

Friday, 5 February 2021

ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Andrews Labor Government has launched a new initiative to drive gender equality across Victoria's 79 councils.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane today announced the formation of the Gender Equality Advisory Committee, which will be co-chaired by Labor members of parliament Juliana Addison and Kat Theophanous.

The committee will draw on the experience of women from across the sector to ensure that the local government sector can harness the benefits of equality for all Victorians.

Expressions of Interest are now open to fill 10 places on the committee. Mayors, councillors, senior staff and sector leaders will be encouraged to nominate suitable candidates.

The committee will advise the Minister for Local Government and the Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams on how to deliver the Labor Government's target of 50 per cent female mayors and councillors by 2025.

In addition, the committee will drive implementation of the Australian-first Gender Equality Act across local government. Its work will complement that of the Public Sector Gender Equality Commissioner Dr Niki Vincent, who was appointed last September.

The committee will also include representatives from the Australian Local Government Women's Association, the Australian Services Union, the Municipal Association of Victoria, the Victorian Local Governance Association, Local Government Professionals and Reconciliation Victoria.

Following the 2020 local government elections, 272 women were elected to council – representing 43.8 per cent of councillors.

Quote attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"Victoria has made tremendous progress on gender equality in local government. This new committee will focus on gender equality across the sector and build collaborative, forward-thinking approaches to the issues."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

"Victoria is leading the way in pursuit of gender equality. I'm looking forward to working with the committee to ensure we meet our goals – because gender equality benefits all of us."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"This Committee will drive new opportunities for women to participate in local government. I'm delighted to be contributing to this effort, which will build on our work to progress gender equality in our state."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"This is an exciting time for local government with record numbers of female councillors elected last year. I'm excited to have this opportunity to contribute to further breaking down barriers in the workplace."