

Media Release

The Hon Adem Somyurek MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Small Business



**DELIVERING
FOR ALL VICTORIANS**

Thursday, 4 July 2019

VICTORIAN-FIRST PROGRAM PROMOTES LOCAL COUNCIL DIVERSITY

The Andrews Labor Government is boosting diversity across local councils by funding a landmark new program to support Aboriginal people to become council candidates.

Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek today announced \$20,000 to help the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) launch the *Your Community, Country and Council*.

This Victorian-first initiative is designed to ensure the local government sector reflects the diversity of the community, by helping and encouraging Aboriginal people to run for the 2020 local government elections.

It addresses a significant underrepresentation of Aboriginal people in local government and supports the Labor Government's commitment to achieving diversity and gender equity within local councils.

The program will provide targeted support in the form of advice, expertise and training to Aboriginal people around the process of candidacy.

The first phase of the program will link potential candidates with past and current Aboriginal representatives in local government, capturing and communicating their insights and expertise.

The second phase will be focused on raising awareness around the process of nominating, with a series of engagement and information forums held across the state.

This builds on the Labor Government's grant of \$50,000 to the VLGA for its Local Women Leading Change program to support female candidates in running at the upcoming local council elections.

The Government has also given a \$5,000 boost to the HART Awards, which recognise initiatives by local governments and community organisations that are advancing reconciliation in Victoria.

Promoting diversity within local councils brings a range of skills, perspectives and expertise into the local government sector and ensures that the elected councils reflect the diverse communities they represent.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Adem Somyurek

"This program will deliver targeted support and information sharing for Aboriginal people looking to run for council."

"Councils should represent the communities they serve and this is a great step forward in achieving diversity across the local government sector."

Quote attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gavin Jennings

"Aboriginal communities have unique insight into what their communities need, and it is important to have this experience reflected in local councils."