

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Awareness Campaign

That the MAV develops and implements a strategic communications campaign to raise the level of awareness and understanding of the work Councils do in regional and metropolitan Victoria and rebuilds the trust in local government as an institution.

RATIONALE:

There is a need for the MAV to lead the development of a state-wide campaign that helps build trust and confidence in local government and strengthens the relationships with our communities and stakeholders. We need a compelling story that articulates the purpose of local government and contributes to improving overall accountability and transparency.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Rate Capping

That the MAV advocates to the State Government on behalf of all Councils that:

- Consideration is given to sector-wide issues that are impacting the costs of all Councils, such as recycling, when the annual rate cap is being set rather than just setting the rate cap at CPI; and
- The funding provided to Councils to deliver services or undertake functions on behalf of the State Government is increased in line with real cost to Council of those services or functions.

RATIONALE:

Increases to Councils' main source revenue in rates on municipal properties have been capped by the State Government. The cap on rate increases since the introduction of rate capping have been set in line with the CPI forecast in State Government Budget Update released just prior to the setting of the rate cap.

No consideration is being given to other external factors that are having significant financial impact on Councils' operations. It is requested that consideration be given by the State Government to these factors when setting the cap on rate increases.

Councils provide services to the community on behalf of the State Government such as maternal and child health and undertake functions on behalf of the State Government such as the collection of the Fire Services Property Levy. The funding for these services from the State Government has not increased in line with the increases in the cost to Councils of delivering these services creating overall financial disadvantage to Councils. It is requested that State Government funding is increased in line with cost increases experienced by Councils.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Aged Care Services

That the MAV:

1. Coordinates a campaign and advocates to maintain block funding for the delivery of the Commonwealth Home Support Program beyond June 2020,
2. Advocates for the Victorian State Government to grant an exemption to local government providing home care services from the National Competition Policy.

RATIONALE:

Reforms in the aged care sector have been driven by the federal government to achieve a nationally consistent system.

Local government in Victoria has a proud history of delivering aged care services to local communities. The Victorian system, supported with joint planning and delivery from local government, has been at the forefront of home support services which are responsive to local needs.

The current reform agenda provides certainty of funding for Commonwealth Home Support Program services only to the end of June 2020. It is unclear how the federal government will proceed with funding model beyond then although it was previously expected that block funding would end at that time, and a competitive market of service providers created instead.

This situation is creating uncertainty for older Victorians in receipt of these services, for service providers and for the workforce.

It is important that the federal reforms do not result in a lowest common denominator approach, where quality Victorian services may be affected because of an imposed national-wide system.

Block funding of local council services through the CHSP should be continued. That is, there should be a moratorium on ending CHSP block funding in Victoria. A federal review should be conducted to examine the potential impacts of removing block funding in favour of creating a competitive market of service providers in Victoria.

In 2018 the MAV passed a resolution to advocate for maintaining CHSP funding for local councils that want to continue delivering quality aged and home care services to their vulnerable and ageing communities and advocate for an analysis of impact on the gender pay gap of the introduction of My Aged Care, and the shift in service delivery away from local government.

The announcement of the Royal Commission into Safety and Quality in Aged Care in recent months is another reason why there should be a moratorium. The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety commenced its work and it is expected to deliver its final report in April 2020, the close proximity of this to the anticipated end of block funding would not provide government with the time to consider, findings and recommendations to potentially make changes to the funding model if required. Therefore, block funding should be extended to provide certainty to the community and to the workforce.

If the competitive market for CHSP is introduced after June 2020, National Competition Policy will apply to the services of many councils, and will effectively remove the ability of councils to subsidise their services. This could make it impossible for those councils to continue their services. Legal advice obtained by Darebin indicates that the Victorian government can approve an exemption to National Competition Policy to local government-provided home care services. This would allow local government's continued involvement in service provision if and when the service model changes.

Senior Victorians have benefited over decades from Victorian councils' leadership in the area of providing quality aged care services. Victorians should not be disadvantaged in the federal reforms.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Compulsory Inclusionary Zoning in Planning Schemes for Affordable Housing

That the MAV:

1. Advocate for a coordinated, national response to housing issues, incorporating all levels of government.
2. Advocate for mandatory controls in planning schemes, in the form of inclusionary zoning, to require affordable housing contributions as part of private development.
3. Ensure MAV is appropriately resourced to support Councils to implement state government housing policy.

RATIONALE:

Australia has faced a structural housing affordability problem for the last 60 years, whereby the growth in the cost of housing has outstripped growth in wages. In addition, the last 20 years have seen a significant reduction in government investment in public housing. These factors, and others, have resulted in a housing system that is unaffordable for increasing numbers of Australians.

The lack of affordable, secure housing in Australia will have significant social and economic impacts, not only on the individuals affected, but upon our society. There is significant cultural, social and economic importance attached to home ownership, and the inability of increasing number of people to enter the property market will have significant consequences. For example, the Australian government relies on the fact that many retired Australians own their own home in calculating the aged pension. If future generations do not have secure housing, there will be significant impacts upon the ability of the government to support and house older Australians.

Capital cities, particularly Melbourne and Sydney, have been acutely impacted by the lack of investment in public and community housing by successive governments. There are now more than 80,000 Victorians, including 20,000 children, on the waiting list for subsidised housing. Again, this has severe implications for those individuals directly affected, but also for society more broadly. Those in affordable and secure housing have better health and education outcomes, and are better able to contribute to and participate in civic life.

Given the significance of the impact of rising house prices on generations of Australia, a national policy debate and response is needed.

Summary of Key Arguments:

Housing affordability has become a critical issue in contemporary Australian society. There has been a structural affordability problem in Australia for the past 60 years – between 1960 and 2006 house prices increased by 2.7% per annum on average, while incomes increased by only 1.9% per annum. Housing prices have increased far beyond incomes. At the same time, housing supply has failed to keep pace with demand. Concessions and tax exemptions have increased demand, and incentives for housing supply have been limited. Rapid migration and population growth has increased demand for housing, particularly in large cities. There is a lack of institutional investment in Australia's rental housing market in part because of the lack of tax concessions and low investment returns. Superannuation funds in Australia have invested in the housing market in Europe and the US, but to a very limited extent in Australia.

As house prices rise, increasing numbers of people, particularly those on low and very low incomes, are unable to enter the property market, and rely on private rental housing. In Darebin, 1.9 per cent of private rental stock is affordable to very low income earners¹. Demand for affordable rental housing adds to demand for government-subsidised housing. There are more than 80,000 people, including 20,000 children, on the waiting list for social housing in Victoria². Many commentators, and Council, believe housing in Australia is at a crisis point³. All levels of government must take action to address declining housing affordability and the severe undersupply of affordable housing.

The planning system has received significant attention for its role in housing affordability, specifically the planning mechanisms that can be used to contribute to affordable housing supply. While such mechanisms have been adopted in some local jurisdictions in Australia, they have not resulted in significant outputs, in part due to a lack of support at the level of state and national government.

There is a need for a coordinated, national response to housing affordability. The policy levers that impact housing affordability span federal, state and local government. A national response should include establishment of a national body that is responsible for forecasting demand and supply and the development of a national housing strategy; tax reform to demand side incentives that work to reduce housing demand; implementation of supply side tax incentives that work to increase supply; significant investment and/or incentives for affordable housing, and finally, implementation of planning mechanisms, such as inclusionary zoning, that ensure that affordable housing is delivered as part of private development.

¹ Department of Health and Human Services 2018, Rental Report, available at <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report>

² Parliament of Victoria Legal and Social Issues Committee 2018, Inquiry into the Public Housing Renewal Program, available at https://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/images/stories/committees/SCLSI/Public_Housing_Renewal_Program/LSIC_58-11_PHRP_Text_WEB.pdf

³ Mares, P 2018, *No Place Like Home: Repairing Australia's Housing Crisis*, The Text Publishing Company, Melbourne

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motions: Less Car Dependant Society and Cycling Infrastructure

Part One

- That the MAV writes to the Minister for Planning requesting:
 - the Victorian Government plan for the decoupling of housing and parking;
 - an amendment to the planning scheme to remove the current minimum parking rates based approach for new developments in preparation for a shift in private car ownership and use.
 - Transport for Victoria to work closely with local governments in undertaking research and development into innovative and disruptive transport technologies and urban infrastructure.

Part Two:

- That the MAV:
 - Compiles information from local government cycling plans and work with councils to identify up to 50 priority projects to improve cycling infrastructure across Melbourne, enabling people to safely cycle as a primary mode of transport.
 - Presents these projects to the Minister for Transport, VicRoads and Transport for Victoria, with a request to fund these projects.
 - Calls on the Victorian Government to:
 - increase funding for cycling infrastructure to a minimum of \$500 million per year, noting that this is less than 0.05% of the Victorian government's 2018-19 roads budget; and
 - extend TAC coverage to include any person injured while riding a bike on Victorian roads and paths.

RATIONALE:

With the forthcoming introduction of autonomous vehicles and the increasing use of car share and ride share schemes; the need for households to privately own a car will lessen. In light of these shifts in car access and ownership the requirement for minimum parking rates in new developments will need to be reconsidered in the Victorian Planning Scheme.

Local government has a role in managing the decoupling of housing and parking (i.e. parking rates for new developments will need to be reconsidered with the view to remove minimum parking rates where appropriate). To date there has been little forward looking leadership on this matter shown by the Victorian Government, with planning decision being made on a case by case basis to derogate from the planning scheme.

The need for less onsite and on street parking should lead to the reallocation of public open space to provide communities with greater urban greening, safer pedestrian facilities, more economic vibrant streetscapes and increased liveability.

The Victorian Government's 2018 Cycling Strategy has not been funded to deliver a high standard of metropolitan cycling infrastructure. As a consequence Melbourne's cross city routes are in complete and vary widely in terms of a safety, design and user experience.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Nursing and Medication Management Subsidy for Home Care Packages

That the MAV calls on the Federal Government to introduce two new Home Care subsidies to medication management, and nursing services. This will allow Home Care Packages recipients to receive these two crucial services and maintain care in the community.

RATIONALE:

Home Care Packages are funded by the federal government to help older Australian with complex care need to live independently in their own homes.

As at 30 June 2018, there were 91,847 older Australians in receipt of Home Care Packages nationally, with additional 40,000 packages announced this financial year so far.

The federal government pays a range of care subsidies and supplements depending on the care requirements, and funding levels of a package are allocated based on the care needs. Currently Level 1 and 2 (basic and low needs) can access nursing services at the subsidised Commonwealth Home Support Program rate from nursing providers for short term when the Home Care Package funding have been fully allocated to other services, this is not available for Level 3 or 4.

Older people who are on a Home Care level 3 or 4 package, are assessed to have intermediate and high needs, although these level of packages have higher care subsidies levels, however due to the complex care need requirements and cost of case management service recipients are left with little funding to support them with all their care needs. This includes the medication management cost and the purchase of nursing services to meet their needs adequately. This motion argues for the government to consider specific supplements for the nursing support and medication management for people on these level 3 and 4. This anomaly and lack of funding for these two services places additional pressure on older Australians and their carers as it renders these services out of reach for people on a package.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Tree Protection

That the MAV advocates for a change in the Local Government Act allowing councils to charge the tree's Amenity Value (Melbourne City Council Method) or significantly increase the number of penalty units for the unauthorised removal or damage of a local law and planning scheme protected tree.

RATIONALE:

The purpose of this motion is to protect and enhance the urban character, by regulating tree removal and pruning of trees on private property.

With increasing housing density and loss of private open space protection of trees on private property is becoming an issue. Neighbourhoods are losing character and in this time of climate change the mitigating effects of tree canopy are being lost.

This is particularly true in middle and outer suburbs of major cities where rapidly growing populations are placing increasing demands on housing supply.

A mechanism to reduce this tree removal by an increase in fines will deter the indiscriminate removal of trees from private property.

Summary of Key Arguments:

- Protected trees can be very long-lived and provide a sense of character and identity to an area.
- They also contribute significantly to modifying the impacts of living in an urban environment, including reducing runoff into drains, reducing air temperatures, capturing dust particles and pollutants in the canopy, increasing property values, providing natural protection from the sun, contributing to psychological well-being and providing habitat for local fauna.
- An increasing density of urban development means that the number of large trees on private land is decreasing, therefore the health and sustainability value of these trees is becoming increasingly important.
- Decisions made in respect to tree removal permits need to consider the property owner's needs, any risk or damage to persons or property and the impact of the tree removal on the environment and local amenity.
- The current maximum fine under a local law and planning scheme is limited to 20 penalty points (currently \$3,200)
- The amenity value of a tree as a fine can potentially be much higher than the 20 penalty points and would be a greater deterrent to unauthorised removal

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Waste Recycling

That the MAV calls upon the Victorian Government to:

- 1) Immediately take steps to establish a storage facility for all recycling in order to avert it going to landfill;
- 2) To provide local governments with financial support in the event that SKM is unable to meet its contractual obligations to financial compensate local governments for the costs of directing recycling to landfill;
- 3) Set a up a Taskforce with local government representation as a first step to developing and implementing a new recycling industry policy;
- 4) Similarly to the renewable energy industry, develop a new comprehensive Victorian Government Recycling Industry Policy and invest the land fill levy into recycling processing and education.

2019 MAV State Council Meeting Motion

Motion: Advocacy for Homeless Women aged 50+

That the MAV:

1. Advocates to the State and Federal Government to provide significant, consistent and ongoing funding for social and affordable housing, which includes targeted support to address the needs of older women at risk of homelessness.
2. Advocates to the State Government to provide significant, consistent and ongoing funding for homelessness access points, to include assertive outreach and brokerage for safe emergency accommodation.
3. Advocates to the State Government to continue to implement measures aimed at improving women's financial security and economic independence across the lifespan, as outlined in the Safe and Strong, Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy.
4. Supports the North and West Housing Networks *A Crisis in Crisis* advocacy campaign and to promote the campaign to local government areas.

RATIONALE:

Women over 55 years are now the fastest growing cohort of homeless people in Australia. Experiencing Family Violence is the single most common reason women seek the support of the Homelessness Service System. Women experience economic inequality as a result of wage, wealth and retirement income gaps, increasing their risk of vulnerable to housing stress, insecurity and homelessness. Women who are older and living alone will be significantly more disadvantaged than men their age, less able to maintain homeownership and less able to compete in the private rental market for affordable accommodation.

Homelessness prevention is possible through the provision of affordable housing stock. In order for the supply of affordable housing to be significantly increased, ongoing and substantial investment is required. Further to this the cumulative impacts of social and financial disadvantage over a woman's lifetime mean that the gendered nature of homelessness cannot be overlooked. Measures aimed at improving women's financial security and economic independence across the lifespan is a vital component of preventing this homelessness. There is significant work being undertaken to further affordable housing and gender equality, and the MAV is ideally positioned to play a lead role in coordinating and supporting this work.