

The Hon. Paul Hamer MP
Minister for Local Government

Local Government

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

22 MAY 2026



Government
Services

Local Government Sector

The Local Government Portfolio delivers **policy, legislation** , and **programs** to support a responsive and accountable local government sector.



618 elected councillors represent community interests and are responsible for council decision-making and determining priorities



Councils provide critical partnerships with the State Government so Victorians can access public services and infrastructure that meet local community needs



Councils support their communities by providing more than 100 critical services and essential infrastructure



The Minister for Local Government oversees the local government system, engages with councils and sector on issues, intervenes when necessary and advocates for the sector within the State Government

Local Government Priorities



Supporting councils

- Grants to councils support efforts in providing critical community services, maintaining infrastructure, and preserving the environment.
- Supporting libraries as vibrant community hubs.



Emergency management support

- Councils provide significant support to their communities following emergency events.
- The Victorian Government backs Councils to support their communities after emergencies:
 - \$64.95m through Council Support Funds since 2020 to support councils respond to natural disasters
 - \$4.9m annually through the Municipal Emergency Resourcing Program



Working with the sector to continue strengthening good governance

- Working with councils, peak bodies and other stakeholders to improve governance, conduct and performance

Government has invested more than \$567 million since 2015 to support the delivery of library services

Key achievements for 2025-26

Progress has been made on key government priorities in the local government portfolio

- Delivered Hardship Guidelines to better enable councils to support their community members during a cost-of-living crisis.
- McCrae Board of Inquiry.
- Improving transparency and consistency through the local government Service Rates and Charges Guidelines.
- Supporting councils to meet statutory reporting and planning requirements.
- \$1.09 billion in grant funding provided to Councils, including Commonwealth Financial Assistance Grants and State Government programs.
- Partnering with peak bodies and councils to lift governance standards across the sector.
- Engaging with integrity agencies to support good governance and taking appropriate intervention actions :
 - 5 councils have municipal monitors appointed
 - 1 council is under administration.
- Delivering a Local Government Gender Equality Strategy to promote greater diversity in the local government sector:
 - Mentoring program for new women councillors
 - Annual Mary Rogers Awards.

Forward look to the next 12 months

Local government is uniquely positioned to drive the change we need to build stronger, more resilient communities.



Creating more supportive governance structures

- Continued delivery of Operation Sandon recommendations, including the Transparency Policy and Model Governance Rules to support good governance in councils.
- Referring to integrity agencies to identify and investigate issues where required.



Financial sustainability and supporting critical infrastructure

- Continuing to support councils to deliver library services through the Public Libraries Funding Program, Premiers' Reading Challenge Book Fund and the Living Libraries Infrastructure Program.
- Advocating strongly to the Commonwealth regarding Financial Assistance Grants.
- Tabling the government's response to the statutory review of the local government rate cap mechanism.



Working with the sector to shape a more sustainable future

- Developing innovative approaches that support sustainable local government, build workforce capability and capacity, and strengthen partnerships.
- Focusing on supporting diverse representation across Victoria's councils.
- Working with Traditional Owners and councils to support Recognition and Settlement Agreements.

Government provided funding of **\$5.4 million in 2026 -27** to minimise insecure work in the local government sector by establishing the **Local Government Fair Job Code** .