

Women Building Surveyors Program

What is the Women Building Surveyors Program?

The Victorian Government has allocated \$6.3 million over two financial years to give women the opportunity to train to become building surveyors within local government. This 2020-21 State Budget initiative will fund 40 councils \$75,000 per year over the life of the program to employ and train new building surveyors.

The Women Building Surveyors Program will allow 40 successful candidates from Victorian councils to begin the pathway to becoming a Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS). It will support women to either commence a new career or transition their existing career within local government to the pathway of building surveying.

This initiative aims to address a workforce shortage and contribute to Victoria's economic recovery through supporting construction and community infrastructure stimulus measures. It recognises the vital role local government plays in enabling construction and building activity across Victoria. Local government has a statutory role in Victoria's building control system with MBSs providing a key oversight role. The *Building Act 1993* requires that every municipal council have access to the services of an MBS.

The Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) is delivering this initiative through Local Government Victoria (LGV).

Program Partner

Local Government Professionals (LGPro) will partner with LGV to help promote the program and coordinate candidate case management and professional development support services.

LGPro and industry bodies will work together with councils, training providers and professional organisations affiliated with building surveying such as the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group (VMBSG), the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) and the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) to ensure that successful candidates are:

- enrolled in the most appropriate building surveying course for their pathway; and
- supported through regular networking events, professional development advice, and educational and industrial guidance.

Current Enrolment Opportunities

The Academic Course Listing for Victoria includes:

- Building Surveyor Unlimited (Level 1)
Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University – 3 Year AQF level 7 qualification.
- Building Surveyor Limited (Level 2)
Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University; or a 2 Year advanced diploma of building surveying (CPC60115) from an RTO
- Building Inspector (unlimited)
Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University – 3 Year AQF level 7 qualification.
- Building Inspector (limited)
Bachelor of Building Surveying from Victoria University; or a 2 Year advanced diploma of building surveying (CPC60115) from an RTO.

Training Pathways

LGPro will support successful candidates to enrol into the most appropriate training course.

Councils can nominate a person who already holds a qualification in a similar field and wishes to transition to building surveying.

Funding to councils will subsidise the successful candidate's costs in undertaking any of the agreed training options and partially cover their salary.

As this initiative is funded for two years only, applicants should note that the funding provided will only cover a portion of a candidate's educational training.

There are currently two identified pathways in Victoria to becoming a municipal building surveyor.

1. Professional Pathway

To become a registered Building Surveyor – Unlimited, applicants must complete the degree in Building Surveying offered by Victoria University (AQF level 7). This is the only course currently on offer that equips graduates to be registered and employed as Municipal Building Surveyors in Victoria.*

2. Para-Pathway (through existing VET / TAFE courses)

An alternative pathway is the Advanced Diploma of Building Surveying (AQF level 6). Graduates of the Advanced Diploma can qualify and work as level 2 building surveyors and can undertake further study if they wish to become a registered Building Surveyor – Unlimited. This pathway is generally targeted at building trades, mature age applicants not wanting to undertake a university degree or people who cannot fulfill the academic requirements for university entry.

*VBA is working towards expanding the recognition of building surveyors that have trained at an interstate training operator. Further information regarding this matter will be communicated as it becomes available.

Who is eligible?

All 79 Victorian local government councils are eligible to apply. Councils must complete applications on behalf of their nominated staff members.

Individual councils will be responsible for the enrolment and ongoing employment of their nominated staff member. Councils will be expected to provide flexibility to enable the staff member to attend educational training.

Councils in rural areas may wish to nominate a candidate to work across several municipalities as a shared resource.

Funding Conditions

Councils will only be able to nominate one of their female staff members or recruit a female staff member to participate in the Women Building Surveyor Program.

This initiative will fund up to 40 subsidised positions for a two-year period commencing February 2021. This will enable each successful council to nominate and start the process of training a female staff member to become a building surveyor.

Councils who do **not have an identified candidate** for a February 2021 enrolment can still submit an application. These will be considered an expression of interest for a potential mid-2021 intake if the initial intake is not fully subscribed. In this situation, a council should clearly indicate whether the expression of interest for the mid-year intake is for an existing staff member, or whether they intend to undertake a recruitment process. Councils that nominate existing staff members will be given preference.

The key conditions of this initiative are:

- Subsidy is valued at \$150,000 for two years of study and will be paid to councils to support the training and employment of successful candidates.
- Funding is provided on the undertaking of an agreed appropriate training program.

- Successful candidates will be required to participate in any LGPro-led development activities or training conducted within the two-year period.
- In recognition of this investment, councils should seek an ongoing commitment from successful candidates that they intend to continue to work within the Victorian local government sector for a minimum of five years after they receive their qualification.

Funds can be used for:

- Enrolment of the successful candidate in an eligible course.
- Any further professional development opportunities for the successful candidate to further their knowledge and experience in the building surveying area.
- Student memberships to organisations such as AIBS to access support services and information sessions.
- Travel and accommodation costs associated with attending the building surveying courses or any other professional development activities/training.
- Purchase of any equipment that may be required to undertake a building surveying course.
- Supplementation of the candidate's salary while undertaking a building surveying course.

Funding will not be provided to cover the following costs:

- Training courses that are not associated building surveying.
- Any staff costing not associated with the program or LGPro/VMBSG/AIBS events.
- Any ongoing support for candidates who do not re-enrol for a second year of training.

How to apply

Applications open on 14 December 2020 and must be received by the Department no later than **2.00pm on 4 January 2021**.

Applications must be submitted via the following link:

<https://www.localgovernment.vic.gov.au/grants/women-building-surveyors-program>

DJPR may ask applicants for further information following initial assessment of applications.

If you have any queries regarding the application process, please contact DJPR on 0411 752 071 or wbsp@ecodev.vic.gov.au

The Minister for Local Government will announce successful applicants from 11 January 2021.

Funding Agreements

Successful applicants must enter into funding agreements with DJPR. Funding agreements set out the parties' commitments and obligations to each other and the general funding terms and conditions. DJPR recommends that applicants review the Common Funding Agreement standard terms and conditions before applying. These will be made available as part of the application process.

If several small rural councils apply for a shared resource, one council must be nominated as the lead council for the purpose of administering the funding Agreement.

Funding will be released upon the execution of the funding agreement and budget. If the agreed budget is not fully expended, applicants will be required to return unspent funds.

DJPR will request progress reports to be submitted through its online system throughout the funding agreement lifecycle. Councils will also be required to submit a final report with financial acquittal for all program income and expenditure, together with any media coverage material, by 23 December 2022.

Funded recipients are responsible for program delivery, including any cost overruns should they occur. As this is a one-off funding program, councils bear full responsibility for any ongoing staffing costs, including staff training, following completion of the program.

Acknowledgement

Promotional guidelines will form part of the funding agreement, and councils are expected to acknowledge the Victorian Government's support. Applicants must liaise with LGV to coordinate any announcements related to the program.

Successful applicants may be required to provide information on activity outcomes for use in program evaluation or in DJPR's communication material.



Authorised by the Hon Shaun Leane MP

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