditions are placing significant pressure on our farms, families, and regional communities. These conditions affect not only crops and livestock, but also financial wellbeing and mental health.

Despite clear evidence of worsening conditions, local farmers are facing the season with no access to the direct support measures now being made available to neighbouring areas. Livestock producers across the region are dealing with severe feed shortages, exhausted on-farm water supplies, and unaffordable freight costs — with some paying up to \$20,000 per load to bring in hay from interstate.

Council is particularly concerned that several Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the Hume region have been excluded, despite facing the same climatic and economic pressures as those deemed eligible.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 10.2 - Drought Long Term Realities

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV write to the Premier of Victoria:

1. Thanking the State Government for its recently announced additional \$75 million drought support package announced on 4 July 2025. In that letter, request the State Government:
2. Requesting the State Government formally acknowledge that the financial distress caused by the current drought in Southwest Victoria will take many good seasons to repair, and consequentially our farmers will require continued support beyond the package announced on 4 July 2025.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The drought is impacting deeply right through regional areas both inside and outside the farmgate. Dialogue from the State Government continues to suggest they believe some rain will fix this economic crisis. The farmers spirits and confidence would both be lifted significantly simply through acknowledgement from the State government, that support will be needed for multiple years to overcome the depth of this economic crisis.

Consolidated Motion 11 – Occupational Violence

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Undertakes statewide research into occupational violence incidents against Council staff and Councillors and seek WorkSafe support for measures to enhance safety, including a public safety campaign.
2. Initiates a comprehensive, statewide campaign aimed at countering negative community behaviours and addressing social media attacks directed at Councillors and officers. It should also promote positive messages about the vital role of Local Government and the wide array of services it provides.
3. Immediately establishes a committee to oversee the investigation of harmful behaviour directed at councillors, including behaviour such as harassment, intimidation, general abuse, including via social media, which may have been detrimental to the safety and health of councillors. This committee will investigate and report to MAV on the following items:
 - a. provide an overview of how many Victorian councillors have been impacted and how they have dealt with such behaviour
 - b. issue a survey to MAV members to understand the breadth of the serious issue
 - c. determine which federal or state legislation is most appropriate to change/introduce to better support councillors, and develop a lobbying strategy;
 - d. determine whether MAV and/or council insurance policies could be amended to assist councillors seeking legal assistance if subjected to worrying behaviour;
 - e. the implementation of a fund to provide attacked councillors with additional support resources; and
 - f. investigate and recommend ways in which councillors could be offered financial support, for example, if they wish to seek a Personal Safety Intervention Order

Which motions are being consolidated?

Increase in OVA incidents towards council staff and councillors	Yarra Ranges Shire Council
MAV Statewide Communications and Marketing Campaign	Hepburn Shire Council
Supporting Councillors exposed to bullying and harassment	Stonnington City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 11.1 - Increase in OVA incidents towards council staff and councillors.

Submitting Council: Yarra Ranges Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV undertake statewide research into occupational violence incidents against Council staff and Councillors and seek WorkSafe support for a public safety campaign

Submitting Council Rationale:

Occupational violence and aggression (OVA) is an escalating concern across Australian workplaces, with public-facing roles, such as those held by council workers, being particularly vulnerable. Despite growing anecdotal evidence and national data indicating a rise in workplace violence, there is a critical gap in sector-specific research that captures the scope, nature, and impact of OVA on local government employees in Victoria.

Council employees, which includes elected Councillors, frequently engage with the public in high-pressure and emotionally charged environments.

These roles may include local laws officers, customer service staff, compliance officers and field workers. These interactions increasingly expose them to verbal abuse, threats, and physical aggression. The absence of comprehensive data and coordinated prevention strategies leaves councils ill-equipped to respond effectively and protect their workforce.

We therefore call on the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to:

1. Undertake a statewide research initiative to quantify and qualify incidents of occupational violence against council staff and councillors.
2. Collaborate with WorkSafe Victoria to develop and launch a public safety campaign aimed at raising awareness, promoting respectful engagement with council staff, and reinforcing zero tolerance for workplace aggression.

This initiative will:

- Provide councils with evidence-based insights to inform policy, training, and support systems.
- Strengthen advocacy for legislative and regulatory protections.
- Foster a culture of safety, respect, and accountability across Victorian communities.

By taking a proactive and unified approach, MAV and WorkSafe Victoria can lead the way in safeguarding council staff and Councillors and ensuring that local government remains a safe and sustainable sector for all employees.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 11.2 - MAV Statewide Communications and Marketing Campaign

Submitting Council: Hepburn Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) should initiate a comprehensive, statewide communications and marketing campaign that promotes positive messages about the vital role of Local Government and the wide array of services it provides. This campaign should also include targeted messaging aimed at countering negative community behaviours and addressing social media attacks directed at Councillors and officers.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The proposed motion for the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) to lead a comprehensive, statewide communications and marketing campaign addresses a critical issue of strategic relevance across the entire local government sector in Victoria.

1. **Statewide Impact** All 79 councils in Victoria are affected by the growing challenge of negative public sentiment, misinformation, and online abuse directed at Councillors and Officers. These behaviours undermine trust in local government, discourage civic engagement, and impact the wellbeing of elected representatives and staff. The issue is systemic and widespread, not confined to any single municipality or region.
2. **Alignment with Broader Policy Priorities** This motion aligns with current and emerging priorities at both state and federal levels:
 - **Mental Health and Wellbeing:** The Victorian Government has prioritised mental health support for public sector workers, including local government staff, in response to increasing workplace stress and abuse.
 - **Digital Safety and Online Harms:** The federal government's eSafety Commissioner has launched initiatives to combat online abuse, which directly relate to the social media attacks faced by Councillors and Officers.
 - **Local Government Reform and Engagement:** Strengthening public confidence in local governance is a key strategic priority, and this campaign would support that goal through proactive and positive messaging.
3. **Need for a Sector-Wide Response**

This issue cannot be effectively resolved at a single council or regional level due to its scale and complexity:

- **Consistency of Messaging:** A statewide campaign ensures unified, professional messaging that reinforces the value of local government across all communities.
- **Resource Efficiency:** Many councils lack the capacity to develop and deliver high-impact communications independently. A MAV-led campaign allows for shared resources and expertise.
- **Strategic Advocacy:** Coordinated messaging enhances MAV's ability to advocate on behalf of the sector with state and federal governments, amplifying the collective voice of local government.
- This motion is both timely and essential. It calls for a unified approach to address a pressing challenge, support the wellbeing of public officials, and reinforce the legitimacy and value of local government in Victoria.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 11.3 - Supporting Councillors exposed to bullying and harassment

Submitting Council: Stonnington City Council

Motion:

That the MAV immediately establishes a committee to oversee the investigation of harmful behaviour directed at councillors. This may include behaviour such as harassment, intimidation, general abuse, including via social media, which may have been detrimental to the safety and health of councillors.

This committee will investigate and report to MAV on the following items:

1. provide an overview of how many Victorian councillors have been impacted and how they have dealt with such behaviour
2. issue a survey to MAV members to understand the breadth of the serious issue
3. determine which federal or state legislation is most appropriate to change/introduce to better support councillors, and develop a lobbying strategy;
4. determine whether MAV and/or council insurance policies could be amended to assist councillors seeking legal assistance if subjected to worrying behaviour;
5. the implementation of a fund to provide attacked councillors with additional support resources; and
6. investigate and recommend ways in which councillors could be offered financial support, for example, if they wish to seek a Personal Safety Intervention Order.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Councillors are the elected officials closest to the community, and are at risk of unsafe behaviour from within and outside of their organisations. The 2024 VLGA Census found that bullying and harassment has markedly impacted the lives of many councillors, and abuse and/or intimidation from members of the public is also seen as on the increase and more than anticipated. The report specifically notes that “dispute resolution mechanisms to deal with councillor conflict, bullying and harassment are largely seen as inadequate, with councillors feeling they are caught in a “no man’s land” due to the nature of their role (not technically employees, and nowhere near the same level of checks and rules as elected members at state and federal levels).”

The Fair Work Commission does not recognise the role of a councillor in its anti-bullying frameworks, and the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 does not codify a local government councillor as either a worker or a parliamentarian. Ensuring councillors are included under relevant anti-vilification or workplace safety legislation would greatly assist their legal protection. Industrial law should complement, not differ from, the Model Code of Conduct and staff and customer behavioural policies for local government.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

A funding mechanism could also be established for Councillors to access if they need to seek legal advice or initiate legal action against an external individual or group. Options for a funding mechanism could include expanding the legal remit of the Liability Mutual Insurance scheme, or, a new similar mutual fund scheme. Councillors would then be indemnified when undertaking legal action against persons who commit in-person or online abuse and harassment. Ensuring that councillors can access a level of financial support to undertake last-resort legal action in genuine cases of bullying and harassment will support councillors to protect themselves regardless of their or their council's financial means. Taking legal action against perpetrators who harass, troll and bully councillors will send a strong message that this behaviour, often directed toward female councillors, will not be tolerated by the industry.

Consolidated Motion 12 – Protecting and expanding urban tree canopy through planning and vegetation management reform

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for urgent reforms to better protect and grow urban tree canopy, including:

1. Recognising the role of tree canopy in climate resilience, public health, biodiversity, and urban amenity in planning decisions
2. Revise Clause 55 (Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment code), any further redesigned built-form standards and codes, to align with the 30% tree canopy target now required in all planning schemes
3. Moving away from broad vegetation clearance practices around powerlines in low bushfire-risk areas, where safety risk is low
4. Endorsing evidence-based minimum vegetation clearance (e.g. 30cm) where appropriate—such as in inner metropolitan Councils that are classed as Low Bushfire Risk Areas (LBRA)
5. Establishing statewide standards and targeted investment to support councils in retaining and expanding canopy cover through planning controls, infrastructure coordination, and local greening initiatives.

Which motions are being consolidated?	
Protecting and expanding urban tree canopy through planning and vegetation management reform	Glen Eira City Council
Protecting and expanding urban tree canopy through planning and vegetation management reform	Port Phillip City Council
Tree Canopy Targets to Align with Plan for Victoria	Banyule City Council

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidated Motion 12.1 - Protecting and expanding urban tree canopy through planning and vegetation management reform

Submitting Council: Glen Eira City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for urgent reforms to better protect and grow urban tree canopy, including:

1. Recognising the role of tree canopy in climate resilience, public health, biodiversity, and urban amenity in planning decisions
2. Moving away from broad vegetation clearance practices around powerlines in low bushfire-risk areas, where safety risk is low
3. Endorsing evidence-based minimum vegetation clearance (e.g. 30cm) where appropriate—such as in inner metropolitan Councils that are classed as Low Bushfire Risk Areas (LBRA)
4. Establishing statewide standards and targeted investment to support councils in retaining and expanding canopy cover through planning controls, infrastructure coordination, and local greening initiatives.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Urban tree canopy is critical infrastructure that delivers wide-ranging benefits — from cooling suburbs and mitigating heat stress, to improving mental health, enhancing biodiversity, and increasing overall liveability.

However, current planning frameworks and vegetation management regulations frequently undermine efforts to retain and grow tree canopy, particularly in areas around powerlines. In low bushfire-risk urban areas, widespread vegetation clearance often lacks a sound safety rationale and results in the unnecessary loss of canopy cover.

This motion calls for a more nuanced, evidence-based approach — balancing safety with the need to preserve and expand urban green cover. Drawing on models such as South Australia's, where canopy retention near powerlines has been achieved without compromising safety, Victoria can reform outdated standards and adopt more targeted clearance distances (such as 30cm where appropriate). Statewide standards aligned planning policy, and dedicated investment will enable councils to better protect and grow tree canopy, especially in urban environments where green space is under pressure.

The motion reinforces the role of trees as essential to climate adaptation and wellbeing and calls for reforms that empower councils to plan and deliver greener, healthier neighbourhoods. MAV's advocacy is essential to drive legislative and regulatory reform, enabling councils across Victoria to deliver greener, healthier, and more climate-resilient communities.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidate Motion 12.2 - Protecting and expanding urban tree canopy through planning and vegetation management reform

Submitting Council: Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for urgent reforms to better protect and grow urban tree canopy, including:

1. Recognising the role of tree canopy in climate resilience, public health, biodiversity, and urban amenity in planning decisions
2. Moving away from broad vegetation clearance practices around powerlines in low bushfire-risk areas, where safety risk is low
3. Endorsing evidence-based minimum vegetation clearance (e.g. 30cm) where appropriate, such as in inner metropolitan Councils that are classed as Low Bushfire Risk Areas (LBRA)
4. Establishing statewide standards and targeted investment to support councils in retaining and expanding canopy cover through planning controls, infrastructure coordination, and local greening initiatives.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Urban tree canopy is essential for climate resilience, public health, biodiversity, and urban amenity. Despite many councils being located in low bushfire-risk areas, broad vegetation clearance, particularly around powerlines, continues to result in unnecessary canopy loss. A more nuanced, evidence-based approach is needed. Statewide standards, targeted investment, and planning reforms will better support councils to retain and expand urban canopy, ensuring greener, healthier, and more liveable communities across Victoria.

MAV October State Council Meeting 2025

Consolidate Motion 12.3 - Tree Canopy Targets to Align with Plan for Victoria

Submitting Council: Banyule City Council

Motion:

That the MAV request that the State Government revise Clause 55 - Townhouse and Low-rise Apartment code to align canopy targets with the 30% target as required in Plan for Victoria.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Clause 55 Townhouse & Low-Rise Apartment code tree canopy targets are set too low and will undermine the State's own 'Plan for Victoria' canopy target.

The recent updates to Clause 55 for Townhouse and Low-Rise Apartment Code (the code) and supporting guidelines remove variations that result in built form and landscape design changes in current and future planning permit applications. Of particular concern to Council is the 10% target (<1000m²) or 20% for >1000m² now set as a 'deemed to comply' standard. Not only does it impede Council's ability to meet its own Urban Forest Strategy canopy targets, but is also incongruous with the State's own 30% tree canopy target for urban areas, as outlined in 'Plan for Victoria'.

This gap between planning policy and the new provisions enshrined in the code, also indicates an expectation that local Councils and communities will do the 'heavy lifting' in the public realm. This is unrealistic and, in a time of a climate crisis, a disappointing step backwards.

Banyule's Urban Forest Strategy, adopted in 2023, supports the planning, management and maintenance of Banyule's highly valued urban forest for the next 10 years, particularly in relation to climate adaptation, biodiversity and amenity.

The Urban Forest Strategy set a target of 30% canopy cover across all residential areas and 45% canopy cover across the footpath and local road network by 2050, which was on track to achieve.

In response to the lower targets now required by the State Government through Clause 55, Council has undertaken detailed testing of a range of tree canopy targets (10, 20 & 30%), against different typologies. This work found that, in most cases, up to 20% can be readily achieved without compromising density or design. For lower density typologies, 10% was clearly an underperformance in terms of canopy provision.

To align planning controls with canopy cover ambitions requires a nuanced, typology specific approach that supports increased tree planting, through design innovation and site responsiveness. The changes to Clause 55 have removed this opportunity.

Council requests the State Government increase the canopy target in Clause 55 to align with the 30% target currently set in 'Plan for Victoria'.

Block Motion

Motion 55. Farmer Sovereignty Over Their Land

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate against the proposed changes to the Electricity Industry Act 2000 which implements fines for property owners who obstruct, hinder, or delay the entry of authorized officers to their property, and sanctions authorized officers to use reasonable force to gain entry.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Changes to the Electricity Industry Act 2000 will formalize in legislation the following:

Fines for obstruction: Individuals who obstruct, hinder, or delay the entry of authorized officers can be fined up to \$12,000, according to The Guardian.

Fines for body corporates: Body corporates (e.g., companies) face higher fines, potentially reaching \$48,000 for obstruction, reports the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

Fines for refusing identification: Refusing to provide your name or proof of ownership could result in a fine of up to \$4,000.

Fines for interfering with notices: Interfering with a notice of entry can lead to a fine of \$1,221.

Use of force: In certain situations, authorized officers may be permitted to use reasonable force to gain entry, particularly if blocked or disrupted, and after obtaining a court order.

"Reasonable force": If farmers block access to their land, authorized workers may be able to use reasonable force, potentially with police backing, to gain entry.

Only an 'electricity corporation' can exercise section 93 powers. An 'electricity corporation' is a corporation licensed by the Essential Services Commission to transmit, distribute or generate electricity.

Whilst a Land Access Code of Practice applies, this in no way rebalances the power between farmers and electricity corporations. The legislation is unconscionable and draconian and removes basic rights property owners would be entitled to.

Motion 56. Safety for women councillors and council employees

Submitting Council: Yarra City Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. notes the recent findings from the Victorian Local Governance Association that 80% of councillors have experienced threatening or intimidating behaviour and 48% of women councillors - and 44% of councillors in total - have received a higher level of hostility than expected from some members of the public; and
2. continues to advocate to the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Women to reinstate the Gender Equality Advisory Committee to address the challenges identified by female councillors and council employees.

Submitting Council Rationale:

This motion calls for the reinstatement of the Gender Equality Advisory Committee to support coordinated action on the gender-based challenges facing local government.

Recent data from the Victorian Local Governance Association shows that 80% of councillors have experienced threatening or intimidating behaviour and 48 percent of women councillors, and 44 percent of councillors overall, have experienced higher-than-expected hostility from the public. These findings highlight ongoing issues of gendered abuse, unsafe environments, and barriers to women's full participation in civic leadership.

The Committee was established in 2021 to support the implementation of the Gender Equality Act 2020 and help achieve the State's target of 50 percent women councillors and mayors by 2025. It brought together councillors, sector leaders, and government representatives to provide strategic advice and promote practical reforms. Its work supported initiatives such as Women Leading Locally and culminated in a set of policy recommendations in 2022.

Since then, there has been no public update on the Committee's status or ongoing role. Its absence leaves a gap in sector-wide coordination and limits councils' ability to engage with government on shared gender equality priorities.

Reinstating the Committee would restore a dedicated forum for collaboration between councils, the MAV, sector bodies, and the Victorian Government. It would help address the systemic issues affecting women in local government, including those highlighted in recent research, and support a safer and more inclusive environment for elected representatives and council staff.

This motion aligns with the MAV's long-standing commitment to gender equity, safe participation in public life, and sector-led reform. It ensures that the lived experiences of women remain central to the development and implementation of policy responses.

Motion 57. Elevating Environmentally Sustainable Development (ESD) requirements in planning policy.

Submitting Council: Greater Dandenong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV write to the Minister to advocate for elevated ESD targets for new buildings and encourages a move towards net zero carbon developments.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Greater Dandenong City Council has committed to emergency action on climate change. As one of Melbourne's most disadvantaged communities, Greater Dandenong residents are at a much greater risk to the impacts of a changing climate. The Greater Dandenong Council Plan 2025-29 aims to be a green city committed to a sustainable future.

Council is advocating for better planning outcomes for our community, including creating affordable housing that is not only affordable to obtain, but is also affordable to run. Housing is a necessity and must enable our community to adapt to the effects of climate, whilst also being designed to mitigate its impact.

Council acknowledges the efforts of the State Government through the ESD Roadmap, however due to the recent changes to the planning scheme, there is an urgent need for to review the impacts of these changes and address ESD best practice throughout planning policies. Greater Dandenong continues to advocate with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) and outlines four key focus areas to strengthen ESD. These are:

1. Reinstate ESD provisions in planning schemes that have already been demonstrated as fit for purpose to strengthen sustainability standards.
2. Complete Stage 2 of the state government ESD Roadmap.
3. Embed consistent and ambitious ESD requirements in Activity Centre Structure Plans and associated ordinance.
4. Authorise Elevating ESD Targets Planning Scheme Amendments (C238GDAN).

It has been three years since 24 councils lodged a planning scheme amendment (C238GDAN) to introduce planning policy that elevates sustainability requirements for new buildings, facilitates best practice ESD and supports zero carbon development outcomes. All 24 councils are awaiting authorisation to exhibit.

The ESD Objectives and Standards proposed in this amendment address:

- Operational Energy (energy efficiency, performance and greenhouse gas emission reduction)
- Embodied Carbon (greenhouse gas emission reduction and resource efficiency)
- Sustainable Transport (electric vehicles and bicycles)
- Integrated Water management (water efficiency and integration)
- Green infrastructure (lot scale vegetation and urban ecology)
- Climate resilience (climate change adaptation, urban heat mitigation)
- Waste & Resource Recovery (recycling and waste management)

Motion 58. Advocating for Integrated Policy, Design, and Funding Support to Address Climate-Related Risks in Victoria

Submitting Council: Maribyrnong City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government to urgently strengthen the policy, design, and funding frameworks that support local governments in preparing for and responding to increasing climate-related risks, including flooding, bushfires, and extreme heat. This should include:

1. Development of a State-wide Climate-Resilient Housing and Infrastructure Framework which establishes clear design standards and planning guidance that integrate disaster resilience, sustainability, and housing innovation across all forms of development.
2. Support for Local Government-Led Adaptation Initiatives providing targeted funding and technical assistance to councils for climate adaptation projects, including retrofitting existing infrastructure, implementing nature-based solutions (e.g. mudbrick, adobe, strawbale, earthships), and delivering community education programs.
3. Integration of Innovative and Inclusive Housing Models enabling planning reforms and pilot programs that support:
 - a. Water-sensitive and fire-resilient housing designs,
 - b. Passive cooling and heat-resilient building strategies,
 - c. Cohousing, co-located dwellings, and managed retreat approaches.

Cross-Government Collaboration and Capacity Building facilitating partnerships between councils, state agencies, research institutions, and communities to co-design and deliver locally tailored climate resilience strategies.

Submitting Council Rationale:

A coordinated and well-resourced approach will improve community safety, wellbeing, and environmental outcomes while fostering innovation and equity in housing and infrastructure delivery.

Motion 60. Social and Affordable Housing Design Standards

Submitting Council: Banyule City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the State Government to ensure that all residential developments are subject to the same good design standards, including social and affordable housing projects.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Council is concerned that the recent planning reforms have diluted the Better Apartment Design Standards required for social and affordable residential developments, particularly for projects seeking fast track approval via the Development Facilitation Pathway's (DFP) 'Significant residential development with affordable housing - Clause 53.23'.

Quality design contributes to a community that is healthy, inclusive, and equitable and provides for cohesiveness and connection. The State Government needs to ensure that future occupants of social and affordable residential developments are living in well-designed dwellings, and access the health, wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits associated with quality design. This must be non-negotiable and not able to be waived or varied by the Minister for Planning, especially if being assessed through Clause 53.23.

Council has further concern that the incentivisation of design excellence through Clause 53.25 may have the effect of creating a two-tiered system of liveability in our communities. By giving developers two housing pathways; one that rewards housing affordability, the other, that rewards design excellence, there is a risk that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable populations are made to live in substandard housing stock, while the more affluent can 'buy' the good design elements (such as better cross-ventilation) that should be available to all.

Council asks that the State Government requires to ALL residential developments to meet its 'Design Principles', not just projects being assessed through Clause 53.25.

Motion 62. Mandated social housing quotas.

Submitting Council: East Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the Victorian Government to mandate the implementation of broad based social and affordable housing quotas and/or contributions for new developments.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Whilst there are overall housing targets set out in Plan for Victoria, a more nuanced approach to housing supply is required to ensure the correct type of housing is being delivered to meet community needs, including social and affordable housing.

Other states have legislated requirements for new developments to meet a dispersed ration of social and affordable housing as part of new developments of a certain lot size. Similarly new apartment developments must have a set ratio of social housing.

Some councils have policy that sets targets for new developments. Whilst this aspiration is admirable it is not supported by same legislated requirements that other states, including Western Australia, enforce.

As part of the reforms that accompany the Big Housing Build, The Victorian Government is developing a 10-year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy, in partnership with the community housing sector. This strategy is promoted as setting a shared long-term vision and objectives to continue to grow the social housing system alongside the state's population.

There is also opportunity to:

1. Share details with the local government sector on the 10-year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and how it addresses current housing gaps and targets per LGA.
2. Liaise with relevant stakeholders (e.g. community housing providers) to understand what is required to meet future needs and address these recommendations as a priority.
3. Consistent with the Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Framework (2020), collaborate with Traditional Owner groups and relevant Aboriginal service providers to support the development of affordable and culturally appropriate accommodation and housing for the Aboriginal community.
4. Acknowledge that provision of crisis and social housing is not just driven by need in Melbourne and regional cities, with provision also needed across most regional Victorian towns. Such provision should also be supported by assertive outreach services and social marketing to de-stigmatise the plight of the homeless.

Motion 63. Support for passenger flights into rural areas

Submitting Council: Southern Grampians Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the State and Federal Governments for a strategic and ongoing investment in regional air services across rural Victoria, including:

1. Route viability support by the establishment of subsidies or minimum revenue guarantees for passenger routes servicing rural airports.
2. Infrastructure funding for upgrades to rural aerodromes.
3. Regional air service strategy by the development for a coordinated strategy to ensure equitable access to passenger flights across rural Victoria

Submitting Council Rationale:

Passenger air services are vital for rural communities to remain connected to metropolitan centers for business, education, health care and tourism. Many rural airports face declining services or the closure of them due to low passenger volumes and high operating costs. Without intervention, communities risk further isolation and economic disadvantage. Strategic investment and policy support are needed to ensure the long-term viability of these essential services. Passenger air services to rural communities not serviced well by public transport attract a subsidy in every state except Victoria.

This motion is in consistent with the MAV priorities outlined in the Shaping our Future 2024-2027 Strategic Plan, of Connected Places, Health and wellbeing, Sustainable economy and Intergenerational Infrastructure.

Motion 64. Funding of flood mitigation infrastructure

Submitting Council: Campaspe Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the Victorian Government to work with the Federal Government to fund flood mitigation infrastructure in line with Victorian Councils adopted Flood Risk Mitigation Plans.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Flood studies and Flood Risk Mitigation Plans have been developed by Council's after 2011, 2016, and 2022 flood events. These plans have been developed in partnership with other government and statutory authorities, key agencies, water experts and community members to address the requirements for flood mitigation infrastructure to protect community infrastructure, homes and businesses throughout flood affected municipalities. The costs associated with the feasibility, planning, design and construction of the infrastructure sit well outside all Council budgets. Therefore, Councils are reliant upon government support to build mitigation infrastructure to protect their communities.

Flood Risk Management Plans recommend how the risks associated with flood are best managed, investigates mitigation works, development controls, flood warning systems, and provide flood information 'intelligence' for other agencies. While some of the recommendations can be covered by Councils operating budgets, the planning, design and construction of permanent levee's and or the purchase of demountable or mobile infrastructure sits well outside the reach of Councils operational and capital budgets. Therefore, it is paramount the government support is provided to councils to support the implementation of such infrastructure.

Natural disasters, such as floods, fire and storm events, resulting from the impacts of climate change, are becoming more frequent and intensive. Australia is reeling from the physical, social and economic impacts of major events. Communities are left devastated in their wake, taking years to recover. Flood mitigation is critical to prevent the level of harm that Australia and in particular Victoria has experienced over the past decade.

In particular, the January 2011 and the October 2022 flood event impacted many municipalities across the state. As a result of both events the Shire of Campaspe was severely impacted with most townships across the municipality inundated with over a thousand homes, hundreds of kilometres of roads, community buildings, businesses and other public assets destroyed or damaged. Over two and a half years later, many residents of Rochester, Campaspe's most impacted community are still not living in their homes. The installation of recommended infrastructure will go a long way in preventing the magnitude of destruction in future events.

Councils and communities are looking for certainty from all tiers of government that they will continue to support flood impacted communities with funding to help mitigate potential future significant flood events. This motion supports the MAV's current priorities to "make resilient communities happen" by "future-proofing communities to withstand natural disaster"

Motion 65. Increased Funding for Regional Infrastructure

Submitting Council: Colac Otway Shire Council

Motion:

That MAV:

1. Notes that the 2025-26 Victorian budget includes an allocation of \$10m to unlock trunk infrastructure in regional Victoria, which is significantly less than what is required to adequately support the growth and development of regional communities.
2. Notes that the Victorian Government increased Land Tax and introduced the Windfall Gains Tax in 2023, which is impacting the feasibility of developing land in regional areas.
3. Calls on the Victorian Government to reintroduce an infrastructure funding program with appropriate funding levels specifically for rural and regional Councils to fund key infrastructure that supports economic development and population growth.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The Victorian Government's Economic Growth Statement, "Victoria: Open for Business" is the state's strategic plan to drive economic growth, increase investment, and foster innovation. The Statement emphasises the importance of regional Victoria in the state's overall economic growth and aims to ensure that all communities benefit from the economic opportunities.

As part of its 2025-26 Budget, the Victorian Government announced \$10 million to unlock trunk infrastructure including water supply, sewerage, roads and electricity, to open up more industrial land across regional Victoria. This is significantly less than what is required to adequately address the challenges and opportunities with developing land for industrial and/or residential development.

Furthermore, there is limited funding for infrastructure to grow and build communities in regional areas. Regional communities have capacity to support population growth, however the cost of development and the return on investment is challenging in regional areas.

There is an urgent need for the Victorian Government to support regional communities to capitalise on the growth and development opportunities through the provision of funding. The Victorian Government continues to introduce new taxes such as the Windfall Gains Tax which could be used to provide the much needed infrastructure that our regional communities require to realise growth and sustainability opportunities.

The Victorian Government previously provided programs such as the Regional Infrastructure Fund which provided financial support for enabling and transformative infrastructure projects. It is vital that funding programs with sufficient levels of funding are reintroduced to support regional communities.

Motion 66. Support for Local Government in Managing Water Recovery Impacts under the Murray-Darling Basin Plan

Submitting Council: Campaspe Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV request that the Federal and Victorian Governments:

1. Engage affected councils early and transparently in all water recovery decisions under the Basin Plan.
2. Provide structural adjustment support for impacted communities, including funding for local transition planning and socio-economic impact assessments.
3. Ensure water recovery delivers effective environmental outcomes, supports biodiversity, integrates Traditional Owner knowledge, and promotes climate resilience.
4. Recognise councils as key partners in water reform and include them in the design and delivery of recovery measures.
5. Align with regional advocacy, including the Murray River Group of Councils, for balanced and community-informed water reform.
6. Support the development of a long-term water policy that prioritises regional equity, environmental sustainability, and local government leadership—consistent with MAV’s 2025–26 advocacy priorities.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Water recovery under the Basin Plan affects regional economies, communities, and ecosystems. Councils must be supported and included to ensure sustainable and equitable outcomes. This motion reflects MAV’s broader advocacy for fair water policy, climate resilience, and empowered local governance as outlined in the State Advocacy Priorities 2025–26 document.

Motion 67. A non-competitive funding stream to replace the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) program

Submitting Council: Moyne Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Australian Government for the establishment of a permanent, non-competitive, and formula-based funding stream to replace the Local Roads and Community Infrastructure (LRCI) Program, ensuring continued investment in local transport and community infrastructure that is equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the unique needs of rural and regional councils. This funding stream should:

1. Provide indexed, long-term funding to support local road maintenance, bridge renewal, and delivery of community infrastructure;
2. Be distributed via a transparent and equitable formula, reflecting factors such as road length, geographic spread, asset condition, and financial capacity;
3. Support economic resilience, community wellbeing, and service access in rural and regional areas, aligned with national productivity, decentralisation, and disaster recovery priorities.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Rural and regional councils are responsible for extensive road networks and vital community infrastructure with limited revenue streams. The \$1 billion national annual shortfall in local road maintenance (as identified by the Grattan Institute) reflects a growing disconnect between infrastructure responsibilities and funding.

Programs like LRCI and Roads to Recovery have been essential in closing that gap—but without a permanent, predictable funding stream, councils are left vulnerable to funding volatility and short-term grants cycles.

The ALGA's 2024 National State of the Assets Report showed a \$1 billion improvement in asset condition due to LRCI. This demonstrates clear evidence of impact. A permanent version of this program would cement these gains, address structural inequities, and support national priorities around freight productivity, decentralisation, and disaster resilience.

This motion builds on:

1. ALGA and NGA advocacy around sustainable roads and infrastructure funding;
2. Strong sector-wide momentum for formula-based, equitable capital investment;
3. A clear opportunity to shape national infrastructure policy in a way that benefits all Victorian councils, especially those most in need.

Motion 68. Coastal Hazard Overlay

Submitting Council: South Gippsland Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) call on the Victorian Government to urgently coordinate and fully fund a statewide Coastal Hazard Overlay to be implemented into applicable Planning Schemes across Victoria. The purpose is to give coastal councils and landholders agency to plan for and mitigate known risk.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Victoria's coastal communities face increasing risks from climate change impacts, including sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and extreme weather events. These hazards pose significant threats to lives, property, infrastructure, and the natural environment along our coastline. Currently, the lack of a consistent, statewide Coastal Hazard Overlay within Victorian planning schemes means that coastal hazard risks are not uniformly or adequately addressed in land use planning decisions. This results in varying levels of protection, potential increased vulnerability of coastal developments, and increased costs for councils and communities in managing hazard impacts. Urgent action is needed from the Victorian Government to coordinate and fully fund the development and implementation of a comprehensive Coastal Hazard Overlay that can be incorporated into all applicable Planning Schemes across the state.

Motion 69. Pre-Planning Funding Support for CHMP and Early-Stage Infrastructure Costs

Submitting Council: Mitchell Shire Council

Motion:

That the MAV:

1. Advocates to the Victorian Government, through the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Local Government, for the establishment of a dedicated pre-planning fund to assist councils with the costs of Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) preparation and other early-stage project investigations.
2. Notes that these costs are placing significant financial pressure on councils—particularly in growth areas—and are impacting the timely and cost-effective delivery of essential local infrastructure.

Submitting Council Rationale:

CHMPs are designed to assess the potential impact of proposed activities on Aboriginal cultural heritage and outline strategies to manage and protect it and are mandatory when a "high impact activity" is planned within an "area of cultural heritage sensitivity", as defined by the CHMP regulations. High impact activities include activities like large-scale residential or industrial subdivisions, infrastructure projects, and developments requiring an Environment Effects Statement. CHMPs are prepared by a suitably qualified heritage expert and approved by a Registered Aboriginal Party (RAP) or First Peoples - State Relations. The cost impact to projects for local government is significant especially for growth councils, a dedicated pre-planning fund would assist growth councils to meet the costs without impacting the project budget.

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Motion 70. Illegal Tree Removal

Submitting Council: Whitehorse City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls on the State Government to significantly increase penalties for illegal tree removal across all relevant legislation.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Illegal tree removal is a persistent and growing issue across Victoria, undermining environmental sustainability, neighbourhood character, urban forest strategies, and climate resilience efforts led by local governments.

Current penalties are often insufficient to deter unlawful behaviour and are frequently absorbed by developers or landowners as a cost of doing business. In many municipalities, mature canopy trees are being removed without approval to facilitate urban development, eroding public trust in planning controls and damaging biodiversity, habitat corridors, and the liveability of our communities.

Motion 71. Tree Protection post State Government Planning Scheme Amendments

Submitting Council: Boroondara City Council

Motion:

That the MAV advocate to the Victorian Government for the following:

1. Amend the Townhouse and Low Rise Code canopy requirement to 30% on development lot so that development contributes to the increase in tree canopy in Boroondara and metropolitan Melbourne.
2. The introduction of strong canopy tree protections into Victorian planning schemes to ensure that canopy trees are suitably protected and considered through the planning permit assessment process.
3. Increase the penalties under the Local Government Act and Planning and Environment Act for breaches of tree protection controls.

Submitting Council Rationale:

As development intensity across metropolitan Melbourne is increased, greater pressure is being put on canopy trees and more are being removed to accommodate development.

Recent amendments to the Planning Scheme for residential development under the new Townhouse and Low Rise Code have introduced a minimum 10% tree canopy cover requirement (20% on large lots) as part of the 'deemed-to-comply' assessment process. Further, this new provision does not provide for any consideration of or protection for existing trees. The 10% requirement is below the existing canopy cover percentage for most metropolitan Councils, and below the government's target of 30% canopy across metropolitan Melbourne. As a result, new development will be permitted to diminish tree canopy rather than contributing to realise targets.

Motion 72. Urban Densification

Submitting Council: Whitehorse City Council

Motion:

That the MAV calls upon the State Government to:

1. Investigate the impact of urban densification on the availability and quality of public open spaces, particularly in areas with low open space per person.
2. Examine whether densification genuinely delivers affordable housing given high rates of population growth.
3. Review the implications of government acquisition powers on public open space, highlighting the effect of compulsory acquisitions for infrastructure projects and their impact on local communities.
4. Advocate for stronger protections and policies to preserve and expand public open spaces in middle and outer-ring suburbs, recognising the environmental, social, and health benefits these areas provide.
5. Examine the impact of urban densification on physical and community infrastructure, such as schools, health services, drainage, and congestion on roads.
6. Engage with relevant stakeholders, including community groups and planning bodies, to identify best practices and policy recommendations for maintaining and enhancing open spaces in the face of urban growth.

Submitting Council Rationale:

As urban densification accelerates, it is critical to balance growth with the preservation of public open spaces and the demands placed on physical and community infrastructure. Open spaces are essential for community health, environmental sustainability, and social cohesion. This motion seeks to ensure that the State Government proactively addresses these challenges and advocates for policies that protect and expand our precious open spaces for current and future generations.

Motion 73. Improving the Planning Scheme Amendments approvals process

Submitting Council: Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) advocate to the Victorian Government for reforms to the planning scheme amendment process, including:

1. Investigating simpler pathways for minor amendments;
2. Introducing more flexible processes based on complexity and risk
3. Reducing high costs for councils
4. Simplifying panel processes
5. Reviewing outdated notice requirements; and
6. Clarifying and streamlining the authorisation process.

Submitting Council Rationale:

The current planning scheme amendment process is often slow, costly, and overly complex, creating barriers for councils and reducing certainty for developers and communities. Councils routinely spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on expert reports and legalistic panel hearings, even for amendments with minimal risk.

Introducing simpler pathways for minor amendments and more flexible processes based on complexity would save time and resources while improving responsiveness. Panel hearings should be streamlined, with more matters considered “on the papers” to reduce unnecessary expense. Outdated notice requirements, such as mandatory newspaper ads, should be replaced with more effective digital tools. Additionally, the authorisation process must be clarified and accelerated to restore public trust and support council planning efforts.

These reforms would enable a more efficient, transparent, and community-focused planning system across Victoria.

Motion 74. A transport plan for Victoria

Submitting Council: Port Phillip City Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) calls on the State Government of Victoria to publish Victoria's integrated transport plan, as required under the Transport Integration Act 2010 and in line with Recommendation #33 of Infrastructure Victoria's Infrastructure Strategy 2021–2051 and Recommendation #35 of the updated Infrastructure Victoria 2025–2055 Strategy.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Victoria currently does not have a publicly available integrated transport plan, despite legislative requirements under the Transport Integration Act 2010. The absence of such a plan hampers effective integration between land-use planning and transport provision. This lack of coordination negatively impacts local governments and the communities they serve, limiting the ability to plan for sustainable growth, equitable access, and efficient infrastructure investment. Publishing a comprehensive transport plan would support better alignment across state and local priorities and improve outcomes for all Victorians.

Motion 75. Western Highway Duplication

Submitting Council: Horsham Rural City Council

Supporting Councils: Yarriambiack Shire Council, West Wimmera Shire Council, Pyrenees Shire Council, Northern Grampians Shire Council, Moorabool Shire Council, Melton City Council, Hindmarsh Shire Council, Ballarat City Council, Ararat Rural City Council.

Motion:

Understanding that duplication of the Western Highway from Ballarat to Stawell was scheduled to be completed in 2018, THAT, the Municipal Association of Victoria support the ten member Councils of the Western Highway Action Committee (WHAC) in calling for the Victorian and Australian Governments to ensure sufficient funding and expedite the required legal and administrative processes, to enable the delayed section of works near Ararat to recommence as soon as possible. This project is imperative, in light of the continuing numbers of serious accidents, including fatalities, on that particularly perilous section of the Western Highway, which affects all western Victorians, as well as interstate travellers (including B-double and road train heavy vehicles) and tourists.

Submitting Council Rationale:

- The Western Highway is Australia's third busiest interstate freight route.
- Duplication of the Western Highway commenced with the Bacchus Marsh bypass in about 1972.
- Since then duplication has progressed to reach Buangor, near Ararat, 155 km from Caroline Springs on Melbourne's western edge, and only about 38% of the 408 km to the South Australian border. Progress of duplication to the border has averaged about 0.7% per year.
- A contract was awarded for the next stage of construction from Buangor through to just east of Ararat, but works have now been delayed since soon after the commencement of that contract in 2018.
- While some of the reasons for the delay have been beyond the control of the Governments, the intent of this motion is to call on Governments to do all within their powers to expedite the supporting legal and administrative processes which are also required to enable works to recommence.
- For example, work on a new Cultural Heritage Management Plan is understood to be significantly advanced. The Governments are urgently requested to expedite any supporting processes necessary to enable that to be considered by the Registered Aboriginal Party.
- In the period 2020-24, the unduplicated section of the Western Highway from Buangor to Stawell experienced 5 fatalities and 26 serious injuries as a result of collisions. Four of the five fatalities arose from head-on collisions, which may have been less serious if duplication had been completed.
- The collision statistics continue to increase, with a further three fatalities and four serious injuries occurring so far in 2025 (to July). Tragically, the three fatalities were in a single accident.
- While this motion could be considered to be of regional level significance, it should be escalated to state-level consideration by MAV, on the basis of:

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- The status of the Western Highway as an interstate corridor of national significance.
- Its contribution to support regional development over much of the western half of the state.
- The protracted delays in completing the major upgrade investment.

Links to MAV Strategy Priorities

2. Connected Places

The Western Highway is the principal corridor connecting Western Victoria to Melbourne and Ballarat, and connecting communities along the corridor to each other. Western Victoria is a flourishing region for mineral sands and renewable energy developments, on top of its strong agriculture and tourism base, with potential investments of up to \$20B in these sectors in next few years. This corridor provides the vital connection between regional workforces and these developments, and a key link to markets in Melbourne and Adelaide. Re-commencement of the duplication works is necessary to enhance the productivity of this key route for people and commodities.

3. Health and Wellbeing

The un-duplicated sections of the Western Highway are continuing to experience high levels of significant injuries, and unfortunately fatalities. The road safety benefits of duplication contribute to the region's health and wellbeing, and all Victorians who use this link.

10. Intergenerational Infrastructure

Duplication of the Western Highway started near Bacchus Marsh in the early 1970s. Progress has reached to near Buangor over a period of close to 50 years. Completion of the duplication works will remain relevant for many decades ahead.

Motion 76. Strengthening the powers of local government to respond to illegal clearing of vegetation

Submitting Council: Nillumbik Shire Council

Motion:

That the Municipal Association of Victoria advocates to the State Government to strengthen the powers of local councils to effectively enforce, respond to breaches of, and have increased penalty units for, contraventions of their Planning Schemes under the Victorian Planning Provisions, particularly in regard to illegal native vegetation removal as referenced in the “Offsetting Native Vegetation Loss on Private Land” VAGO Report (May 2022), and illegal earthworks.

Submitting Council Rationale:

Native vegetation plays a critical role in protecting biodiversity, providing food and shelter for wildlife, helping control erosion, and improving water quality.

It is a unique and valued feature of our landscapes, particularly in rural and peri-urban regions of the state that often comprise large parcels of land designated as Green Wedge.

Under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 it is illegal to remove native vegetation without a permit.

Local Councils are responsible for enforcing breaches of the Act through their planning schemes as part of the Victorian Planning Provisions. However, current powers limit the enforcement action that councils are able to undertake, and fines for breaches are often not high enough to deter people from illegally removing vegetation.

When fines are issued, they are often significantly less than what Councils spend resourcing enforcement action. When infringements are issued by the Magistrates Court, they are referred to Fines Victoria. However, fines are frequently not paid and get lost in the system. Councils also find it difficult to recover fines through Fines Victoria.

Councils spend a lot of time trying to negotiate on-ground remediation outcomes including voluntary native vegetation offsets. Outside of these voluntary measures, Councils have the ability to try and seek enforcement orders at VCAT. However, again, this has significant impacts on budgets and resources, and costs are often not recouped, even in the event of costs applications being made.

Councils spend significant time and resources undertaking valuable work and producing important strategies, including Urban Tree Canopy, Neighbourhood Character and Biodiversity strategies, to protect biodiversity values and vegetation. Support in the deterrence of illegal vegetation removal, as outlined above, will support that investment and ensure better outcomes are achieved for our community and the environment.