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 **VICTORIA ELECTS RECORD NUMBER OF WOMEN COUNCILLORS**

Victoria has broken the record books and now leads the nation with the highest level of female representation on councils. The 2020 Victorian Local Government elections has seen 272 women across 76 councils elected, representing 43.8% of councillors. Victoria is the first State to elect more than 40%.

ALGWA Vic is delighted by the new record level of female representation, and remains dedicated to ensuring this progress continues as the success of our work is clear. ALGWA Vic provides encouragement to women within local government, councillors or otherwise, through delivering educational curriculums and encouragement. ALGWA Vic held numerous candidate forums in the run-up to the elections, and will be providing mentoring to newly elected councillors.

2020 was another year of record breaking, with 39% of women candidates standing for the October elections, which was an increase from 34% in 2016. President of ALGWA Vic, Mayor, Cr Kylie Spears said: *‘it is incredibly pleasing that we now have the most women Councillors ever and the highest percentage across the nation’.*

However, despite 2020’s record number of women councillors, ALGWA Vic’s work is far from over. The goal of ALGWA Vic is to reach 50/50 gender representation on councils by 2025, as outlined in the ‘Safe and Strong: A Victorian Gender Equality Strategy’. Although Victoria is at 43.54% of women councillors, there remains numerous municipalities where representation is still low. One council, Mansfield Shire Council, has no women councillors.

ALGWA Vic’s work is not done, but ‘*our continued commitment to supporting women has reached a new record this year, emboldening us to keep fighting for 50/50 gender equality in local government’*, added Mayor Spears. ALGWA Vic congratulates all candidates, re-elected and newly elected, for their campaigning in 2020 with the added challenges of COVID-19. We are proud of all the candidates this year who has showed resilience in stepping up to represent their local communities.