

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



Thursday, 31 August 2023

EMPOWERING FUTURE WOMEN COUNCILLORS AND MAYORS

Dozens of Victorian women who aspire to become local councillors are one step closer to achieving their ambition after graduating from the Andrews Labor Government's Women Leading Locally program.

Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne last night congratulated 60 graduates from the first round of the program which was created to improve gender equality in local government by supporting women to break down barriers to nominating for council.

Victoria set a national record for female representation in the 2020 local government elections, with women making up 43.8 per cent of elected councillors. Women Leading Locally builds on this momentum by equipping women with training, skills, mentoring and resources to campaign in the October 2024 elections.

The Labor Government's recently updated Gender Equality Strategy, Our Equal State, champions the target of 50-50 gender representation on councils by 2025. Women Leading Locally is one of many programs that supports this.

Last month, 65 participants from across Victoria started the second round of the program. These women are drawn from local government areas with low female representation.

They also represent historically underrepresented groups including Aboriginal women, culturally and linguistically diverse women, young women, women living with disability and women who identify as LGBTQI+.

One of the first graduates is Rabbecca Mphande, from Cardinia Shire, who has been heavily involved in teaching and helping African-Australian and other culturally and linguistically diverse community groups over many years and is motivated by closing the gender gap as well as empowering her community.

Women Leading Locally is delivered by the Institute of Community Directors Australia in partnership with Women for Election. Find out more at localgovernment.vic.gov.au/our-programs.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Melissa Horne

"Women Leading Locally has been transformative for its participants. It's wonderful to see women emerging from the program ready to campaign in the local government elections next year."

"I look forward to seeing graduates seeking and winning leadership positions in their communities."

Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

"Our Gender Equality Strategy highlights more than 100 actions to bring us closer to gender equality, including achieving 50 per cent women mayors and councillors by 2025. This program is part of that mission."

Quote attributable to Women Leading Locally graduate Rabbecca Mphande

"In my work and advocacy, I see every day the challenges faced by many people in my community – even more if they're women and culturally diverse. The Women Leading Locally program has helped to deepen my knowledge and skills so I can even better support my community."

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