

# OPEN COUNCIL DATA

Tools and guidance for local government



LEARN

GET STARTED

TOOLKIT

STAY CONNECTED

ABOUT

- How to publish data: step by step
  - > Create a dataset register
  - > Tools for automating data updates
- Open Council Data Standards

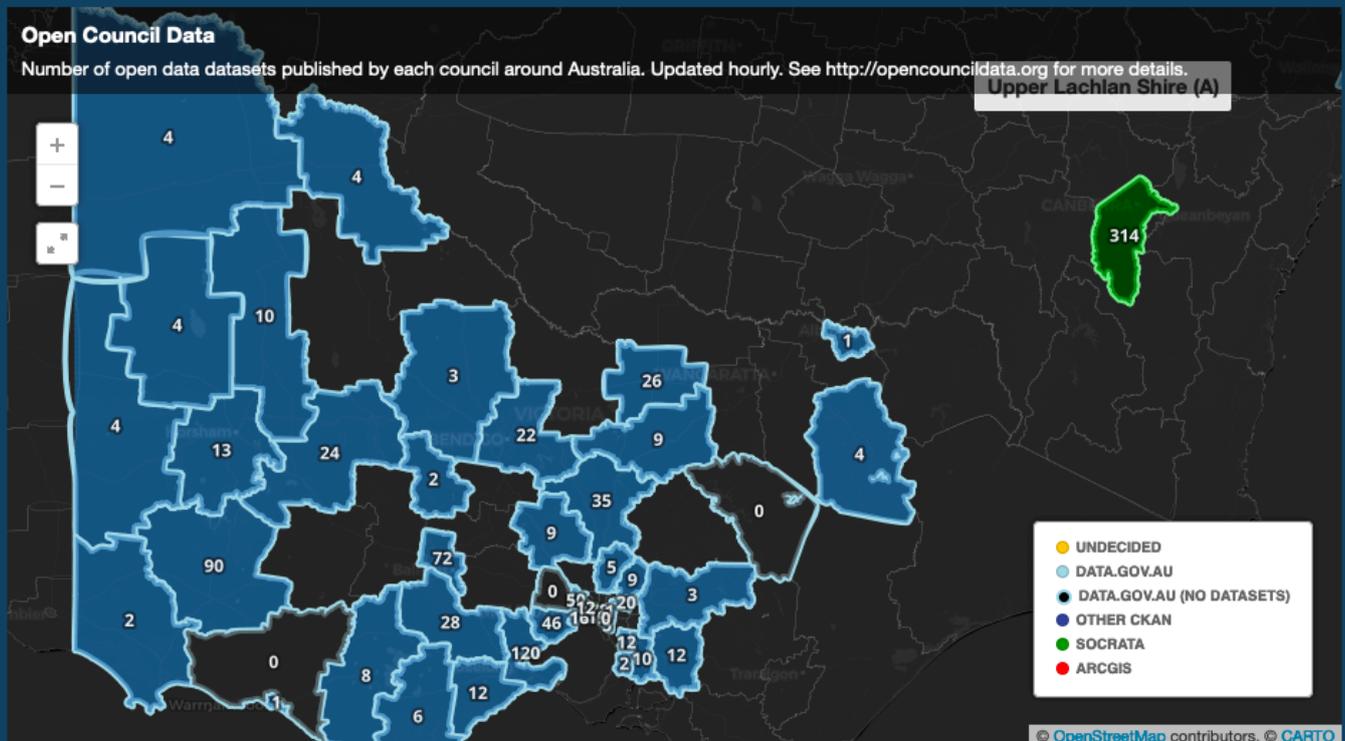
Join dozens of Australian councils in sharing your data assets: free of charge, unrestricted, and in standard formats. Learn what open data is, and why it can help save time and solve real problems.

Need help getting buy-in? Try the sample briefing, responses to common objections, and guide to managing open data.

Ready to publish? Point your GIS and IT teams to the step-by-step guide, tools for automatic publishing and standards to follow.

## Get your council on the map

See how many councils are already publishing open data, and how many datasets they have released. This map is updated live.



# Open Council Data Toolkit

Commissioned by MAV Technology, the *Open Council Data Toolkit* has been developed by consultants Ellen Bicknell and Steve Bennett for use by all Victorian councils wishing to embark upon or enhance their open data journey.

Government data is a valuable public resource that can be a powerful tool to support the goals and values of the community. Government organisations around the world are rapidly adopting open data policies as they recognise the potential benefits that can be realised at all levels of government. Local government data is of particular value, as it includes local infrastructure and amenities.

Even at this early stage, Victorian councils who are currently publishing open data sets have observed internal efficiency gains, increased community engagement, and strengthened relationships with data stakeholders such as coders, entrepreneurs and universities.

In late 2014, MAV Technology brought together the Cities of Melbourne, Greater Geelong, Ballarat, Whittlesea and Corangamite Shire to discuss how they might share their knowledge and experience in open data publishing with other councils. The group discussed a preferred publishing platform, policy for open data publishing and a number of data sets as potential 'starters' for all councils.

*Victoria now boasts more councils publishing open data than any other state in the nation.*

*The map included on the Open Council Data Toolkit website is updated hourly, allowing councils to see how their efforts compare to other Australian LGAs.*

## Toolkit features

*An Open Data Access Policy (template)*

*Open Data Standards and Guidelines:*

- *Responsibilities*
- *Identifying common data sets*
- *Open data standards*
- *Preparing data sets*
- *Publishing data sets*
- *Commercialising data sets*
- *Licensing data sets*
- *Accountability*

*How to seek approval and endorsement for open data publishing from executive management and council*

*Open Data collaboration networks and resources (reference)*

*Resources for automation of data updates.*

At an MAV Technology Forum in December 2014, all councils were encouraged to publish data sets for trees, waste collection and accessible buildings. Within six months, the number of councils publishing open data had doubled and the amount of data published had significantly increased.

In April 2015, MAV Technology partnered with Code for Australia, Socrata and the Cities of Ballarat, Greater Geelong and Melbourne to run

Victorian councils who are publishing open data sets have observed internal efficiency gains, increased community engagement, and strengthened relationships with data stakeholders.

three six-week Open Data Fellowship programs across the councils. The purpose of the Fellowship was to:

- Identify challenges to put forward at GovHack 2015
- Develop strong community understanding on councils' work
- Support and accelerate councils' open data journey

Code for Australia ran a recruitment process and selected Ruth Person, Rosetta Mills and Alicia Ryans-Taylor as the fellows to work with each council. Outcomes from the Fellowship were presented at the 2015 MAV Technology National Conference and in 2016, the three councils involved one the *Exemplar award* at the MAV Technology Awards for Excellence.

Three years on, the toolkit has been used by more than two-thirds of Victoria's 79 councils to begin their open data journey. It has also been used by interstate and overseas

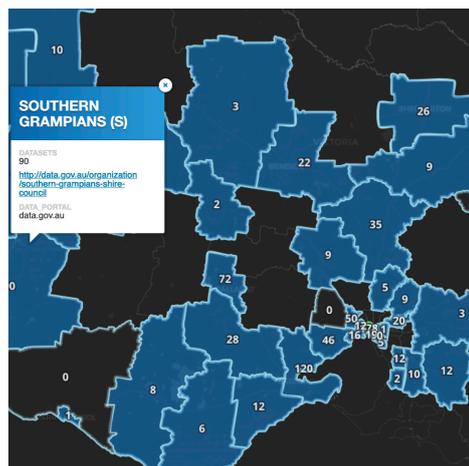
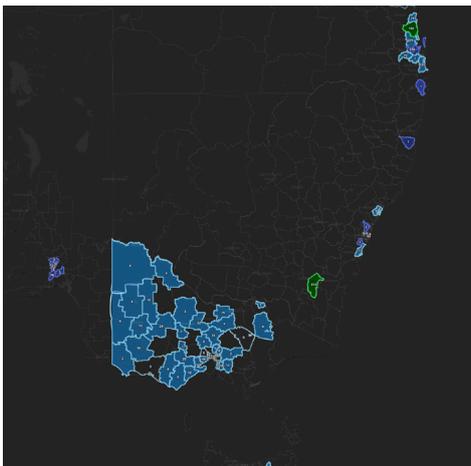
municipalities. A growing number of open data standards and APIs are also available as part of the toolkit for use by all councils. Victoria now boasts more councils publishing open data than any other Australian state.

### Next steps

Identify open data sets of the highest value and publish them to consistent standards – making it easier for developers to consume and produce visualisations and applications that are valuable to local councils, communities and economies.

Explore opportunities to collaborate with other local government stakeholders to share knowledge and establish reliable, useful, economical and equitable open data resources for all communities.

The Open Council Data Toolkit is available for use by all local government data stakeholders now at [opencouncildata.org](http://opencouncildata.org).



*The Open Council Data Toolkit map shows the concentration of councils publishing data in Victoria, compared to the rest of south-eastern Australia.*

*Zoom in on the map to see how many data sets each council has published. The map is automatically updated every hour.*

# The MAV Technology Open Data journey

August 2013 - Pia Waugh spoke @ MAV Technology Annual Conference about GovHack.

December 2013 - Alan Berger facilitated Open Data workshop @ MAV Technology Forum.

July 2014 - MAV Technology sponsored GovHack Melbourne.

September 2014 - MAV Technology brings together the Cities of Melbourne, Greater Geelong, Ballarat and Whittlesea, the Shire of Corangamite and consultant Steve Bennett to discuss:

- Preferred publishing platform
- Open Data Policy
- Potential "Starter" data sets for councils.

Early 2015 - Letters sent to councils encouraging publishing of open data.

April 2015 - Open Data Fellowship partnership announced with Code for Australia, MAV Technology and the Cities of Melbourne, Greater Geelong and Ballarat:

- Identify challenges to put forward at GovHack 2015
- Develop community understanding of council work
- Support & accelerate councils' open data journey.

May 2015 - MAV State Council Resolution establishes sector position to encourage uploading of appropriate data sets for public accessibility.

July 2015 - GovHack Events held in Melbourne, Ballarat and Greater Geelong.

July 2015 - 12 Victorian councils are publishing data.

August 2015 - Cities of Melbourne, Geelong, Ballarat win MAV Technology Awards for Excellence "Collaboration of the Year" & "Exemplar Award" for Open Data Fellowship outcomes.

March 2016 - MAV Technology Open Council Data Toolkit is launched.

June 2018 - More Victorian councils are publishing open data than all other states and territories of Australia combined.

June 2019 - City of Greater Geelong and City of Ballarat establish open, publicly accessible Data Exchange platforms to make it easier for users to view, obtain and use council data. The datasets are provided in multiple formats to meet filtering, mapping, charting and visualisation needs.

December 2019 - Explore potential to offer Data Exchange platform access to more councils in Victoria and beyond.

Early 2020 - Explore development of a single platform for high value, common spatial datasets that makes it easier for developers to use and supports a marketplace for apps that rely on council data.

Encourage cities and industry to work together to develop consistent approaches for gathering and sharing real-time and resilient data, to help inform decisions that could solve big public problems.



*MAV Technology's sponsorship of GovHack is designed to encourage the use of Victorian local government data to develop resources that can be used by local communities.*

**CONTACT:**

*Lisa Bennetto  
Executive Officer  
MAV Technology,  
Municipal Association  
of Victoria.  
lbennetto@mav.asn.au  
+61 412 992 005*