COMMUNITY RESEARCH REPORT

Shepparton State Election 2026

Six candidates
Their backgrounds, contributions and multicultural policies



Greater Shepparton community and landmarks

Prepared by

Hussam Saraf

On behalf of and with support from the
Multicultural Roundtable in Shepparton

31 October 2026

Shepparton Election 2026 Community Candidate Report

The six candidates and their records on community service and multicultural inclusion

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I have prepared this report to help Greater Shepparton's multicultural communities make their own informed decisions in the Victorian state election. It examines Phillip Bryant, Lou Costa, Cayla Fin, Karen Hocking, Shane Sali and Grace Verney through their public records, local contributions, statements and party policies.

Our aim is to make the differences clear and checkable. This edition adds comparisons of shared priorities, distinct backgrounds, multicultural policies, parliamentary votes and practical effects on communities. We distinguish a candidate's own words from party positions and government achievements. The report does not endorse a candidate or recommend a voting order.

Community candidate forums

Detail	From the supplied invitation
Host	The Door Bells Migrant Women's Network
Event	Demystify Politics and Politicians Migrant Communities Ask the Candidates
Date and times	Tuesday 10 November 2026 Arrival 5 pm | Forum 5.30 to 7.30 pm | Close 8 pm
Venue	Mooroopna Education and Activity Centre 23 Alexandra Street, Mooroopna VIC 3629
Entry	Free; registration required

Registration: surveymonkey.com/r/JP9GS29

The Door Bells forum details are taken from its invitation. [1] The separate Committee for Greater Shepparton forum is listed on the newer event flyer for **5.30 pm on Monday 9 November at Riverlinks Eastbank, Shepparton**. That venue supersedes the earlier La Trobe announcement. [50,51]

Portraits are reproduced from the supplied Committee for Greater Shepparton forum flyer, which labels each candidate. Individual photographer credits were not provided. [51]

How to use this report

The personal profiles are on pages 3 to 13. Common ground and differences follow on pages 15 and 16; multicultural positions on pages 17 to 23; policy effects on page 24; parliamentary votes on page 25; and federal migration on page 26. Sources and questions follow. These sections support comparison without prescribing anyone's vote.

Candidate	Affiliation on flyer	Principal background found
Phillip Bryant	One Nation Victoria	Dookie; defence service, business and retail; CFA volunteering. [5,6]
Lou Costa	Community independent	Landscape architecture and construction; environmental advocacy; community projects. [10-17]
Cayla Fin	Victorian Labor	Senior TAFE leadership; regional training and workforce connections. [20,21]
Karen Hocking	Victorian Socialists	GV Health nurse; junior soccer administration; community and sport awards. [29-32]
Shane Sali	The Nationals	Former Greater Shepparton mayor; business, regional advocacy and community boards. [35-40]
Grace Verney	The Greens Victoria	Mental-health peer work, university study and regional-services advocacy. [22,47]

What the evidence means

Official and organisational records establish roles, projects or recognition, although organisations may present their work favourably. **Reported history** comes from news and community publications. **Candidate statements** identify personal accounts and promises. A pledge is not a delivered result, and institutional achievements cannot automatically be credited to one person.

Sources include electoral, council, employer, sport and community records alongside campaign material. Some pages were available through indexed text only. A shorter public record does not establish less community service.

Election context

The six profiles cover the candidates named on the supplied forum invitations; they are not a complete final ballot guide. The VEC lists nominations opening on 4 November and closing at noon on 9 November. Election day is Saturday 28 November 2026. At this edition's cut-off, formal nominations are still ahead. [2]

The ABC guide also lists Alison White of Family First, who is outside this report's six-candidate scope. Kim O'Keeffe won Shepparton for the Nationals in 2022 with 56.8% of the final two-candidate vote against Suzanna Sheed's 43.2%, and is not recontesting. These historical results do not predict the 2026 result. [3]

This is a Victorian state election. Schools, hospitals, police and public transport are central state responsibilities. Immigration is primarily federal, while local councils handle many neighbourhood facilities and services. Funding often overlaps. Ask candidates to identify which government must act and what they could personally do as a state MP. [4]

Phillip Bryant



One Nation Victoria | Also publicly called Phil Bryant | Dookie

Background and career

Bryant's party biography describes him as a first-time candidate who returned to his hometown of Dookie after 7.5 years in the defence force. It says he co-owned a family business for 10 years and later spent nearly 20 years in retail management. His public account centres on regional family life, staff leadership and the pressures facing small businesses. [5]

The local announcement of his candidacy on 2 September 2026 repeats the defence, business and retail history and reports about 30 years of CFA volunteering, including interstate taskforces. It does not identify his defence branch, rank, service dates, business name or retail employer. The duration claims are publicly reported, but a detailed service chronology was not located. [6]

Community roles and contributions

His most substantial stated community commitment is long-term CFA service. That is relevant to fire preparedness, emergency response and volunteer welfare. The sources reviewed did not identify particular deployments, formal brigade offices or awards, so those details should be confirmed directly rather than assumed. [5,6]

His campaign also describes coaching and participation in cricket, netball, football and bowls. Club names, dates and specific appointments are not given. These are campaign descriptions of community involvement rather than independently documented club leadership records. [5]

An October report records a campaign office at 49 High Street, Shepparton. That provides a public point of contact during the election; opening a campaign office is separate from a pre-election community-service record. [9]

Phillip Bryant continued

Political history and current priorities

His 2026 candidacy was announced in September. No earlier elected office was identified in the reviewed sources. His own biography expressly presents this as his first candidacy. [5,6]

In written responses reported on 16 October, Bryant identified three local priorities: investigating a second secondary school across the river from Shepparton, a second river crossing, and funding for Queensland fruit fly prevention. He also called for an emphasis on literacy and numeracy and criticised what he characterised as political influence in schooling. The report supplied no further implementation detail. [7]

The proposed school is an investigation commitment, not a funded construction project. The available material does not specify a site, enrolment model, staffing plan, capital cost or relationship with existing schools. His river-crossing advocacy likewise needs to be distinguished from a costed commitment: he told the local newspaper that his party would avoid financial promises until it had examined the state's finances. [7,8]

What is established and what remains unclear

The public record supports a candidate profile built around emergency volunteering and business experience. Much of the biographical detail comes from his campaign or the announcement of his selection; it is not a complete independently audited employment or service history. No specific completed public infrastructure project was attributable to him in the material reviewed.

A detailed personal commitment from Bryant on language services and multicultural funding was not located. The expanded section on his party's policies identifies material restrictions and funding proposals that require a clear response from him. Party positions are attributed to the party, rather than presented as quotations from Bryant.

Questions for the forum

- What specific CFA roles and community projects have you undertaken, and which outcomes best demonstrate your local contribution?
- For the proposed second school, what would the investigation examine, how would families and existing schools participate, and when would you publish costs and findings?
- How would your electorate office serve residents from every background, including people who need an interpreter, and what state-funded services would you prioritise?

Lou Costa



Community independent | Also published as Louise Costa | Goulburn Valley background

Background and professional work

Costa grew up in Shepparton East and studied landscape architecture at RMIT. She established Design by Nature after returning to the region. The Shepparton Adviser gives 1998 as the start year; an earlier Waranga News profile gives 1997. The safest description is that the business began in the late 1990s, pending confirmation. [10,11]

The 2024 profile identifies a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture and lists work at Harmony Village, the Australian Botanic Gardens Shepparton's Weaving Garden and Children's Garden, Mooroopna North and Shepparton East primary schools, St Mary's School Rushworth, St Joseph's Primary School Nagambie, Euroa Arboretum and Winton Wetlands. It describes employing local people and working with contractors and craftspeople. These are reported professional contributions; individual contracts and project scopes were not inspected. [11]

Environmental and community record

Her environmental record predates the election. Goulburn Valley Environment Group's 2019 president's report names Costa and Mel Stagg as its representatives on the Shepparton Bypass Community Consultative Committee. The group also credits pressure from Costa and GVEG with VicRoads forming a Roadside Environmental Committee to improve consultation. This is a dated organisational account of her involvement. [12]

GVEG's spring 2025 newsletter identifies her as its native vegetation spokesperson. It reports that negotiations over four significant habitat trees on Shepparton's northern edge resulted in two being retained, with indigenous understorey planting required around them. The outcome is attributed to the group's work; the newsletter establishes Costa's spokesperson role, not sole responsibility for the result. [13]

An ADAPT Loddon Mallee program report credits her with bringing Rushworth gardeners together to convert a weedy site into indigenous wildflower beds. Working bees developed into further activities including food swaps and a seed bank. This is a concrete community initiative in the wider region, outside Shepparton city itself. [14]

Waranga News identified her as president of the Waranga Catchment Landcare Cooperative when she co-led a GV Pride bushwalk at Whroo in April 2024. Shepparton News separately records her presenting on sustainable gardens and landscaping at a Tatura native-plant event in May 2024. The presidency is documented for that period; continued tenure in October 2026 was not established. [15,16]

Her community activities also include music. In August 2025, Shepparton News identified her as part of the folk trio Angelus, alongside Emma King and Julie Price, planning concerts to make use of regional community halls. That report described her as living in Rushworth at the time. It should not be treated as confirmation of her current address. [17]

Lou Costa continued

Political history and priorities

Voices for Goulburn Valley endorsed Costa as its community independent in September 2026. Her campaign draws on the group's listening survey, covering cost of living, health, climate and environment, social cohesion, housing, transport, integrity, education and safety. No prior elected office was established in the reviewed sources. [10]

In a 23 September interview, she supported continuing funding for Shepparton Foodshare and an integrated cancer centre at GV Health. She argued for treating agricultural needs and river health together. These are advocacy positions; the interview does not establish secured funding or an agreed government delivery plan. [18]

Former independent federal MP Cathy McGowan publicly supported her candidacy in connection with an October Kialla event. This is a political endorsement, not evidence of a funding agreement or a commitment to support either major party in parliament. [19]

Evidence and questions to resolve

Costa's record includes identifiable local projects and dated community reports. Some work was paid professional practice, some was advocacy, and some was volunteer activity. The sources do not establish a complete division between those categories. Her current business interests and any arrangements for managing them if elected would be useful to clarify.

- Which landscape and community projects did you personally lead, and which were collaborative or paid commissions?
- How would community consultation shape your parliamentary votes, and what principles would guide negotiations if neither major party held a majority?
- What funding, workforce and timetable would you seek for Foodshare and the proposed cancer centre, and how would you report progress?

Cayla Fin



Victorian Labor | Dookie | Education leadership and regional skills

Background and career

Fin is a senior vocational and higher-education professional. Her employer's profile describes more than 15 years in the sector and identifies her as Chief Transformation and Performance Officer and Regional Lead for the Shepparton Region at NVITAFE. It emphasises local training, employer partnerships and pathways into regional jobs. [20]

The role has a documentary basis beyond election publicity: GOTAFE's 2024 annual report names Cayla Fin as Chief Transformation and Performance Officer in its organisational chart. This confirms a senior role by 2024. It does not establish her exact appointment date or give her personal credit for all institutional results. [21]

The June 2026 announcement places her origins in Gruyere, her current home in Dookie, and her Portarlington CFA service in 2019 to 2024. That volunteering was outside the Shepparton district. [22]

An earlier Geelong Times profile provides additional career context. In January 2024 it reported that Fin and her wife Heidi had launched Seaforth, an online business selling surf apparel, prints and accessories, after moving to the Bellarine Peninsula in 2018. The article describes their CFA involvement and use of local suppliers. It establishes a past business venture, but not its current ownership or trading status. [23]

Publicly disclosed experience and community contribution

Fin has publicly discussed breast cancer as a reason for prioritising accessible healthcare. Her EMILY's List profile also says her mother worked as an intensive-care nurse. These details are included because they are part of her published explanation of her health priorities; they do not establish clinical qualifications for Fin herself. [24]

Her clearest documented contribution in Greater Shepparton is through education leadership. The employer profile describes responsibility for strengthening connections among training, industry and the community. The evidence establishes a role and direction of work; it does not provide candidate-specific figures for additional students trained, jobs created or funding secured. [20,21]

Cayla Fin continued

Political history and current priorities

Labor's endorsement had been publicly reported by 26 June 2026. No earlier elected office was found in the sources reviewed. Her campaign draws on local services and access to education and healthcare. [22,24]

On 27 October, local reporting described Labor's conditional pledge to expand GV Health's emergency department. The wider announcement covered 12 hospitals and a statewide workforce increase. Fin welcomed it as providing faster care and local jobs. The published statewide totals should not be presented as beds or staff allocated entirely to Shepparton. [25]

She also welcomed the funded Greater Shepparton bus-network review, emphasising the needs of people who cannot drive or afford a car. Reporting distinguishes this review from an election pledge: funding had already been allocated, and the review was to proceed regardless of the result. A review is not the same as new routes or services being operational. [26]

A September opinion column describing a meeting with Fin reports support for renewable energy and reducing emissions, including moving away from gas. This is a columnist's account of a discussion, not a detailed costed local energy plan. [27]

Evidence and questions to resolve

Fin's institutional role is independently documented in a tabled annual report. Her prior CFA and business activity adds context to her biography. The missing detail is a complete career and qualification chronology, measurable outcomes attributable to her leadership, and how local campaign priorities would translate into funded delivery.

Government projects cited by a candidate remain government projects unless evidence establishes her personal contribution. Likewise, any current employment or business interests should be explained when discussing how she would manage responsibilities as an MP.

- Which improvements at the local TAFE did you personally lead, and what evidence shows the benefits for students and employers?
- What is the specific GV Health emergency-department commitment for Shepparton, including capital funding, staffing and completion date?
- How would you turn the bus review into usable routes and timetables, and improve training access for people facing language or transport barriers?

Karen Hocking



Victorian Socialists | Shepparton | Nursing and junior sport

Professional and local background

Hocking is a Shepparton resident and a nurse at GV Health, according to the announcement of her candidacy. Her public account links her healthcare priorities to difficulties patients face obtaining surgery and specialist care. The reviewed sources do not establish her exact nursing grade, specialty, qualifications or employment start date. [29]

Documented community service

Football Victoria records that she became secretary of Shepparton Junior Soccer Association in 2003. Its life-member profile also credits her with managing the SJSA Academy Player Development Program, serving as the association's registrations officer and holding a vice-presidential role with the Victorian Country Leagues Football Association. It awarded her life membership in 2020. [30]

The SJSA's 2023 delegates package separately lists her as secretary and registrations manager. This provides dated confirmation of formal administrative responsibilities. Current campaign and news profiles continue to describe long-term involvement, but the 2023 document alone cannot verify every office she holds today. [32,28,29]

Greater Shepparton City Council's 2015 Australia Day record names Karen Hocking as the recipient of the Shepparton Community Service Award. This is distinct from the Citizen of the Year award and from Football Victoria life membership. Together, the two recognitions provide evidence of community service acknowledged outside her political party. [31,30]

Her campaign says she has helped children from diverse backgrounds access sport. That statement is consistent with the administrative work documented by football organisations, although the reviewed sources do not quantify participation, identify a specific migrant-access program she created, or establish that she alone produced wider growth in local soccer. [28,30]

Karen Hocking continued

Political experience

Hocking has contested a state election before. The ABC's 2022 ticket record lists her first on the Victorian Socialists' Northern Victoria Legislative Council ticket, ahead of Emma Dynes. She was not elected. The party recorded 1,893 first-preference votes across the region, or 0.41%; Hocking's 588 individual below-the-line votes are only one component of that total. Neither number is a Shepparton District lower-house result. [33,34]

Her 2026 candidacy is for Shepparton in the Legislative Assembly, a different contest from the much larger Northern Victoria upper-house region. A previous candidacy is experience campaigning, not a parliamentary voting record. [28,33,34]

Current priorities and public advocacy

Her candidate page advocates free and accessible healthcare, aged care and disability services; affordable housing; a free, practical local bus service; affordable renewable energy; and staffed community spaces such as libraries and community hubs. She opposes racism, misogyny and other forms of discrimination, and says she has participated in Palestine solidarity activity. These are her stated positions. [28]

The accessible material does not supply a costed Shepparton service plan, staffing numbers, delivery dates or the division of responsibility between state, federal and local government. The practical test is how she would convert these objectives into amendments, budgets and agreements in parliament.

What the record establishes

Hocking has a substantial, independently recognised record in junior-sport administration, as well as a publicly reported nursing career. Her political experience includes an unsuccessful 2022 candidacy. Exact current sport offices and the detail of her healthcare career remain worth confirming; the awards do not establish her policy proposals' costs or feasibility.

- What changed in junior soccer during your service, particularly for children facing financial, transport or language barriers?
- What would a free and useful Shepparton bus network require in routes, operating hours, drivers and annual funding?
- Which healthcare and housing measures would you seek first, and how would you secure parliamentary support for them?

Shane Sali



The Nationals | Former Greater Shepparton mayor | Balaclava Ward councillor on leave

Current status and public career

Council's dated announcement states that Sali stepped down as mayor on 7 September 2026 and would remain on leave from council until the state-election results were declared. Local reporting also says he chose not to receive his council salary during that leave. Older pages calling him the current mayor should be read in that historical context. [35,36]

Sali was elected to council in 2020 and became mayor in June 2022. He was returned to council in 2024 and represents Balaclava Ward. His council biography describes him as serving a second council term. [3,38]

He secured Nationals preselection on 5 September 2026, defeating Alexander Lew. This followed Kim O'Keeffe's decision not to recontest. His elected experience is in municipal government; it should not be presented as an existing state-parliamentary record. [44,3]

Background and business experience

In a published VLGA interview, Sali describes being born and raised in Shepparton and coming from an Albanian migrant family whose grandfather arrived in 1928. He recounts working as an account manager at the local Telstra business centre before joining the family's women's retail business. He also describes membership of the Shepparton Show Me committee before his council election. These details come from his own published account. [37]

His council biography describes long-term membership of the Shepparton Albanian Committee. The reference to 14 years is tied to that biography's publication period and should not be treated as an exact current duration. Local reporting shows him helping at the March 2026 Albanian Harvest Festival and speaking at an interfaith iftar in 2025. These establish participation, not sole organisation of either event. [38,45,46]

Regional and community leadership

Council's December 2024 announcement records his re-election as Regional Cities Victoria chair for 2025. It specifies that he was deputy chair in 2023 and chair in 2024. These dated records give a clearer chronology than abbreviated descriptions elsewhere. The role involved collective advocacy for regional cities. [39]

The Greater Shepparton Lighthouse Project lists Sali as a director and explicitly notes a leave of absence. The page also contains an older description of his mayoral tenure. The board appointment is a governance contribution to an organisation working with local young people and families, not evidence that he personally delivered every Lighthouse program. [40]

Shane Sali continued

Concrete local outcomes

The Lenne Street drainage upgrade in Mooroopna is a documented project completed while he was mayor. August 2026 reporting puts its cost at about $4 million, with $1.68 million from the federal Disaster Ready Fund and $2.23 million from Council. It describes new pipes and a pump following the 2022 flood problems. Sali spoke at its completion alongside ward councillor Paul Wickham. [41]

This supports an assessment of Sali's involvement in council leadership and advocacy around flood resilience. Credit should also reflect residents, councillors, council staff, contractors and the funding governments. His campaign cites this work and the 2022 flood response as examples of delivery. It would be useful to ask him to identify his particular decisions and interventions within those shared efforts. [41,42]

Current campaign priorities

His candidate page prioritises regional healthcare, roads, water security, crime, sports infrastructure and a fairer bus network. It also advocates removing the levy his campaign calls the Emergency Service Tax. These are campaign positions; they are not completed state reforms. [42]

A Nationals release available at the research cut-off announces a $25 million Coalition pledge for the first stage of planning and development of a second Goulburn River crossing. It envisages better flood resilience and freight movement. The announcement does not fund the whole bridge and connecting-road construction program. [43]

Evidence and questions to resolve

Among these six candidates, Sali has the clearest documented elected-government record in the sources reviewed. That makes his council decisions and delivery claims assessable, while leaving the normal distinction between mayoral leadership and collective council achievement. It does not by itself establish future performance as a state MP.

- Which council outcomes best demonstrate your personal contribution, and what were the costs, delays and lessons learned?
- What would the $25 million crossing allocation deliver, by when, and what further funding and approvals would construction require?
- How would you maintain accessible representation for all communities while managing party obligations, business interests and community-board responsibilities?

Grace Verney



The Greens Victoria | Health-sector worker and university student

Background and work

Verney's official candidate profile describes her as a health-sector worker studying at university while working full time. She connects her politics to growing up in a low-income regional household and to difficulties with living costs and access to healthcare. [47]

The June 2026 announcement calls her a mental-health peer worker who studied psychology and sociology, moved to Shepparton in 2024 and planned a Master of Social Work in 2027. This does not establish a completed social-work qualification or registration as a psychologist. [22]

Grace Verney has told the author that the claim she grew up in regional Victoria is incorrect. A newspaper described a rural NSW background, while her Greens profile referred to regional Victoria. Her correct childhood location has not been confirmed directly for this edition. The earlier suggestion that the accounts might describe different periods of her life is withdrawn. [22,47]

Public roles and local contribution

Her mental-health work is the principal professional contribution reported. The sources reviewed do not identify her employer, service dates, seniority, client numbers or a named program she founded. Accordingly, this report does not assign her responsibility for a particular Shepparton health service or outcome. [22]

A Greens event listing credits Verney and Murray Plains candidate Zoe Cook with helping organise a party analysis workshop, including the venue. This documents party activity, rather than a delivered public service. No prior elected office, major local award or independently documented long-running community leadership role was located in this review. [48]

Political priorities

Her official platform emphasises healthcare suited to a growing and diverse regional population, cost-of-living relief, gender equality and First Nations justice. The local announcement also reports a priority of better public transport. These are published areas of concern; the available sources do not contain a detailed costed Shepparton delivery program. [47,22]

How to interpret the shorter record

Verney has a shorter and less detailed public biography than several other candidates. That limits what can responsibly be said about her history; it does not establish the absence of worthwhile work. Her employment chronology, qualifications, community partnerships and specific policy proposals are useful subjects for direct questions.

- What mental-health work have you done locally, and which service gaps could you address through the Victorian Parliament?
- Which three changes would you prioritise for Shepparton, what would they cost and how would you measure their impact?
- How would you build relationships across the electorate and turn your equality and regional-access priorities into practical services?

Comparing the published proposals

This table compares statements found in the reviewed sources. It is not a complete party-manifesto comparison. A missing proposal means it was not identified in this research, not that the candidate opposes it. Detailed backgrounds and source qualifications appear in the profiles.

Candidate	Specific focus in available material	Delivery detail still needed
Bryant	Investigate a second secondary school; advocate a second crossing; fruit fly prevention. [7,8]	Study scope, location options, costs, government commitments and timetable.
Costa	Foodshare funding; integrated cancer care; river health and agriculture. [18]	Funding level and duration, clinical workforce and parliamentary negotiation plan.
Fin	GV Health ED expansion pledge; welcome for a funded bus review. [25,26]	Local share of funding and staff, hospital delivery dates and service changes following review.
Hocking	Free usable buses; accessible healthcare; housing and community spaces. [28]	Local service specifications, annual operating costs and legislative pathway.
Sali	Regional infrastructure and services; $25 million first-stage crossing pledge. [42,43]	What planning money buys, final construction cost, approvals and delivery commitments.
Verney	Mental-health and healthcare access; living costs; public transport and equality. [22,47]	Named local projects, quantified funding, partners and timeframes.

Three distinctions to keep clear

Completed work: the Lenne Street drainage project was reported complete in August 2026. It is a shared council and federal-funded outcome. [41]

A funded process: the bus review was reported as already funded and due in early 2027. The review itself does not guarantee a particular new bus service. [8,26]

Election commitments: the crossing allocation covers an initial stage; Labor's emergency-department expansion depends on re-election; Bryant's school proposal calls for investigation. Each requires further detail before it can be treated as a fully funded, scheduled local project. [7,25,43]

Assessing contribution fairly

Use the same questions for every candidate: What was your role? What happened? Who else contributed? What evidence confirms it? For a promise, ask what is funded, who has authority to deliver it, and when the community would see a result. This allows volunteering, professional work and elected leadership to be considered on their own evidence.

What the candidates share in common

The six candidates share a district and many concerns about regional life, but they do not share one political philosophy. Some similarities apply to all six; others apply only to the named candidates. A common concern does not mean agreement on the solution, spending level or people eligible for assistance.

Shared circumstances

All six are seeking the Shepparton seat in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. None is the sitting state member. Sali brings municipal experience, while Hocking has contested a previous state election without being elected. The other reviewed biographies do not establish previous elected office. Their present contest therefore concerns what they would do in state parliament, not a shared record of state parliamentary votes. [3,5,10,22,28,33,35]

Common ground	Who shares it	What the evidence establishes
Regional services and opportunity	Across the field, with different priorities	The campaigns discuss access to services, infrastructure, training or affordable living. Their proposals differ in scope and specificity. [7,18,20,25,28,42,47]
Emergency volunteering	Bryant and Fin	Both report CFA service. Bryant's reported record spans decades; Fin's documented period was 2019 to 2024 in Portarlington. The locations and roles should not be treated as identical. [6,22]
Business experience	Bryant, Costa, Fin and Sali	Their backgrounds include retail, landscape design or a small business venture. Ownership, management and past trading activity are different kinds of experience. [5,11,23,37]
Sport or community participation	Bryant, Hocking and Sali, in different forms	Bryant reports coaching and club involvement; Hocking has recognised junior-soccer administration; Sali has civic and community-organisation roles. [5,30,38]
Health and access concerns	Costa, Fin, Hocking, Sali and Verney	Health features in their published priorities, ranging from hospital infrastructure to affordable and accessible care. These are not interchangeable funding commitments. [18,25,28,42,47]

A common practical test

Every candidate would need to work with other MPs, ministers, departments and local organisations. Ask each to identify their own responsibility, the government with power to act, the money required and the result they would report. Party membership, independence, professional seniority and long service each offer different experience; none alone guarantees delivery.

Where they differ and what they do not share

Candidate	Distinctive public experience	Political setting
Phillip Bryant	Defence, retail and reported long-term CFA service. Much of the chronology is campaign-sourced. [5,6]	One Nation candidate; no previous elected office established.
Lou Costa	Landscape architecture, environmental advocacy and community projects, with dated regional records. [11-17]	Community independent endorsed by Voices for Goulburn Valley; no party platform can be attributed to her.
Cayla Fin	Senior TAFE leadership, with the role confirmed in an annual report. [20,21]	Labor candidate; her party governs Victoria, but she is not the author of every government achievement.
Karen Hocking	GV Health nursing and independently recognised junior-soccer administration. [29-32]	Victorian Socialists candidate; previously contested Northern Victoria in 2022 without election.
Shane Sali	Council member since 2020 and mayor from 2022 until September 2026; collective council delivery. [35,38,41]	Nationals candidate within the Liberal-National Coalition; councillor on leave.
Grace Verney	Mental-health peer work and university study; a shorter documented local history. [22,47]	Greens candidate; no prior elected office established.

Differences in independence and influence

Costa would need to negotiate issue by issue as an independent. The five party candidates would work within party organisations and parliamentary teams. Fin and Sali are aligned with the two major governing alternatives; Bryant, Hocking and Verney represent other parties. This describes their political setting, not their likely election result or a promise of influence.

Differences in policy and evidence

The largest multicultural-policy divide concerns whether government should fund distinct multicultural institutions and language access. There are also disagreements about migration, religious dress, police powers and safeguards, and the way community languages should be supported. The following sections identify the source and level of government for each position. [52,53,59,71,72,76,78-81]

They also do not have equally detailed public records. A documented council vote is different from a campaign promise; a paid professional project is different from volunteering; participation at a festival is different from organising it. The report applies those distinctions to every candidate.

A person’s surname, ancestry, faith, gender or relationship status is not evidence of how they would vote. Nor does one community leader speak for everyone in that community. The relevant comparison is between stated positions, conduct, delivery and accountability.

Positions on multicultural communities at a glance

“For or against multicultural communities” is most useful when attached to a specific policy. The table gives a plain-language assessment of published positions. It does not claim to know private beliefs, or treat every migrant, faith group and voter as having the same interests.

Candidate	What is established	What still needs a personal answer
Bryant One Nation	His national party explicitly opposes government-funded multiculturalism and translation services. Its Victorian platform restricts full-face veils in schools. [52,53]	Which policies would he support in Victoria, and would he protect essential interpreters and equal access?
Costa Independent	Her public statements favour consultation, social cohesion and opposition to fear and division. [10,65]	Specific commitments on multicultural funding, language services and anti-discrimination measures.
Fin Labor	She publicly celebrates culturally diverse learners. Labor supports multicultural institutions and services through government policy and programs. [58-64]	Her own local delivery commitments, costs, and changes needed where current services fall short.
Hocking Victorian Socialists	She explicitly opposes racism. Her party supports migrant services, community languages and protection from racial scapegoating. [28,76]	The Shepparton allocation and practical delivery of the party’s wider proposals.
Sali Nationals	His council-era statements and actions support multicultural inclusion; Nationals records support multicultural organisations and institutions. [66-69,78]	How he reconciles that support with particular Coalition policies and which measures he would personally back.
Verney Greens	Her own statement stresses equality and diverse health needs; the Greens explicitly support multiculturalism, language access and anti-racism. [47,72-75]	Her candidate-specific local program and how the party platform would become measurable services.

The clearest opposition is policy-specific: One Nation’s national opposition to funded multiculturalism is explicit. **The clearest limitation elsewhere is often delivery detail:** supportive values do not establish a funded Shepparton plan. Costa’s lack of a party manifesto makes direct commitments especially important. A disagreement over one law should be read alongside the reasons and the wider record.

Phillip Bryant and One Nation on multiculturalism

His own published position

Bryant's available local material emphasises regional infrastructure, schooling, business and service. We did not locate a detailed personal multicultural policy or a clear statement accepting or rejecting every national One Nation proposal. His candidacy is evidence of party affiliation; it is not permission to invent quotations or private beliefs. [5-8]

What his party proposes

On 7 July 2026, the national party said it would remove the multicultural minister and office and end government-funded translation services. It presents English-language assimilation as a route to unity and argues that funded multiculturalism creates separation. This is an explicit position against that model of government support. The national statement does not identify every Victorian service or contract it would cover. [52]

One Nation Victoria separately proposes banning burqas and niqabs in all Victorian schools, including Islamic schools, arguing that full-face veils hinder integration and subordinate women. The published proposal is about full-face veils; it should not be rewritten as a ban on all hijabs or all religious clothing. Its education policy also supports parental choice and funding following students to faith-based schools. [53]

The national September migration plan proposes three years of net negative migration followed by a 130,000 net-migration cap. Its student-visa proposal generally excludes accompanying family, with an exception for selected postgraduate study. These are federal proposals affecting prospective migrants and families, not powers a Victorian MP could exercise alone. [54,87]

In July, Pauline Hanson publicly argued against arrivals from countries she described as radical Islamic countries; she denied that her position amounted to a version of the White Australia policy. September reporting describes a proposed pause linked to countries rated "do not travel" for terrorism or extreme security risks. These are national-leadership positions, not a statement made by Bryant. [55,56]

How communities could be affected

Our assessment is that removing funded language assistance could make public services harder to use for residents with limited English, while the school proposal would directly restrict women and girls who wear the specified face coverings. The effect on each service would depend on the legislation, exemptions and funding arrangements. It would be inaccurate to say every migrant would be excluded from every service.

ABC reporting on 29 October records concerns from multicultural organisations about One Nation's rhetoric. It also records Victorian leader Warren Pickering's assurance that the party seeks dialogue across ethnic backgrounds and that communities need not fear a One Nation government. Both the proposed policies and that response belong in the record. [57]

The unresolved test for Bryant

Will he publicly commit to interpreters in hospitals, schools and emergency services, explain his position on the school-dress proposal, and identify any national party policy he would not support? An answer about welcoming everyone should be followed by an answer about the actual service or restriction.

Lou Costa and independent representation

Her own stated approach

Costa's campaign is grounded in the Voices for Goulburn Valley listening process. Its published priorities include social cohesion and community consultation alongside living costs, health and environmental issues. She describes involving residents in decisions and drawing on local knowledge. This is a positive statement about participation, but not a complete multicultural service program. [10,18]

In a 20 October response to the reported attack on Helen Haines, Costa said her campaign opposed fear and division and stressed compassion. That supports a description of her public approach as inclusive. It does not establish her position on every immigration rule, religious-freedom question or funding measure. [65]

What she shares with other candidates

Her interest in social cohesion overlaps with the inclusion commitments of Fin, Hocking, Sali and Verney. Her health and regional-service concerns overlap with several campaigns. Her environmental and consultation record gives those themes a longer history than the current campaign alone. The earlier profile sets out the specific projects and the limits of the evidence. [10-19]

What is different about an independent

Costa has no political party manifesto whose positions can fill the gaps in her personal platform. The views of other independents, a supporter or an endorsing organisation must not automatically be attributed to her. Nor does a listening survey prove every language group had equal access to it.

If elected, she would be assessed on her parliamentary choices and negotiations. Community consultation could inform those choices, but the available material does not establish a published process for resolving conflicting community views, guaranteeing interpreters, or reporting which advice was accepted and why.

What remains unverified

We did not establish a candidate-specific funding package for local multicultural organisations, a detailed position on the 2026 multicultural-governance reforms, or a complete policy on asylum and migration. The absence of a located statement is not evidence that she opposes these matters.

The useful next step is a written commitment identifying the services she would protect, the funding she would seek and how smaller communities, women and young people would participate. A public explanation of her negotiating principles would also help residents distinguish independence from uncertainty.

The unresolved test for Costa

Which three multicultural commitments would she carry into parliamentary negotiations, and what would she do if a major party sought her support while offering policies that conflicted with those commitments?

Cayla Fin and Labor on multiculturalism

Her own statements and work

In a public LinkedIn post about GOTAFE graduations, Fin explicitly celebrated migrant and culturally diverse learners, people of colour, women and other groups. This is direct evidence that she presents diversity as a strength in education. It is a personal public statement, not proof of particular enrolment or employment outcomes. [63]

Her official Labor profile focuses on local services and accessible healthcare. It does not publish a separate, costed multicultural plan for Shepparton. Her TAFE responsibilities and her campaign platform should therefore be examined alongside, rather than merged with, Labor's government record. [20,21,64]

The Victorian party and government record

Victorian Labor's values statement rejects racism and discrimination. The government's 2024-2029 anti-racism strategy addresses service access, workplace participation and support for people subjected to racism. It also publishes a guide to recognising and reporting Islamophobia. These are explicit supportive positions; the existence of a strategy does not establish that racism has been eliminated or every service gap solved. [58,60,61]

The 2026 reforms created Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria, bringing engagement, policy and grants functions together. They provide for a regional deputy, regional engagement groups, departmental inclusion plans and recognition of language services as essential. These are institutional government measures, not achievements attributable personally to Fin. [59]

Recorded local funding

The Department of Premier and Cabinet's 2025-26 payments report records the following examples. They demonstrate actual public expenditure, rather than new election promises. The events round retains its 2024-25 program label within the 2025-26 payments report. [62]

Recipient	Program	Reported payment
Ethnic Council of Shepparton and District	Regional Settlement Support Fund 2025-26	$96,300
Albanian Moslem Society Shepparton	Regional Multicultural Festivals and Events Fund medium and large round 2	$32,176
Greater Shepparton Nepalese Community	Same festivals and events round	$26,550

Where support needs scrutiny

Residents can ask whether funding is sufficient, distributed transparently and accessible to smaller organisations. The government review made 41 recommendations; its published response says the announced actions address seven key recommendations and other recommendations remain under consideration. That is a reason to check implementation, not assume the whole review has been completed. [59,90]

Karen Hocking and Victorian Socialists on multiculturalism

Her own stated position

Hocking explicitly opposes racism and bigotry and says she has participated in Palestine solidarity activity. Her junior-soccer work provides a documented basis for discussing inclusion through community sport, while the number of children assisted or particular access outcomes still needs evidence. [28-32]

The party program

Victorian Socialists' anti-racism policy rejects scapegoating migrants, refugees, Muslims, African Australians and Chinese Australians. It proposes more interpreters, English learning, migrant legal assistance, employment support and action against exploitation and rental discrimination. It also supports increased multicultural-organisation funding and community-language education, including teacher preparation and early childhood programs. [76]

The party proposes making Victoria a sanctuary state and preventing state police from assisting Australian Border Force deportation operations. This is a proposal about state cooperation; it would not itself grant visas or remove federal immigration powers. Its policy gives particular attention to poorly served outer-suburban communities, so a specific regional allocation cannot be assumed. [76]

Palestine and the limits of state power

The party's anti-war policy supports Palestinian rights and proposes ending specified Victorian defence-related partnerships and procurement relationships connected to Israel, alongside federal advocacy. These are distinct from everyday services for local communities, and several proposals would require legal and constitutional assessment. They should not be presented as powers held personally by a Shepparton MP. [77]

A position about a foreign government does not, by itself, establish a position against local people of a religion or ancestry. Hocking should explain how she would protect Jewish residents from antisemitism, Muslim residents from Islamophobia, and peaceful political expression consistently.

What the program would mean locally

Our assessment is that the party's service proposals would, if funded and implemented, address several barriers faced by residents with limited English or insecure work. Their local value depends on staffing, eligibility, regional distribution and delivery. The published material does not supply a complete Shepparton budget or an implementation agreement with other parliamentary parties.

The unresolved test for Hocking

Which measures would she seek first in Shepparton, what annual funding would they require, and which departments or partners would deliver them? Ask separately how she would pursue her policing and asylum proposals within Victorian powers, and how she would protect all faith communities while advocating her international positions.

Shane Sali and the Nationals on multiculturalism

His own public record

Sali's record includes explicit support for multicultural inclusion during his mayoralty. When Council adopted its 2023-2026 Multicultural Action Plan, he supported better services, participation and accessible activities. This is stronger evidence than ancestry alone: it is a published statement attached to a council policy. Council staff, community organisations and other councillors also contributed. [66]

In Council's 2026 Cultural Diversity Week announcement, Sali welcomed residents of all backgrounds and celebrated local traditions, languages and histories. His participation in Albanian and interfaith events adds context, but does not prove the outcomes of all multicultural programs. [67,45,46]

The Victorian Nationals and Coalition record

Nationals representatives publicly promote multicultural organisations and recognition. Northern Victoria MP Gaelle Broad encouraged local organisations to apply for multicultural festival grants in October 2025; Mildura MP Jade Benham encouraged nominations for the 2026 Multicultural Awards for Excellence. These statements support a description of the party as supportive of multicultural community activity. Promoting an existing government grant is not the same as creating or personally funding it. [68,69]

Nationals MPs also voted for the multicultural-governance bill in August 2026. On other legislation, the Coalition disagreed with Labor and the Greens about how anti-vilification protections should operate. The detailed parliamentary comparison explains those differences. It would be inaccurate to turn those votes into a claim that the Nationals oppose all multiculturalism. [78-81]

The federal party position is more restrictive on migration

The federal Nationals' current plan seeks lower migration linked to housing supply. The Coalition's April 2026 plan proposes enforceable visa conditions tied to Australian values, expanded screening, longer social-security waiting periods for non-citizens and a return to temporary protection for specified cohorts. These are federal policies, not a plan for withdrawing every Victorian multicultural grant. [70,71]

What remains to be tested

Sali has a documented public record of supporting local multicultural participation. That does not settle his position on each national Coalition proposal or establish a costed state multicultural program for Shepparton. The relevant test is what he would preserve, change and advocate when party commitments and local requests differ.

Ask for an evaluation of the council action plan, including which commitments were completed and which remained unfinished. Then ask for written commitments on interpreters, community-language education, regional settlement services and protection from hate. Those answers would connect his civic record to the responsibilities of a state MP.

Grace Verney and the Greens on multiculturalism

Her own published position

Verney's candidate statement emphasises fairness, equality and healthcare for a growing and diverse population. It does not provide a separate local multicultural funding package. Her party's detailed platform therefore supplies relevant context, but it should not be mistaken for a record of services she has personally delivered. [47]

The Victorian Greens platform

The Greens' multiculturalism policy affirms cultural, religious and language participation. It supports interpreters, independent translation, flexible free English learning, community-language education, fair assessment of overseas qualifications and funding for migrant organisations. It also calls for culturally responsive services, including gender-sensitive provision where needed. [72]

The party's anti-racism platform adds proposals for public-sector diversity data, improved police-stop data, school anti-racism education, support after racist abuse and protection of migrant workers' rights. These are specific policy directions, but local staffing numbers and service budgets are not supplied for Shepparton on those pages. [73]

After an attack on Warragul Mosque in September 2026, Victorian Greens leaders explicitly condemned anti-Muslim intimidation and expressed solidarity with the mosque and Muslim communities. That is a documented party response to an incident; it is not a response personally attributed to Verney. [74]

Support does not remove policy disagreements

The Greens supported the 2026 multicultural-governance reforms while seeking fuller implementation of the review and stronger community participation. In March 2026 they opposed removing an independent prosecution safeguard from serious vilification cases, arguing that unchecked enforcement could harm targeted communities and political expression. The later section records the vote and competing reasons. [88,81]

The federal Greens seek a larger humanitarian intake and an end to offshore detention. These are national proposals. Verney could advocate them as a state MP, but could not set visa numbers or close a federal detention arrangement through a state electorate office. [75]

The unresolved test for Verney

Her public biography is shorter than several competitors' biographies. The appropriate question is what she can demonstrate and commit to locally: which community partnerships she would build, which service barriers she would address first and how she would negotiate funding.

Ask her to turn the party's language-access and anti-racism policies into a Shepparton plan with named services, workforce needs, costs and deadlines. Also ask how she would hear conflicting views within communities and protect both religious freedom and equal access for people facing more than one form of discrimination.

Which communities and services could be affected

The effects below are our analysis of the published policies, not forecasts of an election result or claims that legislation will necessarily pass. Communities overlap: a person may be a citizen, a migrant, a parent, a worker and a member of a faith community at the same time.

People or service	Relevant distinction	What to clarify
Residents who need language assistance	One Nation's national funding position differs from the explicit language-access support in the government reforms, Greens policy and Socialist policy. [52,59,72,76]	Would professional interpreters remain available in health, education, emergency and justice settings? Who would pay?
Women and girls who wear a niqab or burqa	One Nation Victoria proposes a school ban on those face coverings. The proposal must be distinguished from ordinary headscarves. [53]	Exact scope, exemptions, consultation and the effect on education and employment access.
Community organisations and language schools	Labor government programs, Nationals advocacy and Greens and Socialist policies provide different forms of support. Costa's detailed funding position remains to be obtained. [62,69,72,76]	Funding amounts, fair application access, regional distribution and whether support covers language preservation as well as festivals.
Temporary migrants and families overseas	Federal migration proposals affect visa eligibility, family accompaniment and security of status. These are separate from the rights and needs of established Australian citizens. [55,71,83-85,87]	Which proposals the candidate endorses and which decisions sit with federal government.
People facing racial or religious abuse	The parliamentary parties differ over enforcement mechanisms and safeguards. Support for protection and disagreement about a particular law can coexist. [79-82]	Practical support after an incident, prevention, legal assistance and consistent protection across communities.
People with differing views within a community	Greens and Socialist policies also address gender and other forms of discrimination. Multicultural support is not a promise to adopt every view held by every community organisation. [72,76]	How consultation includes women, young people, smaller groups and people who disagree with established leaders.

We have not treated criticism of a government overseas as evidence of hostility to local people who share an ancestry or faith. Nor have we treated a desire to reduce migration numbers as automatic opposition to existing migrant communities. Religious exclusions, service cuts, refugee arrangements and broad migration targets are different propositions and should be assessed separately.

What the parliamentary record shows

These are votes by sitting MPs from the relevant parties, **not votes cast by the six candidates**. Costa has no party record to attribute to her, and Victorian Socialists did not have MPs casting these votes. The examples show why a simple label of "for" or "against" can conceal important differences.

Multicultural institutions in August 2026

On 27 August, the Legislative Council passed the multicultural-governance bill at third reading by 34 votes to 3. Labor, Greens and Coalition MPs, including Nationals Melina Bath and Gaelle Broad, voted yes; One Nation's Rikkie-Lee Tyrrell voted no. The Coalition also supported adding "Multifaith" to the new body's title. This is direct evidence of a cross-party difference over a specific multicultural reform. [78]

Anti-vilification reform in April 2025

In the sitting recorded as 1 April 2025, the final upper-house vote on the anti-vilification bill was 22 to 17. Labor and Greens MPs supported it. Coalition MPs, including the Nationals, and Tyrrell opposed it. Parliament's account of the earlier debate records the Coalition accepting the aim of stronger protection while arguing that the bill's practical design was flawed. [79,80]

The resulting framework expanded protection beyond race and religion to further attributes. Government guidance records serious criminal provisions commencing in September 2025 and stronger civil protections in April 2026. This is context for the political comparison, rather than advice on any individual incident. [82]

A different alignment in March 2026

On 5 March 2026, the Council passed the Crimes Amendment Bill by 31 votes to 8. Labor, Coalition MPs and Tyrrell supported it; Greens MPs opposed it. The change removed the requirement for Director of Public Prosecutions consent for adult prosecutions under serious vilification offences. Government and Coalition speakers argued the change would improve enforcement. Greens speakers argued independent scrutiny helped protect marginalised communities and political expression. [81]

What these differences establish

The Nationals' opposition to the 2025 bill cannot accurately be summarised as opposition to every protection against hate: they supported the later enforcement change. Equally, the Greens' opposition to the 2026 change cannot accurately be summarised as opposition to anti-racism laws: they supported the original framework and defended a safeguard. Tyrrell's support for the later change also belongs in the record alongside her opposition to the multicultural-governance bill.

Ask each candidate which approach they support now, why, and how it would protect both residents targeted by hate and lawful expression. The candidate's answer should identify the actual provision, not simply repeat a party slogan.

Federal migration policy and the state election

The following national positions matter to understanding party values and issues raised by families. They are not Victorian election promises that a Shepparton state MP could implement alone. A state government can shape services and advocacy; visa grants, citizenship and the national intake are primarily federal responsibilities. [4]

One Nation

The September 2026 plan seeks a sharp temporary-visa reduction and net negative migration before a cap. Reporting also identifies restrictions on family visas, a proposed pause for specified high-security-risk countries, and continued access for some seasonal-worker programs. The proposal is therefore not a blanket end to every form of migration. The party's earlier platform also seeks longer citizenship and welfare waiting periods and withdrawal from the Refugee Convention. [54,55,87,91]

The Nationals and Coalition

Their current national plan links migration intake to housing supply and skilled-worker needs. The April values plan would expand grounds for visa refusal or cancellation, increase screening, fast-track certain protection refusals and restore temporary protection for specified arrivals. It also proposes longer welfare waits for non-citizens. These measures could affect applicants and temporary residents even while Victorian Nationals support multicultural organisations. [70,71]

Labor

The federal government maintains a humanitarian resettlement program and settlement support. An August 2026 ministerial interview confirmed an intake of 20,000 while discussing further reductions in overall net migration. Its border operation continues boat turnbacks, returns and regional processing for unauthorised maritime arrivals. Labor therefore combines support for multicultural settlement with restrictive border enforcement; it does not share the Greens' full asylum position. [83-85]

The Greens

The federal Greens propose 50,000 humanitarian places annually, additional sponsorship, pathways to permanence and an end to offshore detention. These differ substantially from both current federal government settings and the Coalition and One Nation proposals. They remain party proposals, not changes already secured by Verney. [75]

Victorian Socialists and Costa

Hocking's proposed state response is discussed in her profile above. No detailed national migration platform was established for Costa, who has no federal party affiliation.

A useful forum answer should separate three questions: treatment of people already living here; services and rights within Victoria; and national decisions about future arrivals. They affect different people and involve different powers.

Sources and verification notes

The original biographical research was checked on 30 October 2026. Sources for the expanded comparisons were checked on 31 October 2026. Links lead to original publications or their published hosts. Article dates are distinguished from retrieval dates. Syndicated copies of the same article are not independent corroboration.

Several council and education pages could not be opened directly but their indexed text was available. The relevant entries say so. The One FM interview is included for further listening; no claims here rely on an unheard recording. Exact qualifications, full employment histories, current business interests and complete community-service records were not publicly established for every candidate.

Lou Costa's business start year remains unresolved. Grace Verney's clarification about her childhood is recorded in her profile. The comparisons use public material and her clarification relayed by the author. No private candidate interviews or completed Roundtable questionnaires are represented as having occurred. Missing detail is marked as unverified, not treated as proof of opposition.

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[11] **Waranga News.** International Women's Day profile of Louise Costa.
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[12] **Goulburn Valley Environment Group.** President's report 2018 to 2019.
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[13] **Goulburn Valley Environment Group.** Spring 2025 newsletter.
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[14] **ADAPT Loddon Mallee.** Regional Climate Leadership in Action.
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[15] **Waranga News.** Perfect weather for GV Pride's walk in the bush.
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[16] **Shepparton News.** Discover the wonders of backyard biodiversity at native plant sale.
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[17] **Shepparton News.** Folk tunes to breathe life into halls.
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[18] **Shepparton News.** Independent candidate commits to Foodshare funding during sit-down with The News.
Candidate interview. 23 September 2026. Read source

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Local campaign reporting. 15 October 2026. Read source

[20] **GOTAFE and NVITAFE.** Regional Lead Spotlight Cayla Fin Shepparton.
Employer profile. Indexed source text accessed 30 October 2026. Read source

[21] **GOTAFE via Parliament of Victoria.** GOTAFE Annual Report 2024.
Tabled institutional report. 2024, printed page 31 organisational chart. Read source

[22] **Shepparton News via Riverine Herald.** Candidates emerge for Shepparton seat.
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[23] **Geelong Times.** Salty souls and Seaforth.
Earlier profile and interview. 20 January 2024. Read source

[24] **EMILY's List Australia.** VIC State Election 2026 Cayla Fin profile.
Supporter organisation's campaign material. Accessed 30 October 2026. Read source

[25] **Shepparton News.** Labor promises to expand emergency department slash wait times.
Reporting of conditional election pledge. 27 October 2026. Read source

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[27] **Shepparton News.** Seeking a conversation on climate change.
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Sources for the expanded comparison

Sources 52 to 91 were retrieved on 31 October 2026. Party pages establish what the party says; government records establish government actions; Hansard establishes recorded votes and stated parliamentary reasons. Policy effects identified as our assessment are reasoned interpretations, not claims that the proposals have already been implemented.

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[80] **Parliament of Victoria.** Anti-vilification legislation debate in Upper House.
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[84] **Assistant Minister for Immigration Matt Thistlethwaite.** TV interview ABC 7.30.
Official transcript, 27 August 2026. Read source

[85] **Department of Home Affairs.** About the refugee and humanitarian program.
Official program and settlement explanation. Read source

[86] **Victorian Government.** Victorian Government values.
Multicultural Infrastructure and Security Program guidelines; updated 2 October 2026. Read source

[87] **One Nation.** One Nation Immigration Plan Targets Family Visas for Overseas Students.
National proposal, 16 September 2026. Read source

[88] **Parliament of Victoria.** Multicultural Victoria Amendment Bill 2026.
Legislative Assembly debate, 12 August 2026; Greens position and reservations. Read source

[89] **One Nation Victoria.** Policies.
Victorian platform overview. Read source

[90] **Multicultural and Multifaith Victoria.** Victoria's Multicultural Review.
Review findings and government response to recommendations. Read source

[91] **One Nation.** Putting Australians First.
Earlier national immigration platform, 12 February 2025; later September 2026 proposal used for migration quantities. Read source

Direct questions on the differences

Ask the general questions that follow of every candidate. Use these additional questions to resolve the particular policy gaps or differences identified in the report. Request a written answer with a date, funding commitment and source where possible.

Phillip Bryant

Your national party proposes ending funded multiculturalism and translation services. Would you support that approach in Victoria? Specifically, would you guarantee professional interpreters in hospitals, schools, policing and emergencies? Please identify any exemptions or party policies you would oppose. [52]

Do you support your Victorian party's niqab and burqa proposal? What evidence, consultation and safeguards would guide it, and how would you protect affected students' access to education? [53]

Lou Costa

Will you publish your own commitments on interpreters, community-language education, regional settlement support and protection from discrimination? How would residents in smaller language groups influence your decisions, and what would guide your negotiations with a government?

Cayla Fin

Which current multicultural services in Shepparton are under-resourced, and what additional funding will you seek? How will the new state multicultural body improve a resident's actual experience, and which local outcomes will you report publicly? [59,62]

Karen Hocking

Your party proposes expanded migrant services and a sanctuary-state approach. What would each mean in Shepparton, what can Victoria legally deliver, and what resources would be needed? How would you protect people of every faith while advocating on Palestine? [76,77]

Shane Sali

Which actions in Council's multicultural plan were completed during your mayoralty, and which remained unfinished? Which state commitments would you make now? Where, if anywhere, do you differ from the federal Coalition's migration proposals? [66,71]

Grace Verney

Which Greens language-access and anti-racism proposals would you prioritise locally, with what budget and partners? How would you protect both people facing hate and lawful expression when police powers and independent safeguards are in tension? [72,73,81]

Important questions for the candidates

Ask the same core questions of all six candidates, then use the preceding candidate-specific questions for follow-up. These prompts help residents compare evidence and commitments fairly. Each voter decides their own priorities and vote.

1 Proven local service

Before this campaign, what did you personally do for Shepparton's multicultural communities? Give two examples, explain your exact role and results, and identify a public source or community organisation that can verify them.

2 Commitments that can be checked

What three specific improvements would you pursue for this district in your first year? For each, what is within a state MP's power, what funding is required, and what milestone will you aim to achieve in the first 100 days?

3 Education and opportunities for young people

What funding and staffing would you seek for English-language support, multicultural liaison and student wellbeing in local schools? How would you improve pathways into TAFE, university and work, and involve students and families in planning?

4 Racism and religious discrimination

How would you respond if residents reported racism or religious discrimination at school, work or in public? What prevention and support would you fund or advocate, and would you apply the same standard when the conduct came from your own political allies?

5 Healthcare people can access

Which local healthcare gap would you address first? Explain your plan for professional interpreters, accessible mental-health care and timely treatment, including the workforce, funding and delivery timetable needed.

6 Employment and skills

What practical action within Victorian responsibilities would help residents use overseas experience, improve English and obtain secure work? Which employers and training providers would you involve, and how would you measure results?

Further questions for the candidates

7 Housing and transport

What specific local action would you seek on affordable housing and reliable buses for people travelling to work, education and healthcare? Distinguish a funded service commitment from a review or an expression of support.

8 Community participation and fair funding

How would women, young people and smaller or newer communities have an ongoing voice, alongside established leaders? Would you support transparent criteria for community grants, and publish how consultation changed your decisions?

9 Safety during floods and emergencies

What would you seek to improve multilingual warnings, evacuation support and access to essential services during floods or other emergencies? Who would be responsible, and how would the plan be tested with local communities?

10 Independence and difficult decisions

If party policy, a major supporter's wishes or a parliamentary deal conflicted with what you believed served this district, how would you decide? Give a real past example where possible, and explain how you would account publicly for your decision.

11 An accessible electorate office

How would a resident who needs an interpreter, has limited digital access or cannot travel get help from your office? What response times and outreach arrangements would you publish, and how would you serve people regardless of how they voted?

12 Accountability after the election

Will you publish your local commitments and progress every three months, disclose relevant interests and campaign support, and hold open community meetings? If a promise cannot be delivered, when and how will you explain that?

How to compare their answers

For each answer record the proposed action, the candidate's own role, the evidence offered, the responsible authority, funding status and date. Mark missing information as unclear and ask a follow-up. An honest explanation of limits can be more informative than an unconditional promise.

If time is very limited, prioritise questions 1, 2 and 12: past contribution, specific commitments and accountability. Then choose one service question relevant to the discussion.