

Media Release

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



Thursday, 22 April 2021

GENDER EQUALITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE NAMED

The Andrews Labor Government has announced the 16-person committee that will drive a new approach to gender equality in the local government sector.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane and Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams established the Gender Equality Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Labor Government Members Juliana Addison and Kat Theophanous, in February this year to drive gender equality across Victoria's 79 councils.

The committee will draw on the experiences of women from across the local government sector and advise on how to deliver the Government's target of 50 per cent female mayors and councillors by 2025, as well as the implementation of the Australian-first Gender Equality Act across local government.

Ten members of the committee were chosen from councillors and council staff through an expression of interest: Cr Jenna Davey-Burns (Kingston), Cr Jennifer Barrera (Wyndham), Cr Mary-Ann Brown (Southern Grampians), Cr Sarah Race (Mornington), Deputy Mayor Cr Helen Healy (Mildura), Rachael Gadd (Towong Shire), Chief Executive Rebecca McKenzie (Glen Eira), Chief Executive Jessie Holmes (Yarriambiack), Meghan Hopper (Moonee Valley) and Fleur Cousins (Campaspe Shire Council).

Six other members will represent peak local government associations: Cr Kylie Spears (Australian Local Government Women's Association), Natasha Wark (Australian Services Union), Cr Jennifer Anderson (Municipal Association of Victoria), Kathryn Arndt (Victorian Local Governance Association), Jennifer Bednar (Local Government Professionals) and Maria Dimopoulos (Reconciliation Victoria).

The first meeting of the committee will be held via videoconference later today. 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

"Gender equality benefits everyone and I'm thrilled to welcome the members of the new committee. This is a great opportunity to drive change for all women in local government."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Gabrielle Williams

"Victoria has record numbers of female councillors and the committee is a chance to achieve our goal of equal representation on councils by 2025."

Quote attributable to Member for Northcote Kat Theophanous

"This committee is a powerhouse of skills, experience and knowledge. I'm looking forward to working together to make a real impact on gender equality in local government."

Quote attributable to Member for Wendouree Juliana Addison

"This committee has the know-how and experience to break down barriers and achieve our goals for gender equality in local government."

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