

Media Release

The Hon Shaun Leane MLC
Minister for Local Government
Minister for Suburban Development
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Wednesday, 23 March 2022

STEPS FORWARD FOR FIRST NATIONS PEOPLE AND LOCAL COUNCILS

The Andrews Labor Government is prioritising relationships with First Nations Victorians with a new guide for Victorian councils when engaging with Aboriginal communities.

Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams this week released the *Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy (VALGS) 2021-2026*, building on the *Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Action Plan* from 2016.

The Strategy, developed following a thorough consultation process over 20 months with Traditional Owner groups and Aboriginal organisations, provides practical advice for councils when developing reconciliation action plans.

Elected Aboriginal local government representatives and Aboriginal staff employed within the local government sector also contributed to the strategy.

The VALGS recognise the key role local government plays in supporting and implementing Victoria's ground-breaking reforms as established in the [Victorian Aboriginal Affairs Framework 2018-2023](#).

The Strategy emphasises the need for a collaborative partnership approach across Government and Aboriginal communities.

To assist Councils in engaging with Traditional Owners, Aboriginal Organisations and Community, a Ministerial Good Practice Guideline under the *Local Government Act 2020* will also soon be released.

To read the Victorian Aboriginal and Local Government Strategy and the Ministerial Good Practice Guideline and General Guidance for Councils Engaging with Aboriginal Victorians, visit: localgovernment.vic.gov.au.

To find out more about the State Government's commitment to First Peoples' cultural rights, self-determination, treaty and truth, visit firstpeoplesrelations.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Local Government Shaun Leane

"This is an important step in ensuring councils acknowledge the rights, culture, heritage, needs and aspirations of their Aboriginal communities."

"It is vital the local government sector recognises and engages with Aboriginal Victorians to best achieve self-determination."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Aboriginal Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"This Strategy emphasises the need for partnerships between local government and Aboriginal Victorians based on listening, trust, truth-telling and understanding."

"Policies and programs based on our First People's knowledge and expertise is crucial to building better relationships across local government and the community. That's what this strategy will do."

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