

Your Councillor Support Network

Membership Prospectus



The VLGA
acknowledges
the Traditional
Owners of Country
throughout Victoria
and recognises
their continuing
connection to
land, waters and
community.

We pay our respects
to the Traditional
Owners, their elders
past, present and
future, and to their
cultures.

Welcome

It is my great privilege to present the Victorian Local Governance Association's 2024 Membership Prospectus.

This document is your insight into membership with the VLGA - from the exclusive perks of membership, to how we translate our thirty years of experience working alongside local government representatives into strong advocacy and advancement on behalf of our members.

Your VLGA is made of a deeply diverse and strong network of experienced leaders - two-thirds of Victorian councils are VLGA members.

We are solely focussed on the leadership development, skills training, and the good governance requirements of local representatives.

For us, good governance ensures the diverse voices within your communities are empowered and are actively engaged in the decision making of local government. It means you are performing at the highest level and are delivering consistent outcomes for your respective communities, supported by the collective strength of the VLGA.



VLGA members are high calibre leaders and ethical decision-makers who are ready to represent and serve their communities with respect.

I encourage you to join in our proud history, reinforcing the highest standards of good governance across local government. .

Kathryn Arndt

CEO, Victorian Local Governance Association

“When I was first elected to be a Councillor, I had very little understanding of what I was supposed to do. I knew what the community wanted me to do, after all, they voted for me, on the basis of my election promises. I felt that being elected was my biggest hurdle, however, it was when my real challenges started.

I had to learn how to work with my fellow Councillors, some of whom had stood for election on completely the opposite issues to me. Somehow, we had to work out how to make decisions together. And the decisions weren't just about the issues I was interested in. There were so many things to do!

Being able to ring the VLGA and talk to someone about how to work with my colleagues, what my role was in relation to the CEO and council staff, how to deal with difficult constituents, where to get information about Acts and legislation, and so much more, made all the difference for me. Meeting other Councillors at events has added even more value. Together, it gave me the knowledge and confidence to do my job as a Councillor.”

~ Councillor, Metropolitan Council



VLGA members are high- performance Councillors and Councils

We empower our members

The VLGA is your councillor support network. We work alongside elected representatives from your candidacy to end-of-term.

We inspire and enable the good governance of our members, empowering your participatory, inclusive and ethical decision-making when it comes to leading diverse communities.

The VLGA is the only peak body in the local government sector with the singular focus of good governance and support for councillors. We are apolitical and member-run.

As the leading voice for councillors, we advance policy and legislative change to improve the working lives of our members.

We work within Victorian communities, raising awareness of the important work of local council and equipping community members who represent the diversity of their community with the skills, knowledge and connections required to be successful community leaders.

We look forward to welcoming you to the VLGA.



Did you know?

Only one VLGA member Council has ever been the subject of a Commission of Inquiry. Non-member Councils are six times more likely to face this outcome – with almost one in seven non-member Councils having already done so.

What is good governance?

At the VLGA, we pride ourselves on bringing good governance to life.

Good governance is the process our members undertake in making and implementing decisions impacting their diverse communities. It is the consistency with which you deliver high quality and positive outcomes for your communities.

Good governance is not about local representatives making ‘correct’ decisions, rather it is the best practice process for decision-making.

For us, local representatives who apply our good governance principles are committed to continuous learning and development. This ensures the diverse voices from across our communities are welcomed and have access to participate in decision-making.

As a VLGA member, you can receive advice on a range of good governance issues, including the development of model policies and protocols, governance rules and interpretation of the *Local Government Act 2020*.

We support the good governance of our membership by offering practical solutions that can be cost-effectively administered in the real world.

VLGA members demonstrate best-practice governance

We train and support our members

Your VLGA provides member councillors with the resources, information and education to support good governance and leadership. We run high level training for councillors, executives and officers, working in partnership with councils to deliver programs which meet their needs and requirements to do their jobs well.

The VLGA event program ranges from small, targeted online workshops through to live forums that push the boundaries of local government thinking. Most VLGA events are offered in either hybrid or online formats – enabling members from across Victoria to participate without the need to travel outside of your municipality.

The VLGA also offers a diverse suite of training and professional development programs specifically designed for councillors and councils.

All training is strongly aligned with the new mandatory training requirements set out in the *Local Government Act 2020*.

As a VLGA member, you will enjoy discounted prices on our sector-leading training programs. Through our program of ongoing professional development workshops and seminars, our members are armed with the knowledge and skills to perform at their best and with good governance as their foundation.



"The speakers are the peak voices in the sector, the workshop sessions are relevant and provocative, and the facilitation is always first class. For new Councillors, first-time Mayors and Deputies, and for seasoned campaigners, FastTrack delivers."
Councillor, Regional Council

Member Exclusive

Lunch & Learn Sessions

Throughout the year, your VLGA provides access to free exclusive professional development Lunch and Learn sessions.

Session topics address key issues impacting our members, and discussions are led by subject matter experts from across the local government sector.

These online workshops are an invaluable opportunity for you to build your critical thinking skills, share reflections within a confidential forum and work together with your fellow VLGA members to develop experience-led solutions.

What we've done

Our FastTrack Professional Development Program is an intensive one-day program designed to give councillors the tools and strategies they need to serve the community well, as well as the opportunity to network with and learn from their peers and industry leaders.

FastTrack has been called one of the most engaging professional development opportunities on the councillor calendar.

VLGA is a champion for local government

We advocate for and represent our members

The VLGA has a front row seat to Ministerial decisions and discussions impacting the local government sector.

As a VLGA member, your experiences inform our engagement and dialogue with government, directly helping to shape the agenda and future of the local government sector.

Your VLGA works in partnership with other sector organisations, providing a united voice to government on issues that directly affect local councils.

We are an active participant in all discussions regarding the implementation of government policy as it impacts across our sector, and represent your voices across key working groups, committees and reference groups, as well as within our submissions and discussion papers.



Did you know?

At the local government elections in 2020, the VLGA launched our *Tap Her On the Shoulder Campaign* to encourage women to stand for local government. Our goal was to support gender parity across all Victorian councils. As a result of our advocacy, a record number of women councillors were elected by their communities.

Our commitment to encouraging more women to become councillors has continued during the most recent election campaign with the number of women being elected as councillors growing by 15.

The average number of women councillors at member councils is currently sitting at 46%, compared to 38% at non-VLGA member councils.

Member Exclusive

Governance Advisory Network

As a VLGA member, you can join our Governance Advisory Network (GAN). The GAN provides councillors and governance professionals access to critical information and resources to support their good governance, including updates on the latest in governmental policy developments and changes and issues impacting the local government sector, as a whole.

The GAN also acts as a key information channel with your VLGA, where the lived and living experiences of our members inform our political advocacy on necessary legislative and policy change.

VLGA members deliver great outcomes for their local communities

We enable our members

We believe good governance is best served through diverse voices participating in decision-making.

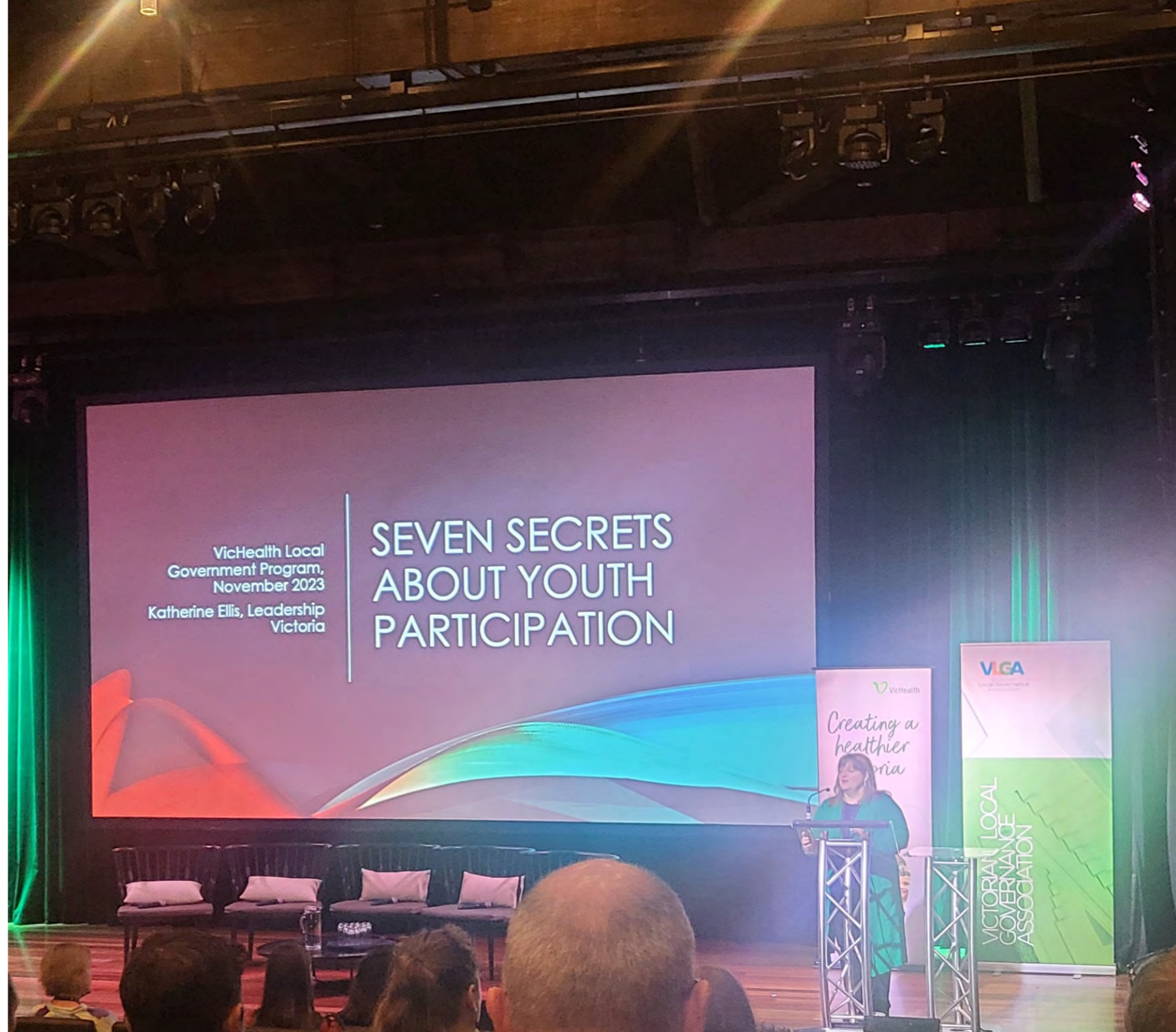
The VLGA works with councils and local communities on programs which directly affect the health and wellbeing of their municipality.

We have worked in partnership with a range of councils on key issues impacting their communities, including programs focussed on harm prevention from gambling as well as health education and prevention.

In reflection of the VLGA's ongoing commitment to achieving gender equality across Victorian councils and

championing diverse voices, we offer tailored training programs that recognise the unique experiences and gendered challenges experienced by women councillors.

Our Local Women Leading Change content offers practical solutions for women councillors, that is grounded in lived experience. This work is based on research results derived from our ongoing industry partnership with LaTrobe and Melbourne Universities.



“The VLGA have been an amazing support throughout my Councillor term. The VLGA’s training and professional development programs that I have attended in my representative role are always focusing on current issues with expert speakers offering a range of perspectives on governance and leadership in government. It has also opened up invitations to be part of additional working groups such as the Local Government Working Group on Gambling. The VLGA is a peak body that is professional, respectful, and collegiate. I would recommend any governance leader to participate in their training and professional development programs.”

- Councillor, Rural Council.

VLGA is an expert in good governance and local government

We listen to and inform our members

Through VLGA Connect we keep the sector informed of the latest developments, trends and issues facing local government.

Our weekly podcast The Governance Update (TGU) highlights the latest local government news, the Local Leaders series interviews Mayors and CEOs from member councils on the challenges and opportunities they face in their municipalities throughout their leadership.

We also hold interviews with prominent figures connected to local government in our In Conversation series, often giving insight into what the sector can expect to see in the future.

Through our partnership with LGiU, our Global Executive Live Panels bring together leaders from around the world to discuss important topics directly affecting councils and our Live Panel Series tackles the local issues with key insights from industry stakeholders and experts in interactive webinar discussions.

VLGA Connect programs and events are complimentary for VLGA members, giving them the direct access to and the opportunity to engage with and ask questions of leading sector figures.

As a first term councillor, I have found the VLGA TGU so informative and useful. It provides me with a broad sector update and knowledge that I can apply to my councillor position. It's full of advice and expert opinions that support my learning of the role of a councillor.

~ Councillor, Rural Council

What we've done

Each week more than 400 local government practitioners tune into The Governance Update podcast, making it the pre-eminent sources of news and information in the local government space.

VLGA

Victorian
Local Governance
Association

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