



Celebrating the Cities of Tomorrow, Built Today

The NGAA Awards recognise and celebrate the unique leadership, innovation and resilience of local governments in Australia's outer metropolitan growth areas. These are not just high-growth councils — they are the builders of future cities, shaping the liveability, identity and opportunity of places that will house more than 20% of Australia's population. The scale and pace of development in these areas is unmatched, and the role of local government is expansive: planning and delivering infrastructure, designing inclusive communities, driving advocacy, and responding to growth with agility and foresight.

Unlike general local government or urban development awards, the NGAA Awards are purpose-built for the conditions and context of growth areas. They acknowledge the complexity of delivering long-term outcomes while responding to short-term pressures. In greenfield environments and rapidly intensifying suburbs, councils must think differently — creating from scratch, acting ahead of infrastructure funding cycles, and bringing communities together often before the streets are even finished. This is work that blends strategic leadership with on-the-ground problem-solving, and these awards recognise that distinct skill set.

For entrants, the NGAA Awards are a chance to profile the depth of your work — not just what was delivered, but how it was done in a high-pressure, fast-changing setting. They are a platform for your stories of advocacy wins, place-shaping innovation, infrastructure delivery under constraint, strategic foresight, and inclusive community-building. For sponsors and partners, these awards offer a direct line to the leading councils at the frontier of Australia's urban growth — those shaping new models of collaboration, innovation and delivery in one of the nation's most vital and under-recognised tiers of government.

For judges, the NGAA Awards are a chance to identify and elevate emerging best practice in one of the most demanding and influential segments of the urban sector. The awards are not about scale alone — they are about the quality of ideas, leadership and impact in a growth area context. They celebrate excellence that reflects constraint, creativity, and a deep commitment to delivering better outcomes for communities that are literally still taking shape.

2025 Awards Categories

Transformative Infrastructure Delivery

Focus: Recognises the timely delivery of infrastructure that responds to the urgency of population growth, unlocks development, and enhances community resilience.

This award celebrates councils that have delivered infrastructure in a way that meets the challenges of rapid growth — where demand outpaces traditional planning and funding frameworks. Projects may include transport, stormwater, community facilities, digital infrastructure, or utilities, delivered through innovative partnerships, funding models or planning approaches.

Place & Community Activation in Growth Areas

Focus: Celebrates initiatives that foster community cohesion by creating a sense of place and belonging in new and fast-growing communities, through the integration of physical and social infrastructure.

This category recognises the vital work of turning housing developments into liveable, connected communities. It rewards councils that combine built form (such as parks, streetscapes or early-stage community hubs) with cultural programming; engagement with communities such as First Nations people, young people or people who speak a language other than English; temporary activations; arts initiatives; or multicultural events that reflect the identity and diversity of their new populations.

Advocacy for Growth Area Equity

Focus: Rewards strategic advocacy efforts that have secured investment, shifted policy, or achieved recognition of growth area needs.

Whether it's securing infrastructure funding, shaping state or federal agendas, or leading a campaign that brought visibility to local issues, this award recognises the advocacy power of growth area councils. Entries should show how evidence, partnerships and persistence translated into impact — not just outputs, but outcomes for the community.

Strategic Foresight & Innovation

Focus: Highlights bold, future-facing strategies and innovations that anticipate change and set new standards for planning and governance in high-growth areas.

This category recognises the strategic thinking that positions councils ahead of the curve — from new research methods and data-driven planning tools to digital engagement platforms, digital transformation or reform-focussed planning work. The emphasis is on anticipating need and developing strategies to address both new challenges like climate adaptation, or perpetual challenges like waste and traffic management, in innovative ways.

Collaborative Impact

Focus: Recognises partnerships that led to measurable improvements in community wellbeing, service delivery, Council operations or infrastructure outcomes.

In growth areas, collaboration is essential to delivery. This award recognises partnerships between councils and other tiers of government, industry, developers, researchers, or community groups that produced tangible benefits. It rewards shared governance models, joint delivery projects, co-funded initiatives or innovative place-based service models.

Leadership in Growth Area Local Government

Focus: Celebrates individuals or teams who have shown exceptional leadership in driving better outcomes for growth area communities under pressure.

This award recognises leaders — elected members, executives or staff — who have stepped up to champion solutions, influence policy, build alliances, or embed culture change within their organisation. It honours those who push beyond business-as-usual to lead with vision, courage and community focus in a demanding growth environment.

NGAA 2025 Awards Submission Format

Submission Process

Stage 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)

- **Closes:** *Friday, 19 September 2025*
- Required information: Project name, Award Category nominating for, 2–3 sentence description and contact information

Once you have submitted an EOI, you'll receive an invitation to complete a final submission.

Stage 2: Final Submission

- Due: *Friday, 31 October*
- All materials must be submitted via the NGAA Awards online form.
- You will be able to upload your written entry, images, video link and confirm CEO/GM sign-off.

Entry Components

1. Project Summary

Word limit: 600–800 words

This is the core of your submission. It should tell the story of the project or initiative - what was done, how it was done, and why it matters in a growth area context.

This *must* address the following criteria:

- 1. Innovation & Distinctiveness**
What makes this project or approach different from standard practice? What new methods, models or thinking did it apply?
- 2. Contribution to Best Practice**
How does the project contribute to advancing the way councils deliver for growth areas? How does it push boundaries in infrastructure, planning, governance or community-building?
- 3. Impact & Evidence of Success**
What was achieved? What outcomes were delivered, and how were they measured or evidenced?
- 4. Relevance to Growth Area Challenges**
How does this project address the unique pressures of growth — such as population acceleration, planning complexity, service gaps, or the need for innovation under constraint?
- 5. Legacy & Future Value**
How will the work continue to benefit the community or sector? What lessons, models or partnerships can be used elsewhere?

2. Images and/or Video

- **Images:** 1–5 high-resolution images
- **Video:** Optional video up to 2 minutes (MP4 or link to hosted video)
- **Purpose:** These should bring the story to life visually. Use photos of the built environment, people involved, project sites, events or engagement activities.

Note: These assets may be used for NGAA advocacy, case studies, presentations or social media (with attribution).

3. Project Contact Details

- Contact name
 - Position
 - Email and phone
 - Council name
 - Project or initiative title
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4. CEO/GM Endorsement

Before submission, you must confirm that your CEO or GM has reviewed and approved the final entry.

Additional Notes for Entrants

- All shortlisted and winning entries will be featured on the NGAA website and may be included in reports, submissions, media releases, and advocacy materials.
- Submissions that clearly explain the “**how**” and “**why**” behind success — not just the finished product — are highly valued.
- Keep in mind that **growth area relevance** is a key judging lens — make sure this context is clearly articulated in your entry.
- The **2025 NGAA Awards will be presented at Parliament House, Canberra, on Wednesday 26 November 2025**. Entrants should ensure that a **representative from their council is available to attend** the event in the case they are selected as a winner.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I need to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) before I can enter?

Yes. All entrants must first complete a short Expression of Interest form by **Friday, 19 September 2025**. Once received, NGAA will provide an invitation to complete the full nomination form.

2. Can I enter more than one category?

Yes, you may enter more than one category, but each project requires a separate submission form and supporting materials.

3. What are the judging criteria?

Entries are assessed against five key criteria:

- Innovation & Distinctiveness
- Contribution to Best Practice
- Impact & Evidence of Success
- Relevance to Growth Area Challenges
- Legacy & Future Value

4. What materials do I need to include in my submission?

- A 600–800 word project summary addressing the criteria
- 1–5 high-resolution images (plus optional 2-minute video)
- Project contact details
- Confirmation of CEO/GM endorsement

5. When do submissions close?

Final submissions are due by **Friday, 31 October 2025**.

6. Will my entry be made public?

Shortlisted and winning entries will be featured on the NGAA website, and may be used in NGAA reports, submissions, media releases, and advocacy materials (with attribution).

7. Do I need to attend the awards evening?

Winners will be announced at the **NGAA Annual Awards Evening**, Parliament House Canberra, on **Wednesday 26 November 2025**. Councils should ensure a representative is available to attend if selected as a winner.

8. Can I submit a joint entry with another council or partner?

Yes, joint submissions are welcome. Please ensure all relevant partners are acknowledged and provide a single, coordinated entry.

9. How will the winners be chosen?

An independent judging panel will review and score all entries against the published criteria.

10. Who can I contact if I have questions about the process?

Please email michelle.jack@ngaa.org.au with any questions about eligibility, submission requirements, or technical issues with the form.