



Young Councillor Network – Terms of Reference

Background

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) launched the Young Councillor Network (YCN) at the start of the 2024 Council term in response to feedback from our members and across the sector that more support was needed for younger elected representatives.

The results of the VLGA Victorian Councillor Census 2024 identified that younger councillors often experience additional challenges in performing councillor duties, including balancing other work and study commitments, parenting responsibilities and social and community expectations.

The YCN is a network that is focused on supporting councillors aged 40 years old and under from Victorian councils.

The VLGA understands the challenges and opportunities all councillors face in serving their local communities; we strive to support councillors by empowering them to fulfill their duties to the best of their ability. We also recognise the importance of a peer support network when working in a demanding environment.

The VLGA YCN creates a safe and supportive environment to come together for bespoke professional development, to share challenges and ideas, problem solve and network throughout the council term.

Purpose

The purpose of the YCN is to:

- Support young councillors to meet their peers and build connections
- Create a positive environment for councillors to constructively share their perspectives on issues and provide peer to peer support
- Provide the group with information and professional development opportunities
- Enable the YCN to collaborate and speak on behalf of Victorian young councillors on relevant issues
- Champion the space for future young councillor candidates

Scope

The YCN will be supported by the VLGA to facilitate:

- Online meetings every 3 months:
Providing the network with relevant information and updates from around the sector, presentations from experts to provide informal professional development opportunities and an opportunity to discuss governance-related issues members wish to add to the agenda.
- In-person networking opportunities:
Occurring on a semi-regular basis when there is sufficient interest.



- Email updates & additional support:
Updates from the VLGA with information, training and events relevant to YCN members.

Roles & Responsibilities

The VLGA will:

- Coordinate the network list of YCN members
- Host and facilitate agended online meetings (currently scheduled for 1 hour on a Thursday evening)
- Link YCN members to other VLGA events and opportunities.

Participants will:

- Make a positive contribute to the YCN where possible always acting respectfully towards each other
- Participate in the YCN events in good faith
- Respect the Chatham House rule during all meetings and events
- Ensure that information deemed as being confidential under the Local Government Act 2020 is not disclosed.

Administration

The YCN is promoted as a network for councillors who are aged 40 years or younger at the beginning of the council term. The group is however open to all councillors who identify with the issues associated with the YCN background and purpose.

Views expressed at any YCN meeting or event are not reflective of the VLGA's views, nor the council in which the member is from.

Participation

Membership to the YCN is free for VLGA member Councils. Should councillors from non-member councils wish to join the network the cost is \$300 per annum.

Review

The terms of reference will be reviewed every 2 years to ensure it remains reflective of the network's purpose.

Disclaimer

The VLGA is not qualified to provide legal advice. Anyone seeking legal advice should contact a qualified legal practitioner. The VLGA would also encourage anyone experiencing issues which are impacting their mental health and wellbeing to seek professional support through their councils' EAP service or their GP.