

Report to the Future Melbourne Committee

Agenda item 6.4

Municipal Association of Victoria, State Council meeting October 2022

6 September 2022

Presenter: Michael Tonta, Director Governance

Purpose and background

1. The purpose of this report is to propose motions for consideration at the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) State Council meeting on 14 October 2022.
2. The MAV holds two State Council meetings each year with member councils having an opportunity to submit motions for consideration on matters which are of state-wide significance to local government.
3. Motions for the October State Council meeting are due by 16 September 2022.

Key issues

4. Following consideration by Councillors and management, it is proposed that motions on the following subjects be considered for submission on behalf of the City of Melbourne:
 - 4.1. Community batteries
 - 4.2. Local government workforce planning
 - 4.3. Affordable housing
5. Details of the proposed motions and supporting rationale are included at Attachment 2 of the report from management.

Recommendation from management

6. That the Future Melbourne Committee approves the motions outlined in Attachment 2 of the report from management for consideration at the October 2022 Municipal Association of Victoria State Council meeting.

Attachments:

1. Supporting Attachment (Page 2 of 5)
2. Proposed motions for the MAV State Council meeting (Page 3 of 5)

Supporting Attachment

Legal

1. There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.

Finance

2. There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation contained in this report.

Conflict of interest

3. No member of Council staff, or other person engaged under a contract, involved in advising on or preparing this report has declared a material or general conflict of interest in relation to the matter of the report.

Health and Safety

4. In developing this proposal, no Occupational Health and Safety issues or opportunities have been identified.

Stakeholder consultation

5. No external stakeholder consultation was required in the development of this report.

Relation to Council policy

6. The MAV State Council meeting provides Council with the opportunity of demonstrating local government leadership by advocating and advancing issues key to the recovery, sustainability and future of Melbourne.

Environmental sustainability

7. One of the motions proposed for consideration addresses the issue of support for community battery programs.

MOTIONS PROPOSED BY CITY OF MELBOURNE– MAV STATE COUNCIL MEETING, 14 OCTOBER 2022

Topic	Motion	Rationale Statement
<p>Community batteries</p>	<p>That MAV State Council calls on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Australian Government to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1. Locate at least 150 of the 400 community batteries provided under the 'Power to the People' initiative in Victoria. 1.2. Prioritise Rewiring Australia and invest in the transmission network to allow greater penetration of localised and distributed renewable energy generation close to demand and storage. 2. The Victorian Government to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2.1. Increase funding to the Neighbourhood Battery Initiative grant program to support feasibility, demonstration and scale-up of community battery projects. 2.2. Engage and incentivise electricity distribution businesses to make network constraint, solar generation, and energy consumption data publically available to councils and community battery proponents. 	<p>The Federal Labor Government was elected on a promise to establish 400 community batteries in Australia under its 'Power to the People' initiative. The Victorian Labor Government has introduced a Neighbourhood Battery Initiative grants program. Councils will rely on both programs to implement or broker community battery initiatives within municipalities.</p> <p>The City of Melbourne is well advanced in establishing its Power Melbourne initiative, partnering with universities and the clean technology sector to deliver mid-scale energy storage batteries and create innovative viable delivery models. It will partner with other councils to scale the project.</p> <p>Power Melbourne will engage the community and inspire the market to transformation by demonstrating feasibility and sharing insights and data.</p> <p>City of Melbourne is therefore well placed to partner with the Australian Government and locate, demonstrate and scale the delivery of the first stage of the Power to the People initiative.</p> <p>Further, the Victorian Government Neighbourhood Battery Initiative supports the demonstration and scalability of community batteries and as a result Victoria is better placed to progress community battery projects.</p>

<p>Local Government workforce planning</p>	<p>That the MAV State Council calls on the Victorian Government to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a Victorian Skills Plan for Victorian Local Government in alignment with the recent release of the Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023. 2. Conduct a review of the current Victorian Local Government Workforce and identify any key skills and resource gaps necessary to deliver on local government commitments and initiatives through 2023-24. 	<p>In December 2018 the Municipal Association Of Victoria released the ‘Local Government Workforce and Future Skills Report, Victoria 2018’.The introduction of this document states the following:</p> <p>“An accurate national employment profile of the local government sector is difficult to determine. The most accessible source of data comes from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census of Population and Housing, but this is available only every five years and while it can highlight trends, it does not provide an accurate record of total employment numbers for the local government sector. It is estimated the Census underreports the local government workforce by 19%. The tendency of each jurisdiction to collect their own variable data sets also makes it challenging to aggregate data to achieve an accurate national profile of the local government workforce. The absence of a national profile impacts on the ability of the sector to determine current and future workforce needs and priorities. This is in stark contrast to other industry sectors that have been able to use national data to effectively attract and retain skilled and talented staff, attract funding for skills development and advocacy, and address skill shortages.”</p> <p>This is still true today and with the impacts of COVID 19, the impacts of the great resignation and a general shortages of skills and labour within the market these impacts are more prevalent than ever.</p> <p>The Victorian Skills Plan for 2022 into 2023 goes some way to address these issues but more detail and focus is required at a local government level to ensure community services and initiatives can be efficiently and effectively be delivered.</p>
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<p>Affordable housing</p>	<p>The MAV calls on the Victorian Government to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Commit to a sustainable ongoing affordable housing funding stream beyond the \$5.3b Big Housing Build (2021-24) and quantify this commitment prior to the election. 2. Overcome any legal barriers to requiring mandatory affordable housing contributions through the planning scheme, including tailored zones. 3. Make any necessary changes to the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) to enable planning authorities whether Council, the Victorian Planning Authority or the Minister, to implement mandatory affordable housing requirements. 	<p>Voluntary agreements and policy aspirations are not working at the pace or scale required to meet the existing and anticipated need for affordable housing.</p> <p>The Big Housing Build, which will provide \$5.3 billion in funding over four years (2020/21 - 2023/24) and targets an additional 12,000 social and affordable dwellings, is quickly being allocated. There is no commitment to any additional funding beyond this initiative.</p> <p>A mandatory process is required through planning controls that incentivises and provides certainty on the expectation to provide affordable homes within new developments at all scales. This also provides certainty to the development sector so these costs can be factored earlier into the feasibility of the project/site and assures supply of affordable homes to our vulnerable and at risk community members.</p> <p>The VPPs should allow councils (and other planning authorities) to pursue housing outcomes most appropriate to their circumstances.</p> <p>The Standard Advisory Committee (SAC) Report scrutinising new planning controls for the Arden urban renewal precinct in inner Melbourne recommended mandatory affordable housing requirements in planning controls, subject to confirmation of a legal power to do so, and noting that imposing this requirement when (not after) the land is rezoned for redevelopment means the 'cost' of the provision can be factored into the land price future developers pay. The City of Melbourne legal advice supported this position, through the use of the Special Use Zone within Arden.</p> <p>The Planning Minister did not implement the recommendation of the SAC, which begs the question: if mandatory affordable housing contributions cannot be imposed in somewhere as central and well located as Arden, can our planning system facilitate mandatory affordable housing contributions at all?</p> <p>This matter must be clarified, with the ability of the planning system to facilitate mandatory affordable housing contributions put beyond doubt.</p>
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