Maddocks

Local Government Risk Summit

2026 Training Program

Introduction

Never have Victorian councils faced such uncertainty.

With a State election looming, increasing financial strain, a volatile operating environment, a turbulent regulatory landscape, increasing expectations from community about service and infrastructure delivery, and growing challenges to public trust and democracy, councils are navigating pressure from every direction.

The risks are evolving quickly, and so are the consequences of getting them wrong – from compliance failure and financial loss to legal challenge, reputational damage and further strain on already stretched teams.

Our inaugural **Local Government Risk Summit** on **November 19** is a one-day conference designed to help councils reduce their exposure to these consequences. Through practical, legally-informed training, officers will be empowered to understand, manage and overcome the most pressing risks currently faced by Victorian councils – compliantly, confidently and with greater certainty.

Event Details

Time
08:30am - 5:30pm

Date
Thursday, 19 November 2026

Location
The Events Centre, Collins Square, Melbourne, VIC

Cost

$575 (excluding GST)

To enquire about registering, **get in touch with our Events team.**

Maddocks

Local Government Risk Summit

Why attend?

Learn how to reduce Council's exposure to risk

Council risks are constantly shifting – some new, some emerging, and some long-standing but increasingly difficult to manage. The Summit is built around addressing the most pressing risks currently facing Victorian councils, including:

- Financial sustainability
- Planning reforms and their practical impact
- Workforce and service delivery challenges
- Governance, trust and transparency pressures
- The sector skills gap, as identified in LGPro's Victoria's Future Local Government Workforce report

You'll receive dedicated legal training grounded in the operational pressures and risks that officers are managing every day, and you'll leave with actionable tools to reduce your council's exposure and risk of non-compliance.

Benefit from deep sector expertise

We have advised local government for more than a century, and no other Victorian law firm knows the sector as deeply as we do. Our lawyers regularly advise on these risks and they understand the operating environment, the common obstacles and the ways that councils can respond. You'll receive training that is informed by our lawyers' frontline experience with real matters, rather than generic legal theory.

Access tailored, applied training

Our lawyers have delivered training to more than 50 councils over the last three years. You'll receive training that is tailored specifically to the needs of Victorian councils, with practical takeaways that you can begin to implement at Council right away.

Hear from the sector

With four networking opportunities during the conference, along with a keynote from sector leaders Kelly Grigsby and Sue Wilkinson, you'll have the chance to connect with your peers and hear directly from those helping to shape the future of Victorian local government. Step back from the day-to-day, share experiences and better understand how councils are responding to the pressures, risks and uncertainty facing the sector.

Meet learning and development requirements

All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance, helping you to satisfy your learning and development requirements.
For qualified lawyers, we anticipate that all 5 of the sessions in the Governance & Risk stream can be counted towards the Substantive Law component of your CPD, meaning that attending this stream will count for 5 CPD points.
For registered planners, our understanding from the Planning Institute of Australia is that 1 hour of conference attendance equates to 1 CPD point, meaning that attending the Planning & Environment stream will count for 5 CPD points.

How it works

The Risk Summit features four concurrent streams, with five training sessions in each stream. Each stream is tailored to a specific cohort of council officers, so attendees can focus on the issues most relevant to their role and leave with guidance they can apply immediately.

Attendees register for and attend one stream. They can meet other officers attending other streams during the breaks between sessions.

All attendees will then come together at the end of the day for a keynote conversation with Kelly Grigsby, CEO of MAV, Sue Wilkinson, CEO of the City of Yarra and President of LGPro, and Kate Oliver, Partner and Victorian Local Government Sector Leader, on the state of play and future direction of the sector.

Stream 1
Planning & Environment

Audience: For officers working across planning and environment.

Availability: Capped at 100 participants.

Stream 2
Employment, Safety & People

Audience: For officers working across HR, IR and WHS.

Availability: Capped at 100 participants.

Stream 3
Governance & Risk

Audience: For officers working across governance, legal, compliance and FOI/privacy.

Availability: Capped at 80 participants.

Stream 4
Property, Projects & Revenue

Audience: For officers working across finance, infrastructure, property, projects and capital works.

Availability: Capped at 30 participants.

Stream 1 – Planning & Environment

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 1 **Planning Reform Part 1 — New Objectives, Strategies and Scheme Amendments**	The Planning Amendment *(Better Decisions Made Faster) Act 2025* rewrites how councils prepare and process planning scheme amendments. New impact categories, public engagement plans and codified decision-making criteria mean your existing processes need updating. This session walks through the strategic planning reforms, with a focus on what to prioritise first.	Attendees will learn: • how to correctly classify your next amendment as low, medium or high impact and understand what follows from that decision • how to prepare a public engagement plan and engagement report that meet the new statutory requirements • how to navigate the reformed authorisation pathway — including proponent-initiated amendments and when you can proceed without authorisation
Session 2 **Planning Reform Part 2 — New Permit Types, Objections and Application Management**	Three new permit application types replace the existing framework, each with different notice, referral and decision-making rules. When the new framework comes into operation, councils and other authorities will be more accountable, and it will therefore be essential to properly understand the suite of new powers and responsibilities. This session is a practical walkthrough of the new permit system.	Attendees will learn: • how to triage applications into Type 1, 2 or 3 and understand the consequences — including deemed approval and conditional permit notices • how to use the new concern notice mechanism to manage problem applications without triggering a refusal • how to apply the new objection rejection powers confidently, knowing where the line sits
Session 3 **Planning Reform Part 3 — Panels, Submissions and What's Coming Next**	Councils can now exclude frivolous or wholly irrelevant submissions from panel referral — but the bar is high and the case law is still developing. Panel procedures are also changing, with document-based hearings and new time limits. And the interim regulations are still being finalised. This session covers what you can act on now and what to watch for next.	Attendees will learn: • how to apply the "frivolous, vexatious or wholly irrelevant" tests to real scenarios and build internal criteria that will withstand scrutiny • how to prepare for the reformed panel process — including document-based hearings, updated referral requirements and the Minister's power to exempt Council from considering a late panel report • how to identify the transitional provisions and incoming regulations that affect amendments and applications you're already processing

Stream 1 – Planning & Environment

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 4 **Contaminated Land and EPA Obligations**	Contamination issues can stall projects and expose councils to significant liability. This session will cover your obligations under the EPA framework, practical risk management for contaminated sites, and what to do when contamination surfaces mid-project.	Attendees will learn: • the trigger points that activate councils' EPA obligations on a site • how to assess a contaminated site scenario and select the right risk management response • how to follow a clear action sequence when contamination is discovered mid-project
Session 5 **Council as a Law Enforcement Agency**	Councils hold broad regulatory and enforcement powers — but using them well requires precision. The new enforcement regime which commenced operation in August heralds greater opportunities and powers to bring land use and development into compliance. This session will examine council's enforcement role from a planning and environment perspective, including investigation and prosecution strategy, evidentiary standards, and managing reputational risk.	Attendees will learn: • how to distinguish between the enforcement pathways available and when to use each • how to understand the new enforcement toolkit — from Supervisory Intervention Orders to Industry Exclusion Orders — and when each is appropriate • how to build an evidence brief that meets prosecution standards from the outset • how to develop a communications approach that protects council's reputation during enforcement action

Presenters

The Planning & Environment stream will be delivered by the **Planning & Environment** and **Compliance and Enforcement teams**.



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Stream 2 – Employment, Safety & People

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 1 **Workforce Transformation and Bargaining**	The bargaining landscape is shifting, and councils face unique pressures around workforce flexibility, cost management, and enterprise agreement negotiations. This session will cover current trends and provide practical strategies for getting to a workable deal.	Attendees will learn: • the current state of enterprise bargaining in Victorian local government, and the forces and influences shaping it • how to apply practical negotiation strategies to achieve workable enterprise agreements • how to balance workforce flexibility and cost management objectives during bargaining
Session 2 **Working from Home: Employment & OHS Challenges**	Hybrid work is here to stay, but so are the legal risks. This session will unpack the latest on the proposed Victorian legislation, and councils' employment law and occupational health and safety obligations when staff work remotely, and offer frameworks for policies that are both practical and defensible.	Attendees will learn: • councils' employment law and OHS obligations for remote and hybrid workers and how to comply with them • common legal risks arising from work-from-home arrangements and how to mitigate them • how to ensure decisions about developing remote work are compliant, and legally defensible
Session 3 **AI & Privacy in the Employment Context**	AI tools are entering council workplaces, from recruitment to lengthy AI-generated complaints and submissions. This session will explore the employment law implications, including decision-making risks, responding to AI-generated documents, and building a governance framework your workforce will trust.	Attendees will learn: • the employment law of AI tools in the workplace • how to design a robust governance framework for AI adoption that balances innovation with workforce trust • the new rules imposed by the FWC and other bodies in addressing AI-generated documents

Stream 2 – Employment, Safety & People

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 4 **The latest in dealing with Unreasonable Complainants**	Every council deals with them. This session will tackle the legal tools available for managing unreasonable complainant conduct, including the intersection between safety, discrimination and Charter rights.	Attendees will learn: • the legal tools available for managing unreasonable complainant conduct and how to apply them • applying discretion and making a risk-based assessment to justify decisions • responding to external scrutiny
Session 5 **Services Discrimination: What Councils Need to Know**	Councils deliver services to diverse communities, and discrimination risks can arise in unexpected places. This session will identify the key legal obligations as well as common pitfalls in service delivery, and will share practical steps to reduce councils' exposure.	Attendees will learn: • council's anti-discrimination obligations in the context of service delivery • how to identify common hazards and scenarios where discrimination risk arises • measures to reduce discrimination and discrimination exposure across council services

Presenters

The Employment, Safety & People stream will be delivered by the **Employment, Safety & People team**, which will be led by Partners **Lindy Richardson, Catherine Dunlop, and Meredith Kennedy.**



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Stream 3 – Governance & Risk

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 1 **Decision Making: Delegations, Authority and Process**	Getting delegations wrong can invalidate council decisions entirely. This session will examine how to structure delegations properly, the boundaries of authority, and the procedural steps that protect decisions from challenge.	Attendees will learn: • how to review councils' delegation instruments against common drafting errors that invalidate decisions • exactly where delegated authority starts and stops for different officer roles • how to build procedural safeguards into councils' decision-making workflow, not just its policies
Session 2 **Essential Elements of Administrative Decision-Making**	Councils make hundreds of administrative decisions, and each one is potentially reviewable. This session will cover the legal fundamentals — natural justice, relevant considerations, reasons for decision — and how to build a culture of sound decision-making.	Attendees will learn: • how to stress-test a decision by applying natural justice and procedural fairness requirements • how to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant considerations using real-world council examples • how to embed quality assurance steps into council teams' decision-making routines
Session 3 **Collaborative Procurement: Structuring, Probity and Competition**	Collaborative procurement can offer councils significant benefits, but it also raises important questions about structure, competition, contracting arrangements, governance and probity. This session will examine how councils can navigate collaborative procurement under the *Local Government Act 2020*, including the different models available and the legal and practical issues that should be considered when designing and implementing a collaborative procurement process.	Attendees will learn: • collaborative procurement structuring options • relevant competition issues in a collaborative procurement context • contracting and governance arrangements • identifying and managing probity risks

Stream 3 – Governance & Risk

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 4 **FOI, Privacy & Information Governance**	FOI requests and privacy complaints are increasing in volume and complexity. This session will provide a practical update on the latest FOI and privacy trends, helpful tips in FOI processing and responding to privacy complaints, and how to build an information governance framework that reduces risk across the organisation.	Attendees will learn the latest about: • the latest FOI trends and ways to manage FOI requests • the latest privacy trends and how to manage privacy complaints • key aspects of an information governance framework
Session 5 **Councillor Conduct & Integrity**	Conduct issues involving councillors can consume significant officer time and organisational energy. This session will cover the integrity framework, recent developments, and how officers can navigate conduct complaints and investigations effectively.	Attendees will learn: • the key changes to the conduct and integrity framework and what they mean for councils • how to manage a conduct complaint from receipt through investigation without common missteps • how to minimise the resource drain on council teams when conduct matters arise

Presenters

The Governance & Risk stream will be delivered by the **Governance, Compliance & Enforcement**, and **Government & Not For Profit teams**, which will be led by Partners **Kate Oliver** and **Melanie Olynyk**.



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Stream 4 – Property, Projects & Revenue

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 1 **Council's Powers to Acquire Land: Compulsory Acquisition & Compensation**	When council needs land, the compulsory acquisition process must be executed precisely. This session will cover council's acquisition powers, the compensation framework, and how to manage the process from notice through to settlement or determination.	Attendees will learn: • how to determine whether compulsory acquisition is the right tool for a given scenario • how to work through each step of the compensation process with confidence in the procedural requirements • how to avoid the common errors that cause acquisition delays and legal challenges
Session 2 **Structuring Infrastructure Projects for Community and Revenue**	Major projects can deliver more than infrastructure — they can generate ongoing revenue streams. This session will cover structuring options, risk allocation, and how to design project delivery models that that can reduce project delivery costs, reduce overall risk to Council and/or maximise both community benefit and financial return.	Attendees will learn: • how to evaluate different procurement models and identify which can deliver genuine cost efficiencies for council's projects • how to apply strategies to reduce overall project delivery costs without compromising outcomes • how to maximise the return on investment from council land and facilities through smart project structuring
Session 3 **Rates as a Policy Tool: Making Differential Rating and Rate Relief work for your council**	Differential rating and rate relief are powerful but underused levers. This session will explore how to structure rating strategies that withstand legal challenge and generate the revenue outcomes your community needs while furthering council policy objectives.	Attendees will learn: • how to test your proposed rating strategy against the legal grounds most commonly used to challenge it • how to identify untapped revenue opportunities within the current rating framework • how your rating structure can be used to further policy outcomes you can demonstrate to the community

Stream 4 – Property, Projects & Revenue

Session	Description	Learning Outcomes
Session 4 **Funding Agreements, Local Jobs First & WHS Accreditation**	Funding infrastructure projects means navigating funding agreements and Local Jobs First obligations.	Attendees will learn: • the relevant government procurement policies applicable to council procurements • the model clauses typically required for those procurements, and how to apply them
Session 5 **State Powers: What to Do When the State Comes Knocking**	State agencies can acquire council land or impose infrastructure requirements with limited notice. This session will explain the State's rights, council's rights, negotiation leverage points, and how to protect community assets when the State exercises its powers.	Attendees will learn: • how to know exactly what the State can and cannot require of council in acquisition and infrastructure scenarios • how to apply specific negotiation tactics that have delivered better outcomes for councils • how to develop a response playbook for when State-initiated processes affect your community assets

Presenters

The Property, Projects & Revenue stream will be delivered by the **Real Estate, Rates, Valuations & Compensation**, and **Construction & Projects teams**, which will be led by Partners **Clare Batrouney, Chris Cantor**, and **Billy Gialamas**.



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Keynote

The State of Play: Panel with Sue Wilkinson and Kelly Grigsby

Kate, Kelly and Sue will close the day's sessions with a candid conversation about the current state of play and future direction of the Victorian local government sector. Drawing on Sue and Kelly's respective roles leading the sector's peak bodies, and Kate's role advising councils on legal risk, they'll unpack the trends, pressures and emerging issues shaping the operating environment for councils — and what leaders at every level should be preparing for next.



Sue Wilkinson
President of LGPro and CEO of the City of Yarra

Sue has extensive experience within the local government sector. She is currently the CEO of the City of Yarra, and previously served as CEO of Darebin City Council and Colac Otway Shire Council as well as working in senior roles at Monash City Council and the City of Port Phillip. Sue has also been the President of LGPro since 2024.



Kelly Grigsby
CEO of the Municipal Association of Victoria

Kelly joined the MAV in July 2023 following successful stints as CEO at the City of Hobart and Wyndham City Council. Her background includes city shaping, organisational transformation, service reform and, as a respected sector-leading CEO, is experienced in intergovernmental influencing at state, national and international levels. A Senior Honorary Fellow at the Melbourne School of Government, Kelly is also a member of the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA) State Advisory Council.



Kate Oliver
Partner and Victorian Local Government Sector Leader

Kate is our firm's Local Government Victoria Sector Leader. She has a specialised practice in the area of governance for local government, and provides strategic advice to Victorian councils on the entire range of governance and regulatory matters as well as representing clients in proceedings before VCAT and the Victorian Supreme Court. She specialises in administrative law, governance and enforcement and provides regular advice to Victorian council clients relating to their statutory powers, functions and duties and the operation of legislation affecting their activities. Kate's lengthy experience acting for councils means that she is especially familiar with, and has a deep understanding of, the mechanisms of local government and the unique needs of Victorian councils.

Schedule

Time	Duration	Stream	Topic	Speakers
8:30– 9:00am	30 minutes	All	Registration & Arrival Tea & Coffee	-
9:00 – 9:15am	15 minutes	All	Welcome and opening remarks	Kate Oliver, Partner and Victorian Local Government Sector Leader
9:15 – 10:00am	45 minutes	1	Planning Reform Part 1 – New Objectives, Strategies and Scheme Amendments	Planning & Environment
9:15 – 10:00am	45 minutes	2	Workforce Transformation and Bargaining	Employment, Safety & People
9:15 – 10:00am	45 minutes	3	Decision Making: Delegations, Authority and Process	Compliance & Enforcement and Governance
9:15 – 10:00am	45 minutes	4	Council's Powers to Acquire Land: Compulsory Acquisition & Compensation	Valuations, Ratings, & Compensation and Real Estate
10:00 - 10:15am	*15 minutes*	*All*	*Changeover between sessions*	
10:15 – 11:00am	45 minutes	1	Planning Reform Part 2 — New Permit Types, Objections and Application Management	Planning & Environment
10:15 – 11:00am	45 minutes	2	Working from Home: Employment & OHS Challenges	Employment, Safety & People
10:15 – 11:00am	45 minutes	3	Essential Elements of Administrative Decision-Making	Governance
10:15 – 11:00am	45 minutes	4	Structuring Infrastructure Projects for Community and Revenue	Construction & Projects and Real Estate
11:00 - 11:15am	*15 minutes*	*All*	*Changeover between sessions*	
11:15 – 11:45am	30 minutes	All	Morning Tea	
11:45 – 12:30pm	45 minutes	1	Planning Reform Part 3 — Panels, Submissions and What's Coming Next	Planning & Environment
11:45 – 12:30pm	45 minutes	2	AI & Privacy in the Employment Context	Employment, Safety & People
11:45 – 12:30pm	45 minutes	3	Collaborative Procurement: Structuring, Probity and Competition	Government & Not for Profit
11:45 – 12:30pm	45 minutes	4	Rates as a Policy Tool: Making Differential Rating and Rate Relief work for your council	Valuations, Ratings, & Compensation
12:30 - 12:45pm	*15 minutes*	*All*	*Changeover between sessions*	
12:45 – 1:30pm	45 minutes	All	Lunch	
1:30 – 2:15pm	45 minutes	1	Contaminated Land and EPA Obligations	Planning & Environment
1:30 – 2:15pm	45 minutes	2	The latest in dealing with Unreasonable Complainants	Employment, Safety & People and Governance
1:30 – 2:15pm	45 minutes	3	FOI, Privacy & Information Governance	Government & Not for Profit
1:30 – 2:15pm	45 minutes	4	Funding Agreements, Local Jobs First & WHS Accreditation	Construction & Projects
2:15 - 2:30pm	*15 minutes*	*All*	*Changeover between sessions*	
2:30 – 3:15pm	45 minutes	1	Council as a Law Enforcement Agency	Compliance & Enforcement
2:30 – 3:15pm	45 minutes	2	Services Discrimination: What Councils Need to Know	Employment, Safety & People
2:30 – 3:15pm	45 minutes	3	Councillor Conduct & Integrity	Governance
2:30 – 3:15pm	45 minutes	4	State Powers: What to Do When the State Comes Knocking	Valuations, Ratings, & Compensation and Real Estate
3:15 - 3:30pm	*15 minutes*	*All*	*Changeover between sessions*	
3:30 – 3:45pm	15 minutes	All	Afternoon Tea Break	
3:45 – 4:30pm	45 minutes	All	Keynote: The State of Play	Kelly Grigsby (CEO MAV), and Sue Wilkinson (CEO City of Yarra and President LGPro), with Kate Oliver
4:30 – 5:30pm	60 minutes		Drinks, canapes and networking	

FAQ

Who should attend the Local Government Risk Summit?
The Summit is designed for Victorian council officers who are managing legal, operational, governance, workforce, planning, property, project, revenue or compliance risk. Each stream is tailored to a specific cohort, so attendees can choose the stream most relevant to their role and responsibilities.

Can I attend sessions across different streams?
No. To ensure each stream is as practical and targeted as possible, attendees register for and attend one stream for the day.

Can I share a ticket with another council officer?
No, it won't be possible for tickets to be shared.

Will catering be provided?
Yes. Catering will be provided throughout the day, including refreshments during scheduled networking breaks. Attendees will have the opportunity to advise of any dietary requirements as part of the registration process.

Will there be opportunities to network?
Yes. The Summit includes four networking opportunities during the day, giving attendees time to connect with peers from across the sector, share experiences and discuss common challenges.

How do I pay for it?
Council will be invoiced for all attendees following their registration for the Summit.

How does the stream format work?
There are four concurrent streams, each focused on a different area of council risk. Attendees register for one stream and remain in that stream throughout the day, attending five dedicated training sessions before joining all attendees for the closing keynote conversation.

Are places limited?
Yes. Each stream has a capped number of places to support focused discussion and practical training. We recommend registering early to secure your preferred stream.

Will I receive a CPD certificate?
All attendees will receive a certificate of attendance, helping you to satisfy your learning and development requirements.
For qualified lawyers, we anticipate that all 5 of the sessions in the Governance & Risk stream can be counted towards the Substantive Law component of your CPD, meaning that attending this stream will count for 5 CPD points.
For registered planners, our understanding from the Planning Institute of Australia is that 1 hour of conference attendance equates to 1 CPD point, meaning that attending the Planning & Environment stream will count for 5 CPD points.

What will I take away from the Summit?
You will leave with practical, legally-informed guidance to help identify, manage and reduce key areas of risk within your council. The sessions are designed to provide actionable tools and insights that can be applied immediately within your role.

To enquire about registering, **get in touch with our Events team**.