

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
Minister for Veterans



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IT'S OUR TIME: BACKING WOMEN TO STAND FOR COUNCIL

A drive by the Victorian Government to inspire a new generation of women on councils is gathering pace ahead of the October local government elections.

Opening the LGPro Women's Professional Development Series today, Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane announced that social impact marketing firm Ellis Jones had received a \$50,000 grant to encourage and support more women to stand for election.

Expected to launch in mid-August, the *It's Our Time* campaign aims to inspire women to get involved in local government and nominate for election. The push will include the provision of online resources including webinars.

It's Our Time will draw on the experience and expertise of a range of partners including LGPro (Local Government Professionals), the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Victorian Local Governance Association, the YWCA and the Ethnic Communities Council.

A century on from the election of the state's first woman councillor, Mary Rogers, Victoria now boasts the highest number of female mayors in history with 32 in place across the state. However, 13 of Victoria's 79 councils have just one female councillor while overall, women account for just 38 per cent of elected representatives.

The new grant brings the Victorian Government's investment in promoting pathways for a more diverse range of candidates standing for local government in 2020 to \$137,000.

This has included backing the Victorian Local Governance Association's *Your Community, Country and Council* campaign to Aboriginal communities.

Minister Leane has also announced the launch of a new Gender Equality Advisory Panel which will focus on achieving the 50 per cent representation target set by Victoria's gender equality strategy *Safe and Strong* and delivering the reforms of the state's new Gender Equality Act 2020.

The panel will include members from across the sector including LGPro and councillor representatives.

The Local Government Act 2020 also promotes gender diversity with stronger action on sexual harassment and rules for councils to measure gender equality, diversity and inclusiveness in their workforce plans.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"Gender equality makes communities, councils and Victoria stronger. That's why we're making support available to encourage women to run for council and support safe campaigning."

"The new Gender Equality Advisory Panel will be full of experience and know-how. It's an important step towards achieving gender equity in councils by 2025 and one that will inspire a new generation of councillors."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

"Victoria is leading the country when it comes to improving gender equality. We want people of all genders to enjoy equal rights, opportunities, responsibilities and outcomes – and programs like this help us make it happen."

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