

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Casino, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Local Government

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Roads and Road Safety



Tuesday, 4 July 2023

## HELPING WOMEN SERVE AND SHAPE THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Andrews Labor Government is providing women across Victoria with the tools and connections to advance their leadership ambitions ahead of local government elections next year.

Some 65 women are participating in the second wave of the *Women Leading Locally* program as Victoria moves closer to achieving gender equality in local government.

Participants were selected from across the state with a focus on regions where women are underrepresented in councils. The 60 participants from the first year of the program will graduate in August.

Victoria set a national high mark for female local government representation at the 2020 council elections, with women making up 43.8 per cent of successful candidates.

There is more work to be done to achieve gender equality on councils, particularly in rural areas.

Women participating in the program also represent other historically underrepresented groups including Aboriginal women, young women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, women living with disability and women who identify as LGBTQI+.

Round two participant and Wadawurrung woman Kelly Ann Blake from the Loddon Mallee region welcomed the push for increased participation by women in leadership roles in rural Victoria.

As a biodiversity project officer for the Wadawurrung Aboriginal Corporation, Ms Blake is committed to leading by example in raising community awareness about native habitat and wildlife preservation as a means of bringing people together.

Through the *Women Leading Locally program*, she plans to assist women from underrepresented groups to effect community change where it is needed most.

*Women Leading Locally* is being delivered by the Institute of Community Directors Australia in partnership with Women for Election. To find out more, visit [localgovernment.vic.gov.au](https://localgovernment.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

*"We're equipping fantastic women with the skills and resources they need to best put their case for election to their local council."*

*"It is important that councils are representative of the communities they serve. Gender equality is an essential part of achieving this aim."*

### Quote attributable to Women Leading Locally participant Kelly Ann Blake

*"I see this program as an important opportunity to give a voice to the underrepresented in local affairs. I will champion greater support for social inclusion, our local and state parklands, and for mental health assistance."*

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