

Victorian Local Government Women's Charter

Supporting Women's Participation in Victorian Local Governments

Local governments, in their capacity as the governments closest to communities, are in a unique position to contribute to the global goal of gender equity for women.

This Charter is consistent with state, national and international protocols which highlight equal rights and opportunities as central to good local governance including: the Declaration on the Role of Australian Local Government (1997), the Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government (1998), the Victorian Code of Good Governance (2000) and the National Framework for Women in Local Government 2007, Victorian Human Rights and Responsibilities Charter 2006.

RECOGNISING the need for increased women's participation in the key decision making forums in the community and in democratic governance, we, the local governments of Victoria, on behalf of our communities support the following principles:

GENDER EQUITY
That women and men have an equal right to be representatives in local governments, committees and decision-making positions.

DIVERSITY
The inclusion of different experiences and perspectives in local governments and community decision-making strengthens local democratic governance and helps build cohesive communities. Councils and communities encourage and welcome the participation of all women.

ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP
Local governments will work with the community to increase the numbers and participation of women in public life, so that decision-making more clearly represents and reflects the interests and demographics of communities.



MAAV
MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA



WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT
STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES
AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



VLGA
Victorian Local Government
Association

2007



Victorian Local Government Women's Charter



A Guide to Implementation

TASK/ACTIVITY		COMPLETED/NOTES
STAGE ONE – FIRST STEPS		
1	Council adoption of the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter	
2	Arrange for a press release about how Council is implementing the Charter – even just promoting the fact that it exists and the Council has adopted it	
3	Display the Women's Charter at the civic centre/townhall, libraries, community centres, neighbourhood houses and other Council venues	
4	Use social media to promote and acknowledge progressive actions in your municipality	
5	Be alert to the organisation's culture – how are women talked about or treated in your organisation? Be prepared to challenge the culture	
6	Publicise Council support for the Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities highlighting Section 18, the right of all persons to take part in public life	
7	Ask for the relevant Director to report to Council on the status of your Council in relation to implementing the Charter	
8	Undertake a simple audit of Council's activities, processes and community projects to identify what you have already achieved and can build on.	
9	Distribute the Women's Charter to community groups with invite to feedback on local ideas and priorities	
STAGE TWO – GETTING GOING!		
10	Appoint Charter Champions (Staff and/or Councillors) and create a committee of Council with responsibility for women's civic participation	
11	In scheduling Council and committee meetings strive to avoid clashes with peak times for family commitments and ensure high quality child care is available and accessible	
12	Review women's representation on Council and Council committees and establish annual targets and timelines for achieving gender equity	
13	Review entitlements for Councillors, including allowances and reimbursements, and make sure all Councillors can make claims in practice	
14	Review entitlements for Council employees in relation to gender, position and pay – then identify some targets to improve or maintain a gender balance	
	Recruit Councillors and senior officers as mentors for newly elected	



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Reactivating the Charter in your Council

Before you begin

Check that your Council has adopted the Women's Charter – and even if your Council has – this is a chance to reactivate and reinforce its position in your Council. Make sure you take the time to talk to all the key players during this process of implementation – it's the only way it will work and still be going in ten years' time. This is legacy work.

The Women's Charter has three principles:

- gender equity
- diversity of representation and
- recognizing and supporting the active citizenship of women

The following checklist suggests actions you can take to audit, begin or continue the work of increasing participation by women in local democracy. It is by no means exhaustive – develop your own ideas and actions to suit your communities – involve them in the process.

Step by step

The Women's Charter activation process is designed so that any council can participate – regardless of where it is up to in terms of activating or implementing the Charter. Taking two steps every year is better than taking none. Start with the easy stuff – and work your way into the more complex areas.

Celebrate your work

Record your gains and publicise them – maintain momentum. Use social media to get the conversation going and to encourage broad participation.

Get support

There is a long history to the Women's Charter and huge experience. Take advantage of it. Use the web resources, and great material on the [MAV](#) and [VLGA](#) websites to help you get started or maintain momentum. Get Councillors on board and staff.

Stage 1: First steps	Stage 2: Getting going	Stage 3: All systems go	Stage 4: Best practice & review
Adopt Promote Publicise Check status	Recruit champions Recruit mentors Review representation Review entitlements	Training for community Resources for community Support diversity	Review status Audit, identify gaps Plan for next elections
	Community informed	Community engaged in discussion & learning	Community empowered & taking action



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15	Councillors & women from diverse backgrounds interested in taking on greater roles and civic and political leadership	
16	OTHER	
STAGE THREE – ALL SYSTEMS GO		
17	Plan and host pre-election workshops for women – scheduled well in advance of the 2020 elections	
18	Working with a Council officer, investigate how to encourage local indigenous women and women of non-English speaking background to see Council as a place where they can make a difference.	
19	Invite schools to participate in 'Learning about Local Democracy' programs with Councillors and officers visiting schools and students identifying key future issues	
20	Conduct regular community workshops – encouraging women's leadership and participation in political, civic and community decision-making processes	
21	Provide resources and in-kind support that facilitates women's involvement as active citizens eg child care, transport, meeting expenses, photocopying	
22	Fund an ongoing and regular Women in Local / Community Leadership program targeting women from diverse backgrounds	
23	Develop a regional publicity campaign about the life of a Councillor – with the view of educating the community about the importance of the role	
24	Publicise and widely distribute existing material for women candidates, eg A Gender Agenda, Now You're A Councillor	
25	Establish a funding pool for employment of interpreters and language aides to encourage participation of women from CALD backgrounds and women with disabilities	
26	OTHER	
STAGE FOUR – BEST PRACTICE AND REVIEW		
27	Ask the Council to audit political and civic participation according to the LGA demographics profile / atlas and identify gender barriers to participation associated with Indigenous status, ethnicity, disability, age, income or location	
28	Ensure Council's governance and administrative policies, processes and practices are open and transparent and encourage the participation of all citizens	
	Ensure active women citizens have opportunities and resources to	



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29	participate in the formation, implementation and evaluation of local public policies	
30	Undertake a gender impact analysis and rectify under-funding of women's groups and issues of specific interest to women that could hinder their civic participation	
31	Nominate a local active citizen for inclusion on the Victorian Women's Honour Roll and nominate a young women community activist for the Sally Isaac Award	
32	OTHER	

We look forward to your leadership in promoting the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter and translating the ideas contained within it into local reality.

END



Acting on the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN VICTORIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

FACT SHEET December 2016

Update Dec2016 Fact Sheet 20 - previous update December 2015

These are results immediately following 78 council elections in October 2016. Mayors are updated annually. Councillors numbers alter occasionally between elections but this data will remain the new benchmark until the next elections. All councils will go to election again in October 2020. In April 2016, 12 Greater Geelong councillors were replaced temporarily by Victorian Government appointed administrators.

There are 79 local governments and a total of 637 councillor positions in Victoria excluding vacant Geelong councillor positions.

243 (38%) of the 637 Councillors elected in October 2016 are female.

Data history: Aug2000: 157 councillors, 26.6%; Apr2001: 160 councillors, 26.9%, 2/10/01:165 councillors, 27.6%, June2002: 164 crs of 601 27.3%; 14/08/02: 166 councillors, 27.7%; Oct2003:177 councillors of 621, 28.5%, 2/4/2004: 178 councillors, 29%; Mar2005: 181 councillors of 620, 29%; Jan2006: 191 of 635, 30%; Jun2008: 197 of 635, (31%); 30/08/09: 188 of 631, (29.8%); Oct2010: 183 councillors (29.5%), Oct2012: 215 councillors (34%)

Local governments with more than 40% of women councillors – 41% (32 actual)

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Ararat 42% (3/7) | • Greater Shepparton 44% (4/9) | • Mornington Peninsula 45% (5/11) |
| • Boroondara 50% (5/10) | • Hobsons Bay 57% (4/7) | • Mount Alexander 43% (3/7) |
| • Brimbank 64% (7/11) | • Hume 45%(5/11) | • Murrindindi 71% (5/7) |
| • Campaspe 4% (4/9) | • Indigo 57% (4/7) | • South Gippsland 44% (4/9) |
| • Central Goldfields 42% (3/7) | • Kingston 44% (4/9) | • Southern Grampians 43% (3/7) |
| • Corangamite 71% (5/7) | • Loddon 40% (2/5) | • Stonnington 55% (5/9) |
| • Darebin 66%(6/9) | • Macedon Ranges 55% (5/9) | • Strathbogie 43% (3/7) |
| • Gannawarra 42% (3/7) | • Manningham 55% (5/9) | • Surf Coast 55% (5/9) |
| • Glen Eira 44% (4/9) | • Mansfield 40% (2/5) | • Whitehorse 66% (6/10) |
| • Glenelg 42% (3/7) | • Maribyrnong 71% (5/7) | • Wodonga 43% (3/7) |
| • Greater Bendigo 55% (5/9) | • Maroondah 44% (4/9) | • Yarra City 55% (5/9) |
| | • Melton 55% (5/9) | • Yarriambiack 57% (4/7) |
| | • Moonee Valley 55% (5/9) | |
| | • Moreland 45% (5/11) | |

Data history: 2000: 12% (9); 2004: 22%(18); 2008: 28% (22); 2009: 18% (14); 2010 16% (13); May2012 18% (14); Dec 2015 35% (28)

All councils in Victoria have female councillors.

Data history – Councils with no women elected: Oct2001:5 councils 6%, Aug2002:4 councils 5%; Apr2004:5 councils, 6%; Mar05:7 councils 9%; Jan2006:5 councils 6%; Jan2008:4 councils 5%; Jun2008:after by-elections, 2 councils 3%; Dec2010:5 local governments (6%) Dec 2012, all councils have female councillors.



Acting on the Victorian Local Government Women's Charter

Metro/Interface/Rural/Regional comparisons

Women Councillors	0 women councillors	1 woman councillor	2+women councillors	40%+ women councillors
Metropolitan/Interface	0	3	27	17
Rural	0	9	29	14
Regional	0	1	11	5
Total councils (78)	0	13	67	36

Excl Geelong which has administrators

Local governments with female mayors elected in 2016/2017 : 40% (32 women mayors)

- Ballarat
- Bass Coast
- Corangamite
- Darebin
- Glen Eira
- Glenelg
- Greater Bendigo
- Hindmarsh
- Hobsons Bay
- Horsham
- Indigo
- Latrobe
- Macedon Ranges
- Manningham
- Maribyrnong
- Melton
- Mitchell
- Monash
- Moonee Valley
- Moreland
- Mornington Peninsula
- Mount Alexander
- Murrindindi
- Port Phillip
- Southern Grampians
- Stonnington
- Strathbogie
- Warrnambool
- Wellington
- Whitehorse
- Wodonga
- Yarra City

Data history: Aug2000: (15)19%; Oct2001: (18) 23%, Aug2002: (22) 28%, Oct2003: (29) 37%; Apr2004: (24) 30%; Dec2005: (24) 30%; Jan2006: (29) 37%, Jan2007: (20) 25%; Jun2008: (19) 24%, Jan2009: (20) 25%, Dec2009: (16) 20% Dec2010: (18) 23%; Dec2011 23% (18); Dec 2012 38% (30); December 2013 25% (20); Dec 2014 38% (30); Dec 2015 34% (27)

There is only one female councillor in 13 local governments (17%) :

- Banyule
- Bayside
- Colac-Otway
- Hindmarsh
- Mansfield
- Moorabool
- Moynes
- Pyrenees
- Queenscliffe
- Towong
- Wangaratta
- West Wimmera
- Yarra Ranges

Data history: Aug2000: 24 councils, 30.7%, Oct2001:21 councils, 27%, Aug2002: 23 councils 29%, Oct2003: 19 councils 24%; Apr2004: 17 councils 21.5%; Jan2006: 10 councils 13%; Jun07: 11 councils 14%; Jan2008: 10 councils 13%; Jun2008 after by-elections: 9 councils 11%; Dec2010: 14 councils 18%. Dec2012: 10 councils 13%.

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NEXT COUNCIL ELECTIONS – OCTOBER 2020

Publications available to support women into and on local government councils:

- [A Gender Agenda](#) – kit for women who want to stand for local government and those who want to assist others to stand (5th edition)
- [Now You're a Councillor](#) www.nyac.org.au website for newly elected women councillors
- [GoWomenLG](#) www.gowomenlg.org.au website for potential candidates
- Victorian Local Government Women's Charter - supported by the [MAV](#) and the [VLGA](#)

Enquiries: December 2016 Fact Update 20. Please let us know if there are any errors. This Fact Sheet will be updated in December 2017 (new mayors). **Linda Bennett VLGA T:** (03) 9349 7904 **E:** linda@vlga.org.au