



# NATIONAL CONGRESS

2025



THE FUTURE OF  
GROWTH AREAS

Economy | Communities | Council



# Program Overview

Tuesday

29 July

## Welcome Drinks

**5:00pm – 7:00pm**

*Little Creatures Brewery, Fremantle*

Ease into Congress with an informal evening of networking and connection.

Wednesday,

30 July

## Perth Growth Area Site Tour

**8:30am – 3:30pm**

*Pick-up from Rydges Fremantle*

A behind-the-scenes look at innovation and investment in WA's southern corridor. Delegates will have an exclusive tour of the following two operational sites:

- Kwinana Waste to Energy Recovery Centre
- Australian Marine Complex (AUKUS initiative)

Lunch included.

## Sunset Dinner & Drinks

**4:00pm – 8:00pm**

*Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club*

Relax by the ocean with food, drinks and good company.

Thursday,

31 July

## National Congress

**8:30am – 4:00pm**

*Mills Park, Beckenham (Pick-up from Rydges Fremantle)*

A full day of thought-provoking presentations, expert panels, and collaborative discussion focusing on the key drivers shaping Australia's growth areas.

Friday, 1

August

## Rottnest Island Day Trip

**8:30am – 4:00pm**

*Pick-up from Rydges Fremantle*

A chance to connect and reflect while exploring one of WA's most iconic locations.

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# Perth Growth Area Site Tour

Wednesday, 30 July

8:30am Bus departs Rydges, Fremantle

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Group 1 **Kwinana Energy Recovery Centre**

Australia's first large-scale facility of its kind, the Kwinana Energy Recovery Centre transforms non-recyclable waste into renewable baseload power. Using world-class technology, it processes up to 460,000 tonnes of waste each year—diverting it from landfill, cutting emissions equivalent to removing 85,000 cars from Perth's roads, and generating enough electricity to power 55,000 homes.

Tour will include:

- A presentation from facility operators on how the plant works
- A guided tour of the education centre and viewing platform
- Q&A with local government representatives

This visit offers valuable insights into how innovative infrastructure can address waste challenges and contribute to a more sustainable future.

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Group 2 **Australian Marine Complex (AMC)**

The Australian Marine Complex is Western Australia's premier hub for shipbuilding, sustainment, and advanced manufacturing. As one of only two naval shipbuilding precincts in Australia, the AMC plays a critical role in supporting the marine, defence, energy, and resource industries. Located just 23 kilometres south of Perth in the state's leading industrial corridor, the complex drives significant economic development and employment.

Tour will include:

- Presentation and Q&A with an AMC representative
- Optional site viewing of key facilities
- Insights into defence industry growth, strategic planning, and local economic impact

This visit will highlight how the AMC is shaping Australia's sovereign capability and supporting future-focused industry development.

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12:00pm Lunch & Keynote Address by Linda Dawson at Jacovich Centre

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Group 1 **Australian Marine Complex**

Group 2 **Waste to Energy Recovery Centre**

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# The Future of Growth Areas

Future Economy, Future Communities, Future Councils

Thursday, 31 July

|         |   |  |
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| 8:00am  | Bus departs Rydges, Fremantle               |  |
| 9:00am  | Welcome to Country at Mary Carroll Wetlands |  |
| 9:30am  | Visit YES Youth Centre, Sutherland Park     |  |
| 10:00am | Morning Tea                                 |  |
| 10:30am | MC opening                                  | Bronwen Clark, <i>CEO, NGAA</i>  |
|         | Welcome                                     | Mayor Terresa Lynes, <i>Mayor City of Gosnells</i><br>Mayor Logan Howlett, <i>Mayor City of Cockburn</i> |

## Session 1: Future Economy: Made in Australia, Built in the Growth Areas

This forward-looking session will begin with a contextual overview from Nick Byrne, Director and Principal Consultant at REMPLAN. Drawing on the latest data, Nick will outline the opportunities and challenges emerging from residential development targets and population forecasts across Australia's growth areas.

Cassandra Winzar, Chief Economist at the Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), will then deliver a dual macro- and microeconomic analysis. Her presentation will explore the intersection between global economic volatility and Australia's domestic agenda, including productivity pressures, the manufacturing resurgence under the Future Made in Australia Act, and the implications of the Housing Accord.

The session will conclude with a high-level panel discussion featuring Col Dutton, UDIA National President and General Manager of Greenfield Development at Stockland, alongside other leading national experts. Together, they will examine how growth areas can position themselves as engines of economic productivity, innovation, and sustainable development into the future.

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| 10:45am | Australia's Growth Areas               | Nick Bryne, <i>Director, REMPLAN</i>   |
| 11:15am | Keynote – Setting the Economic Context | Cassandra Winzar, <i>Chief Economist, CEDA</i>   |
| 11:45am | Panel discussion                       | Cassandra Winzar, Nick Bryne and Col Dutton, <i>UDIA National President and General Manager Stocklands</i> |

12:30pm      Lunch

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### **Session 2: Future Councils: Delivering for Growth through Collaboration and Advocacy**

In an era of shifting political priorities and accelerating population growth, the strategic capacity of councils has never been more critical. This session brings together leading voices in political engagement, data analytics, and long-term planning to guide councils in navigating the complexity of future governance.

Justine Conely and Patrick Fagan from GRA Partners will provide an insider's view of the evolving political environment. Novoplan will bring us a GM fireside chat, pulling back the curtains on the challenges and opportunities facing senior leaders in government. What is needed to take organisations to the next level and adapt to an uncertain future.

This session will equip councils with the strategic foresight and technical tools to lead confidently into the next decade.

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| 1:30pm | Keynote          | Patrick Fagan, <i>Partner, GRA</i><br>Justine Conely, <i>Strategy Director, GRA Partners</i> |
| 2:00pm | GM Fireside Chat | <i>Novoplan</i>  |
| 2:30pm | Afternoon tea    |  |

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### **Session 3: Future Communities: Designing for Belonging, Health and Opportunity**

With one in four Australian children growing up in a growth area, the experience of suburban childhood is both defining and under-researched. In this session, NGAA's valued research partnership with the Australian Research Council's Lifecourse Centre will take centre stage, revealing new findings on how children and families experience life in outer suburban Perth.

The built environment influences child and family health. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account". But are we listening to their needs?

In this session, Professor Haley Christian AM will present research that incorporate the voices of parents and children, which provides new insights and policy direction. Neighbourhood features such as public transport, traffic exposure, street connectivity, yard size, the presence of quality green play spaces, playgroups, health services, early childhood education and care, and kindergartens all affect children's health and development. How might surprise you.

Following a deep dive of the latest research, join the Q&A, featuring Dr Kelsee Prabawa-Sear, CEO of Nature Play WA, and Ainslee Sartori, Food and Movement Programs Manager of Cancer Council WA

## OFFICIAL

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|--------|-----------------|--|
| 3:00pm | Keynote         | Professor Hayley Christian AM, <i>The Kids Research Institute</i>  |
| 3:30pm | Q&A             | Professor Hayley Christian AM, <i>The Kids Research Institute</i><br>Dr Kelsee Prabawa-Sear, <i>CEO of Nature Play WA</i><br>Ainslee Sartori, <i>Food and Movement Programs Manager of Cancer Council WA</i> |
| 4:00pm | Closing remarks | Bronwen Clark, CEO, <i>NGAA</i>  |

# Networking Opportunities

## Tuesday, 29 July | Welcome Drinks

|     |  |                                     |
|-----|--|-------------------------------------|
| 5pm | Join us for an informal evening of connection and conversation at the NGAA Congress 2025 Welcome Drinks. Reconnect with colleagues and meet new faces from across Australia's growth areas before the program officially begins. A relaxed start to an inspiring few days ahead. | Little Creatures Brewery, Fremantle |
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## Wednesday, 30 July | Sunset dinner & drinks

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| 4pm | After the Growth Area Site Tour, join fellow NGAA members for an evening of networking at the Coogee Beach Surf Life Saving Club. Unwind with a relaxed, informal BBQ dinner and drinks as the sun sets over the stunning backdrop of Coogee Beach. | Coogee Beach SLSC |
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## Friday, 1 August | Rottnest Island Day Excursion

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|---------|--|--|
| 8:30am  | Bus departs Rydges, Fremantle  |  |
| 9:00am  | <b>Ferry to Rottnest Island</b>  |  |
| 10:30am | <b>Walking Tour</b><br>The walking tour will explore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental restoration and conservation efforts</li> <li>• Heritage precincts and adaptive reuse of historical buildings</li> <li>• Balancing tourism with environmental protection</li> </ul> |  |
| 12:00pm | <b>Lunch</b>   |  |
| 1:30pm  | <b>Free time</b><br>Explore key sites such as The Basin, Wadjemup Lighthouse, or the Quokka habitat.   |  |
| 2:30pm  | <b>Ferry departure #1</b>  |  |
| 4:00pm  | <b>Ferry departure #2</b>  |  |

# Speakers



Cassandra Winzar, Chief Economist, CEDA

Cassandra Winzar has been CEDA's Chief Economist since 2023, after joining CEDA as a Senior Economist in 2020. Cassandra leads CEDA's research and policy work across areas including productivity, the energy transition, migration and disadvantage. Previously as Senior Economist Cassandra authored reports in Aged Care, Disadvantage and Mental Health. Prior to joining CEDA, Cassandra was Principal Economist at the WA Department of Communities (Housing Authority). Cassandra has also held roles as the WA based Economist for the Reserve Bank of Australia, and in Transfer Pricing at EY. Cassandra is on the committee of the WA Women in Economics Network and was the past Chair. She has a Bachelor of Economics (Honours) and Bachelor of Asian Studies from the University of Western Australia.



Prof. Hayley Christian AM, The Kids Research Institute

Professor Hayley Christian AM is a distinguished researcher in child health at The Kids Research Institute Australia, The University of Western Australia. Hayley leads a multidisciplinary team to improve children's active play, health and development through impactful interventions spanning the child, family, social, built and natural environment. This includes evidence-informed policy and strategies to increase active play opportunities to support young children develop healthy behaviours and lifelong health and wellbeing. Hayley collaborates with multi-sector partner organisations nationally and internationally to promote children's physical activity and health. Her contributions extend globally, with her 'Play Active' policy being adopted by the World Health Organization.



### Col Dutton, UDIA National President

With over two decades of experience in the property industry, Col Dutton brings deep insight into the delivery of housing and infrastructure in Australia's fastest-growing communities. As General Manager of Stockland WA, Australia's largest residential developer, Col oversees a team of more than 60 delivering a pipeline of over 12,000 affordable homes across Perth's growth corridors. His leadership is also driving innovative approaches to mixed-use town centres and medium-density development in both greenfield and infill locations.

His expertise and leadership make him a valuable contributor to the conversation on delivering livable, connected, and affordable communities in Australia's outer metropolitan growth areas.



### Justine Conely, Strategy Director, GRA Partners

Justine brings over 15 years of experience as a brand, marketing and business strategist both in Australia and the UK. She has held senior marketing roles at Harvest Road, Crown Resorts, Bankwest, Visa Europe and RACWA. As someone who has been a client too, Justine understands the power and importance of clarity and alignment across all levels of an organisation.

A natural collaborator, she relishes working through a business challenge, unlocking insights through data and delivering a strategic, practical and Board-ready solution that can unlock a brand's potential.

Justine has an unwavering focus on the customer. Understanding what's important to a brand's customers, employees and community is key to a great experience.



### Patrick Fagan, Partner, GRA Partners

Patrick Fagan brings a wealth of political and strategic expertise to his role as Director at GRA Partners, shaped by his time as a Senior Adviser in the Gillard and Rudd Federal Labor Governments. With first-hand experience navigating the complexities of federal policy across key portfolios, including energy, resources, ICT, and regional development, Patrick offers valuable insights into how government decisions are shaped and influenced.

His background includes advisory roles to the Minister for Resources and Energy and work with the Kimberley

Development Commission on regional enhancement initiatives. Patrick has also advised global mining company South32 on government relations and is a founding member of Timor Leste Vision, a not-for-profit promoting rural education in Southeast Asia. Patrick holds a Master of Community Development, an MBA, and a Bachelor of Arts in political science and history, bringing both academic depth and practical policy experience.



**Kiralee Paine, Research Assistant, The Kids Research Institute**

Kiralee is a Research Assistant in the PLAYCE (Play Spaces and Environments for Children's Physical Activity, Health & Development) team at The Kids Research Institute, Australia, working under Dr Hayley Christian. Her work focuses on how built environments influence child health and development, with a particular interest in children experiencing hardship. She contributes to research exploring how urban planning, greenspace, and neighbourhood design shape children's opportunities for healthy development. Kiralee is also undertaking a multidisciplinary Master's degree in sociology and psychology. She has a strong interest in child-centred participatory research methods and qualitative research.



**Grace Stanton, Public Health, Strategic Partnerships & Community Development**

Grace holds a Double Bachelor of Science in Health Promotion and Nutrition from Curtin University and is completing a Master of Public Health at UWA with research focusing on community-level factors that improve the developmental outcomes of children from disadvantaged communities across Australia. For the past seven years, Grace has led strategic health promotion initiatives across WA. Through her work at Healthway, Grace developed a systems approach to build capacity and provide equitable access to mental health and wellbeing support across the sport sector. Grace currently works at the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, furthering her commitment to supporting community health and

wellbeing through developing collaborative, equity-driven programs.



### Mayor Terresa Lynes, Mayor City of Gosnells

Mayor Terresa Lynes has been a dedicated resident of the City of Gosnells for over 30 years, raising her family within the community she now serves. Elected as Mayor in 2021 and re-elected in 2023, she is committed to fostering a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable city. Her leadership emphasises community engagement, environmental enhancement, and responsible financial management.

Beyond her mayoral duties, Terresa serves as the Interim Chair of the National Growth Areas Alliance, President of the WA Branch of the Australian Local Government Women's Association, Chairperson of the Thornlie Senior High School Board, and Board Member of the Gosnells Community Legal Centre



### Mayor Logan Howlett, City of Cockburn

Mayor Logan Howlett has been a dedicated leader of the City of Cockburn for more than 15 years, having been popularly elected in 2009 and re-elected in every local government election since. A long-time resident and passionate advocate for his community, Logan brings a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities that come with managing growth in one of Western Australia's most dynamic local government areas.

With more than 50 years of service and volunteering in Cockburn alongside his wife Pat, Logan is a steadfast believer in the power of local engagement and community-led development. His leadership reflects values of trust, respect, integrity, and inclusiveness, principles that guide his approach to delivering for a diverse and growing population.

As a leader who lives and breathes his community, Logan offers unique insights into the role of local government in shaping resilient, connected, and liveable cities, making him a valued contributor to NGAA's national conversation on the future of growth areas.

## Ian Cowie, CEO City of Gosnells



Ian Cowie is CEO of the City of Gosnells, one of WA's largest and fastest-growing local governments. With more than 25 years of public sector experience, including over seven years leading the City and 18 years in State Government roles spanning regional development, housing, and local government policy, Ian brings a unique, cross-government perspective to managing urban growth.

Ian holds an Honours degree in Geography from the University of Western Australia and a Master of Science in Economics from the London School of Economics and Political Science. His leadership has been recognised with the Public Service Medal in the Queen's Birthday Honours (2014) and the IPAA WA Leader of the Year in Local Government (2013).

Ian's deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing outer metropolitan councils makes him a valuable voice in discussions around planning, infrastructure, and intergovernmental collaboration—core themes of NGAA's advocacy.

## Daniel Simms, CEO City of Cockburn



Daniel Simms is the CEO of the City of Cockburn, one of WA's most dynamic and fast-growing local governments. With over two decades of leadership experience in local government, including a 14-year tenure as CEO of the City of Wanneroo, Daniel brings a wealth of knowledge in urban planning, governance, and strategic development.

His expertise spans key areas such as planning and development, finance, administration, and strategic planning. Daniel has a keen interest in advocacy and economic development, aligning with the City of Cockburn's focus on sustainable growth and community engagement.

As Chair of the Growth Alliance Perth and Peel Policy Forum and an Executive Member of the National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA), Daniel plays a pivotal role in shaping policies that address the challenges and opportunities of Australia's outer metropolitan growth areas.