

Building a Strong, Connected and Resilient Victoria. Together.

Executive Summary

Across Victoria, communities are experiencing growing pressure. Belonging and trust are weakening, civic participation is declining, and social cohesion is under strain. At the same time, climate and economic shocks are intensifying, and major reforms and transitions are reshaping industries, services and local economies. Victoria's future stability and prosperity depends on civic strength: the local leadership, participation and connections that enable communities to navigate change together.

The Victorian Leadership Network (VLN), representing nine regional organisations, and Leadership Victoria (LV), are strengthening this civic infrastructure by building capability, inclusion and collaboration across the state. Working across all 79 local government areas, our network equips Victorians with the confidence, skills and relationships needed to participate in decision-making, lead local and statewide initiatives, and strengthen inclusion.

Together, we seek an investment of **\$10.3 million over four years** to sustain and enhance this important work, and also scale in areas of key concern / opportunity. This will embed civic capability and participation as enduring strengths – building inclusion, trust and local resilience across Victoria.

Our ask is an important commitment to Victorian communities ahead of the November 2026 election.

Challenges and Need

Victoria is at a crossroads. The conditions that hold communities together and underpin prosperity are weakening just when they are most needed.

- **Trust and belonging:** Misinformation and polarisation are eroding shared purpose and confidence in institutions and government.
- **Civic participation:** Formal volunteering has fallen by over 200,000 since 2020; 40 council wards went uncontested in the 2024 local elections.
- **Social cohesion:** Cost-of-living pressures, discrimination and housing insecurity are increasing stress, conflict and isolation.
- **Climate risk:** More frequent and severe events are testing local resilience; where connections are weak, recovery is slower and impacts deeper.
- **Economic transition:** Major reforms and technological change are reshaping industries and communities. Capability is needed to adapt and ensure benefits are optimised and shared fairly.

Victoria's long-term prosperity depends on civic strength – people and communities better able to collaborate, include diverse voices and lead through change.

Our Approach and Impact

The VLN strengthens our state's civic infrastructure by building people's capability to contribute, connect and lead. Our place-based and statewide efforts equip hundreds of Victorians each year with the confidence, skills and relationships to step into governance, volunteering and leadership roles - fostering inclusion, adaptability and stronger connections across the business, government and community sectors.

Our approach combines learning, connection and reflection to develop:

- Self-awareness and integrity in leadership
- Skills for collaboration and systems thinking, including across sectors
- Confidence to act on shared purpose
- Trust-based networks that enable collective problem-solving and action

Evaluations show tangible results:

- 92% of program participants take on new leadership or volunteer roles
- 71% lead or contribute to collective responses on local issues such as youth wellbeing, disaster recovery, housing and economic renewal

The VLN engages more than 1,000 mentors, speakers and civic leaders each year, spanning business, government, education, emergency services and community sectors. In 2025, Leadership Victoria alone worked directly with approx. 850 leaders, including 350 program participants and over 500 alumni. Each of these, in turn, influences many more in their workplaces and communities, multiplying and accelerating impact through stronger governance, volunteering and inclusion across Victoria.

These outcomes build the social infrastructure that underpins Victoria's resilience and prosperity - the connections, capability and trust that enable communities to work together through change. The following table outlines the outcomes the Victoria Leadership Network delivers, the public value created and the policy areas it strengthens.

Outcome	Public Benefit	Policy Alignment
Stronger social cohesion	Safer, more stable communities with reduced social tension.	<i>Strong Regional Victoria, Social Cohesion & Resilience Framework</i>
Democratic renewal	Councillors, board members and grass roots leaders trained to lead and represent local voices.	<i>Local Government Capability & Governance Reform</i>
Equity and inclusion	Broader civic participation across First Nations, migrant, youth and disability cohorts.	<i>Self-Determination, Equity & Inclusion Framework, Treaty</i>
Early intervention capacity	Communities act early to reduce service demand and recovery costs	<i>Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Strong Regional Victoria</i>
Social capital	Increased trust, connection and collaboration between people, sectors and regions.	<i>Community Infrastructure Framework; Measuring What Matters</i>
Economic development	Locally driven initiatives that build workforce confidence, entrepreneurship and adaptive capacity.	<i>Regional Economic Development Strategy</i>

(See expanded detail in Attachment B)

A Shared Investment

This investment proposes to secure, enhance and scale Victoria's civic leadership infrastructure. Further details provided in **Attachment A**.

Purpose	Sustains essential statewide delivery, coordination, and transition to self-sufficiency, with amplified innovation, collaboration and income diversification capacity
Investment (over 4 years)	\$10.3M , as a short term supplement to the significantly higher quantum of earned income that we already mobilise from our communities
Key Deliverables	Core program delivery across 79 LGAs; shared systems for reporting, evaluation, resource mobilisation; and alumni engagement/mobilization Innovation Hub that supports pilots with priority cohorts, micro-grants, and cross-network/cross-sector partnerships
ROI Estimate	\$51.5M public value (≈\$5–6 return per \$1), due to avoided recovery costs, stronger local governance and improved social and economic outcomes
Sustainability Pathway	Self-sustaining by Year 5 through earned income, collaboration, partnerships and efficiency gains, with greater impact through new innovation income streams

Local Benefits

This investment equates to **\$150,000 annually for each of the ten regions/partners that make up the VLN**. These funds stay local, supporting jobs, venues, suppliers and community partners, while building capability that multiplies in value across the region.

This level of support will sustain and accelerate impact through initiatives such as:

- Scholarships for First Nations, migrant, disability, youth and grassroots leaders to access flagship programs.
- Seed funding to activate local and inter-regional impact initiatives
- Network initiatives that mobilise and connect alumni to collaborate and lead locally as volunteers, on community boards and in recovery networks.

Statewide Benefits

Beyond the direct dollars, a real strength of this investment lies in the Network itself, the shared systems, coordination and innovation that flow back to every community across Victoria.

Just as communities thrive when people feel connected and supported, the VLN “community” of ten organisations thrives through shared systems and relationships that enable coordination, collaboration, accountability and shared learning, ensuring we operate as one cohesive network that enhances each other’s work and amplifies impact statewide.

Victorian Government funding would provide a 4-year runway to strengthen our shared systems, embed shared IP, take a united approach to diversifying income streams and developing partnerships with business and philanthropy, enabling the network to become self-sustaining by Year 5.

Return on Investment

- **\$5–6 in public value:** Independent program evaluations show a \$5–6 return to government for every \$1 invested, through avoided recovery costs, stronger local governance and improved social and economic outcomes.¹
- **\$1.40 of additional local investment:** for every \$1 of State Government funding, regional initiatives attract around \$1.40 in extra community and business support through sponsorships, partnerships and in-kind contributions.

Why Government Investment Matters

The 10 organisations that make-up the Victorian Leadership Network are all facing an existential crisis, at a time when good leadership is declining yet needed more than ever.

We are ready to partner with the Victorian Government to deliver measurable, statewide outcomes that align with Victoria’s social, economic and regional priorities. **The need is urgent for the Government to support the work of building Victoria’s civic infrastructure.** Without this investment, our network’s proven capacity to build local resilience will erode, increasing recovery and service costs for the Government, and putting at risk an established, highly effective and credible network that enables capability and participation within every community. This investment will:

- **Protect societal equity:** Communities are already under pressure. It is inequitable and unsustainable to expect communities to carry the load of building resilience alone.
- **Demonstrate accountability:** State investment signals shared responsibility and ensures strong governance.
- **Leverage co-investment:** Each government dollar attracts local, business and philanthropic support, strengthening shared ownership.
- **Deliver system-wide value:** Investing in community capability builds the social capital that supports disaster preparedness, equity, economic transition and wellbeing.

This represents a modest, high-return opportunity for Government to strengthen civic and social infrastructure right across Victoria. It builds the capability, inclusion and local resilience that underpin effective resilience and recovery, economic participation and long-term community wellbeing.

Proven Delivery and Accountability

For over 30 years, the ten organisations within the Victorian Leadership Network have built civic capability and connection across Victoria. **More than 12,000 graduates** contribute to public life statewide, providing millions in unpaid service each year and strengthening local governance, volunteering and inclusion.

Examples of measurable results:

- In the Great South Coast, 195 alumni have delivered 50 community projects with over 140 partners.
- In North East Victoria, 13 alumni stood for office in Local Government in 2024; eight were elected and two became Mayors.
- Evaluation of the Alpine Valleys Community Leadership flagship program found Alumni contribute \$8.6 million in volunteer service annually.

This track record demonstrates accountability, impact and alignment with government priorities. The VLN is also currently working on a transition to a unified, evidence-based, impact evaluation system with consistent measurement and reporting, and a joint program to mobilise our thousands of alumni. This initiative is supported by three philanthropic funders: the Menzies Leadership Foundation, the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust and the Hugh D.T. Williamson Foundation.

Alumni – Diverse Leaders Shaping Victoria

The strength of our efforts lies in the diversity of our participants and alumni – leaders from across sectors, regions, and experiences who together build the social capital that sustains and connects Victoria's communities.

The VLN has cultivated a diverse and far-reaching alumni of civic, community, government, and business leaders, who now contribute to outcomes across every facet of Victorian life, from community development and recovery, to education, health, the arts and economic development. They have all participated in our programs at pivotal points in their lives and careers, and their expertise and connections continue to shape Victoria's future.

Included in attachment E are just a few examples of the many individuals who have accessed our programs through both scholarships and fee-for-service placements. Positive outcomes, and the equitable access to scholarships that enable them, are at risk without government investment.

Place-Based and Statewide Coverage

Organisation	LGAs covered
Leadership Victoria	Statewide, including the Greater Melbourne Metropolitan region
Alpine Valleys Community Leadership	Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Moira, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga, Albury - NSW
Committee for Ballarat - Future Shapers	Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool and Pyrenees
Gippsland Community Leadership Programs	Bass Coast, Baw Baw, East Gippsland, Latrobe, South Gippsland and Wellington
Goulburn Murray Community Leadership	Benalla, Campaspe, Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi and Strathbogie
Lead Loddon Murray Community Leadership	Buloke, Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Gannawarra, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mount Alexander and Swan Hill
Leadership Great South Coast	Corangamite, Glenelg, Moyne, Southern Grampians and Warrnambool
Leaders for Geelong	Colac-Otway, Golden Plains, Greater Geelong, Queenscliffe and Surf Coast
Leadership Wimmera	Hindmarsh, Horsham, Northern Grampians, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack
Northern Mallee Leaders	Mildura, Swan Hill and Wentworth - NSW

Attachment A - The Investment Breakdown

	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	4 yr total
Regional delivery costs	\$3,851,100	\$4,236,210	\$4,659,831	\$5,125,814	\$17,872,955
Statewide delivery costs	\$1,030,309	\$1,133,340	\$1,246,674	\$1,371,341	\$4,781,663
Network Infrastructure & Innovation	\$300,000	\$315,000	\$330,750	\$347,288	\$1,293,038
Total Delivery Costs	\$5,181,409	\$5,684,550	\$6,237,255	\$6,844,443	\$23,947,656
Innovation Incubator	\$500,000	\$525,000	\$551,250	\$578,813	\$2,155,063
Innovation Incubator Coordinator / Connector	\$150,000	\$157,500	\$165,375	\$173,644	\$646,519
Total Costs	\$5,831,409	\$6,367,050	\$6,953,880	\$7,596,900	\$26,749,238
Vic Government Investment	\$2,500,000	\$2,547,500	\$2,597,375	\$2,649,755	\$10,294,630

Total Project Cost # **\$26,749,238**

Govt Investment \$10,094,620

Total ROI **\$51,473,150**

(based on \$5-\$6 per Govt \$ invested)

*** Assumes year on year reduction in real terms as organisations become more sustainable*

excluding in-kind support, which is significant due to the network's ability to mobilise alumni and other community leaders and organisations to support programs

Government funding would provide operational certainty, and enable equitable inclusion of leaders from marginalised communities in programs, while also providing a modest financial base to attract resources from business and community through our social enterprise and sponsorship model. The secured organisational structures are then also able to deliver additional programs and alumni mobilisation projects funded by other sources.

The model also establishes a future-focused Innovation Incubator, to expand impact through scaling the innovation, shared learning and revenue diversification.

The Incubator provides a structured environment for experimentation and learning, supported by a dedicated Incubator Co-ordinator who convenes cross-sector partners, manages micro-grants, brokers collaborations and ensures continuous evaluation and learning.

Key functions include:

- Piloting and scaling initiatives focused on disaster resilience, First Nations participation, youth pathways and migrant inclusion.
- Providing micro-grants for alumni-led innovations and community projects.
- Coordinating and evaluating pilots, ensuring successful models are captured, shared and adopted across Victoria.

Attachment B – Outcomes, Benefits and Alignment with Policy

Outcome	Benefit	Related Policy / Priority Area
Stronger social cohesion	• Safer, more stable communities with reduced social tension and service demand. • Greater public trust and cooperation in government initiatives. • Improved community partnerships that accelerate policy implementation.	• <i>Strong Regional Victoria</i> (Budget Priority) • <i>Great Places, Suburbs and Towns (Plan for Victoria)</i> • <i>Social Cohesion and Community Resilience Framework</i>
Democratic renewal	• Strengthened pipeline of local leaders. Councillors, board members, SES captains and reconciliation advocates, enhancing local governance and civic participation. • Greater community representation in decision-making processes.	• <i>Accessible Jobs and Services (Plan for Victoria)</i> • <i>Local Government Capability and Governance Reform</i>
Community resilience	• Lower government expenditure on emergency response and recovery. • Improved preparedness, coordination and volunteer mobilisation at the local level. • Enhanced confidence in regional and disaster management systems.	• <i>Sustainable Environments (Plan for Victoria)</i> • <i>Climate Preparedness and Disaster Resilience Strategy</i> • <i>Emergency Management Reform</i>
Early intervention capacity	• Communities detect and respond to emerging risks sooner, improving preparedness and reducing demand on crisis, health, welfare and recovery services, delivering measurable fiscal savings and wellbeing gains	• <i>Early Intervention Investment Framework</i> • <i>Measuring What Matters</i> • <i>Strong Regional Victoria</i>
Equity and inclusion	• More equitable access to leadership, governance and civic participation opportunities. • Strengthens delivery of state priorities for self-determination, youth engagement, and multicultural inclusion. • Ensures programs and decisions reflect the diversity of Victorian communities.	• <i>Self-Determination and Caring for Country (Plan for Victoria)</i> • <i>Housing for All Victorians (equity focus)</i> • <i>Victorian Equal Opportunity and Inclusion Framework</i> • <i>Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan</i>
Community wellbeing and cost-of-living resilience	• Strengthens the social supports that help people and families cope with economic stress. • Builds local capacity to coordinate practical responses such as community transport, food programs and peer networks. • Reduces demand on government crisis and relief services by improving local collaboration.	• <i>Cost of Living Support</i> (Budget Priority) • <i>Strong Regional Victoria</i> (Budget Priority) • <i>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</i>
Social capital	• Builds trust and collaboration across communities, sectors and regions. • Strengthens the relationships and civic confidence that enable coordinated action, faster recovery and greater inclusion	• <i>Community Infrastructure Framework; Measuring What Matters</i>
Economic development	• Stimulates locally led growth through stronger networks, leadership and innovation. • Builds workforce confidence, entrepreneurship and adaptive capacity to navigate economic transition.	• <i>Regional Economic Development Strategy</i>

Attachment C – Alignment with Five Pillars Plan for Victoria

Pillar	Alignment with Proposed Investment	Key Outcomes Delivered
1. Self-determination and Caring for Country	• Embeds First Nations leadership, knowledge and on-Country learning in delivery. • Strengthens Aboriginal community-led decision-making through place-based design. • Builds respect for Country and supports locally driven stewardship and land care initiatives.	• Increased First Nations participation and leadership in regional decision-making. • Stronger partnerships between Traditional Owners, local organisations and government. • Community-led approaches that uphold self-determination.
2. Housing for All Victorians	• Builds community capability to engage constructively in housing planning, development and service coordination. • Strengthens collaboration across councils, developers and residents to address housing pressures. • Ensures communities have a voice in growth and infrastructure decisions.	• More inclusive and informed local participation in housing reform. • Improved social cohesion during housing and infrastructure change. • Reduced conflict and faster implementation of housing projects.
3. Accessible Jobs and Services	• Develops leadership and governance capacity that supports local workforce, service delivery and volunteer networks. • Alumni create employment pathways, mentor others, and strengthen local boards and services. • The Innovation Incubator pilots youth and employment-focused leadership initiatives.	• Stronger local economies and workforce participation. • Better-coordinated community services and partnerships. • Regional youth and emerging leaders supported to engage in meaningful work and civic life.
4. Sustainable Environments	• Builds capacity for communities to lead and adapt to climate change and disaster risk. • Facilitates collaboration between sectors on sustainability, preparedness and recovery. • Empowers communities to translate environmental policy into local action.	• Greater community resilience to climate and disaster impacts. • Reduced recovery costs and improved adaptive capacity. • Stronger alignment between local stewardship and state sustainability goals.
5. Great Places, Suburbs and Towns	• Strengthens networks that enable communities to shape local priorities and design shared futures. • Enhances civic participation, belonging and collaboration across sectors. • Mobilises local leadership to create inclusive, vibrant and connected towns.	• More cohesive, engaged and confident communities. • Locally driven solutions that reflect regional identity. • Sustained pride and participation in community life.

Attachment D – Evidence Base

1. Quantified Public Value to Government

Independent evaluations estimate a **\$5–6 return to government for every \$1 invested**¹ through avoided recovery costs, volunteer value, and stronger local collaboration.

Each government dollar also leverages **an additional \$1.40 in community and business support**, demonstrating strong co-investment and local ownership.¹

Implication: Victoria's reform and growth agenda depends on local leadership and cross-sector collaboration to translate policy into action. This investment builds the civic capability and partnerships that enable those reforms to succeed, creating the social infrastructure that underpins resilience, equity and economic participation.

2. Reversing Declines in Volunteering and Civic Participation

- Formal volunteering fell from 36% (2010) to 28.8% (2019) (ABS General Social Survey).
- *Volunteering Victoria (2025)* reports ongoing volunteer shortages and coordinator burnout.²
- 2024 Victorian local government elections recorded 42 uncontested wards (VEC & VLGA); with ABC News reporting nearly 50%.²

Implication: State investment rebuilds local civic pipelines, equipping residents to serve on boards, committees, and recovery efforts, sustaining the volunteer backbone of essential community services.

3. Strengthening Social Cohesion and Belonging

- *Scanlon Foundation (2024)* reports declining trust and belonging.³
- *ABS Measuring What Matters (2024)* identifies cohesion as a headline wellbeing indicator.⁴
- Our organisations directly target inclusion, belonging and cross-sector trust - core drivers of cohesion.

Evidence:

- Programs engage with over a thousand mentors, speakers and civic leaders each year, spanning, business, community, education, emergency services, the not-for-profit sector and all levels of government: creating thousands of new cross-community and cross-sector connections.
- 63% of participants were women; 23% from CALD or Indigenous backgrounds, broadening the diversity and representativeness of Victoria's leadership base.

Implication: Leadership initiatives strengthen Victoria's social cohesion and civic capability, cultivating leaders who connect across silos, mobilise networks, and collaborate to deliver shared public outcomes.

4. Climate Risk & Community Resilience

- *National Climate Risk Assessment (2024)* warns of cascading climate shocks.⁵
- *Deloitte Access Economics / Australian Business Roundtable (2022)* found every \$1 invested in resilience capability yields up to \$11 in avoided recovery costs.⁹
- *Red Cross & Deakin (2024)* show social capital reduces recovery time and costs.⁵⁶⁹⁵⁶

Evidence:

Leadership alumni are now leading local recovery committees, CFA units and NFP boards, applying skills from their programs to real-world resilience and emergency leadership. One Goulburn Murray Leadership graduate credited the program with giving him the tools to lead his CFA team during floods, saving thousands of homes.

Implication: Investing in leadership networks is a high-ROI resilience strategy.

5. Cost-of-Living and Community Wellbeing

- *ABS Measuring What Matters (2024)* highlights financial stress reducing participation.
- Leadership initiatives strengthen informal safety nets and reduce crisis demand.⁴

Evidence

- Local spending through regional programs exceeded \$1.18 in 2022–23, directly supporting regional businesses.
- Community projects addressed youth engagement, mental health, climate adaptation and volunteering renewal - strengthening wellbeing and local opportunity.

Implication: Investment bolsters cost-of-living resilience by sustaining social infrastructure.

6. Evidence from Victorian Regional Leadership Programs – Proven Local Impact

- Leadership Great South Coast (2025): 83% of alumni volunteer; 78% report lasting professional networks; many now serve as councillors or board members.⁷
- Alpine Valleys (2024): 92% of alumni in new leadership or volunteer roles; key actors in disaster recovery efforts.⁸
- Statewide (2022–23): Nine regional programs employed 23 staff and mobilised 8,262 volunteer hours directly back into their organisations

6. Leadership Victoria – Statewide Reach and Influence

- In 2025, Leadership Victoria has worked with hundreds of leaders from across business, government and community, including delivering cutting-edge leadership programs to over 350 leaders, and engaging hundreds of alumni through mentoring, events and networks. The majority of participants report significant positive impact on their leadership and connections, even months and years after completing programs.
- LV also collaborates with partner organisations, e.g. with Safe Equal to develop over 170 leaders from the family violence and sexual assault services sectors in Victoria. Outcomes include significantly uplifted leadership capability, shared language, collaboration and peer support in a very complex sector, and independent evaluation found it to be “a very high-quality leadership program which is highly relevant to the FVSAPP sector contexts, supporting participants’ needs, their professional contexts and their careers within the sector”.

7. Community Projects and Practical Impact

Through alumni-led and program-led initiatives, the network generates lasting benefits beyond individual learning. Strengthening inclusion, wellbeing and local resilience through practical, community-driven projects such as:

- Monash Health mobile van regularly visiting African community organisations to improve access to care.
- Professional development initiatives supporting culturally diverse women to step into leadership roles.
- Financial literacy workshops helping women build confidence and economic independence.
- *Fruit Rescue*, redistributing over 2,000 kg of fresh produce, supporting local food security organisations, and reducing CO₂ emissions

Attachment E – Notable Alumni

Community & Not for Profit

- Tegan Allen, Ambassador, Blind Sports Victoria
- Blake Edwards, President, Yackandandah Community Development Company
- Laura Thompson, Committee Member, Young Dairy Network
- Ebony Mull, President, Alpine Valleys Dairy
- Owen Johnstone, President, Corryong Football Club
- Elise Hill, Founder, Corryong Spirit
- Oonagh Kilpatrick, Chair, Food & Fibre Great South Coast
- Andrew Eales, CEO, Ballarat Foundation
- Katrina Pawley, CEO, Albury Wodonga Regional Foodshare
- Kirsten Seeto, Director, Beyond Housing
- Stella Avramopoulos, CEO, Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand
- Dr Sonja Hood AM, CEO, The Scanlon Foundation, & President, North Melbourne Football Club
- Sarah Davies AM, CEO, The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, & Chair, ACNC Advisory Board
- Dr Richard Dammery, Chair, The Australian Ballet
- Sarimah Hellyer, CEO, Regional Development Australia – Murray

First Nations

- Adrian Appo OAM, Managing Director – Partnerships, First Australians Capital
- Troy Austin, Elected Member, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria
- Karen Milward AM, Chair, Kinaway – Victorian Aboriginal Chamber of Commerce (& others)
- Joe Murfet, National RAP Lead, Australia Post
- Leigh Saunders, Co-CEO, Aborigines Advancement League
- Emily Falla, involved in Yoorrook Justice Commission, & Aboriginal Cultural Adviser, DFFH
- Jarvis Atkinson, First Peoples Assembly of Victoria, Odyssey House Board Director
- Indi Clarke, Elected Member, First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, & Aboriginal Youth Leadership Advocate

Local Government

- Noah Tanzen, Alpine Shire Council
- Justin King, Mayor, Rural City of Benalla
- Bonnie Clark, Mansfield Shire Council
- Andrew Whitehead, Mayor, Towong Shire Council
- Irene Grant, Mayor, Rural City of Wangaratta
- Allison Winters, Rural City of Wangaratta
- Ashlee Fitzpatrick, Rural City of Wangaratta
- Michelle Cowan, Wodonga City Council
- Jessica Mitchell, Deputy Mayor, Campaspe Council
- Daniel Meade, Mayor, Moyne Shire Council
- Suzanne Newton, former Mayor, Darebin City Council

Health

- Professor Sharon Lewin AO, Director, Doherty Institute
- Adam Horsburgh, CEO, Alfred Health
- Shannon Wight, CEO, West Gippsland Healthcare Group
- Matt Sharp, CEO, Goulburn Valley Health
- Katrina Umback, Rural Health Strategist and Advocate

Business

- Alan Schwartz AO, Executive Chairman, Trawalla Group
- Tim Piper AM, Head of Victoria, Australian Industry Group
- Morry Fraid, Executive Chairman, Spotlight Group
- Mark Stone AM, Chairman, SCT Logistics
- Kenneth E Jarvis OAM KSJ, Chairman & CEO Aerolite Quarries Pty Ltd

State & Federal Politics

- Hon Nicholas Reece, Lord Mayor City of Melbourne
- Helen Haines MP, Independent Federal Member for Indi
- Sam Birrell MP, Federal Member for Nicholls

Public Service

- Hon Stephen Conroy, Founder, Chellwood Advisory
- Hon Wade Noonan, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Victoria University
- Hon Mary Wooldridge, CEO, Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- Vivienne Nguyen AM, Commissioner, Victorian Multicultural Commission
- Marlo Baragwanath, Victorian Ombudsman, Victorian Ombudsman
- Dr Jonathan Spear, CEO, Infrastructure Victoria
- Matthew Vincent, CEO, Resources Victoria
- Robert Purcell, CEO, Victorian State Emergency Service
- Dan Stubbs, Commissioner, Victorian Disability Worker Commission
- Fiona Ward, Chief of Staff, Office of the Deputy Premier, Victorian Government
- Nick Green OAM, Deputy Chair, Australian Sports Commission
- Emma King OAM, CEO, HumanAbility
- Fiona McLeod AO SC, Senior Counsel, Victorian Bar
- Natalie O'Brien AM, Chief Executive, Victorian Convention & Event Trust (MCEC)
- Angela Carey, Recovery Director West Region, Emergency Recovery Victoria

References

¹ Independent evaluations and government-acquitted reports of Victoria's regional capability and resilience initiatives, including [Leadership Great South Coast Evaluation Report](#) (2025); Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Alumni Impact Report (2024); and Regional Leadership Collective Completion Reports (2022–2023, Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions). These evaluations collectively identify an estimated \$5–6 return to government for every \$1 invested, based on volunteer contributions, improved governance outcomes, and reduced recovery and service costs.

² Volunteering Victoria (2025). State of Volunteering in Victoria Report.

³ Scanlon Foundation (2024). Mapping Social Cohesion Survey.³

⁴ Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024). Measuring What Matters Dashboard.⁴

⁵ Australian Government (2024). National Climate Risk Assessment.

⁶ Red Cross & Deakin University (2024). The Hidden Power of Community.⁶

⁷ Leadership Great South Coast (2025). Evaluation Report.⁷

⁸ Alpine Valleys Community Leadership Program (2024). Alumni Impact Report.⁸

⁹ Deloitte Access Economics & Australian Business Roundtable (2022). Building Australia's Natural Disaster Resilience.⁹

