



Australian
Institute of
Architects

2025 VICTORIAN REGIONAL ARCHITECTURE SYMPOSIUM Program



WELCOME

The 2025 Victorian Regional Symposium takes place on Wadawurrung Country, at the Geelong Arts Centre in the heart of Victoria's regional innovation corridor. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and acknowledge the enduring connection of First Nations peoples to land, waters, and skies across regional Victoria.

This year's theme, Regional Density: Regional Voices, Resilient Futures, invites us to reimagine density beyond metropolitan centres – not only as a measure of built form, but as a catalyst for stronger communities, sustainable growth, and resilient local economies.

Regional practice continues to demonstrate the agility, creativity, and collaboration needed to design for evolving communities. Grounded in knowledge of place, regional architects, planners, and designers are showing how density can strengthen resilience, celebrate heritage, and support futures that are ambitious, authentic, and locally led. From planning new neighbourhoods to adapting established towns, these practices shape places that reflect their people, landscapes, and histories.

As professionals in the built environment, our collective challenge is to respond to population change, climate pressures, and infrastructure needs in ways that preserve character, enhance liveability, and expand opportunity. Regional voices are essential in this conversation – offering perspectives that balance growth with identity, ambition with stewardship.

Today's program brings together thought leaders and practitioners to share insights into housing, infrastructure, and design strategies that deliver enduring outcomes. We look forward to a day of learning, connection, and inspiration – and to continuing the conversation at our evening networking drinks, hosted by Deakin University, where a special Density Done Well exhibition will be on display.

Welcome to the 2025 Victorian Regional Symposium.

Stephanie Bullock

Victoria Chapter President
Australian Institute of Architects



Mena Kubba

Victorian Regional Committee Chair
Australian Institute of Architects



FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER

9:00 am Delegate Arrival

9:30 am Symposium Opens

10:10 am Session 1

REGIONAL DENSITY CONTEXT: MACRO

Beyond Sprawl: Framing regional density for a sustainable Victoria

Colleen Peterson

Acting Deputy Secretary
Planning and Land Services
Department of Transport &
Planning

The Plan for Victoria – Future Growth in Regional Areas

Colleen will discuss some of the Department of Transport and Planning's work to support thriving places and connected regional communities, including Plan for Victoria, the Single Home Code, the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code, and the Development Facilitation Program.

Clare Richards

Housing Solutions Broker
Mount Alexander Shire
Council

Cost, design, policy & funding of affordable housing in rural/regional areas

Accessing funding for affordable housing developments in rural/regional areas is challenging. State and Federal governments are rapidly reducing the availability of capital grants, while often setting ceilings on cost-per-dwelling that are below cost of delivery in our towns.

Opportunities for increasing scale are limited by several factors including community appetite and heritage considerations. There are therefore multiple pressures on design – for cost efficiencies, yield, performance, and heritage and neighbourhood character considerations. Progressing medium density apartments on two Council owned sites in central Castlemaine requires working within these constraints.

Geoff Crosby

Founder
Crosby Architects

Some Strategies for Regional Density

Geoff will present five projects that highlight the opportunities and pitfalls of introducing higher density housing in the regional Victorian town of Castlemaine.

The presentation will concentrate on the social and ecological aspects of creating sustainable housing in established communities.

The projects offer six different opportunity/need categories: insert, reboot, divide, infill, cluster and shell.

He will detail the process of the making of The Paddock, which was awarded the Allan and Beth Coldicutt Award for Sustainable Architecture at this year's Victorian Chapter of the Australian Institute of Architecture Awards, and has been shortlisted in the National Awards.

Regional towns, although often conservative in outlook and expectations, can invite or allow experimentation.

A short Q&A session will follow with the speakers.

PANEL MODERATOR:

Margie McKay

Manager Urban Design and Place
City of Greater Geelong

11:25 am Morning Tea Break

11:45 am Session 2

REGIONAL DENSITY INFRASTRUCTURE: ANCILLARY

Invisible Foundations: Social civic and service
infrastructure for growing regional communities

Jonathan Daly

Director of Precincts,
Department of Transport
& Planning

Density, Intensity and the Regional Condition

Jonathan's presentation explores how regional cities can embrace more, not less – growing with purpose, diversity, and dynamism. Drawing on international comparisons and the “urban DMA” framework (Density, Mix, Access), he will examine what makes cities tick and how vibrant urban life emerges from the relationships between people, places, and unplanned encounters. Through theory and practice, including lessons from a controversial Geelong urban design framework, the session invites a rethinking of “character” and difference – from fixed ideas of place to more adaptive, inclusive approaches that meet the realities and desires of contemporary communities.

Andrew Milward- Bason

Director, Urban
Creative Studio

Opportunity through Density + Local Agency - a regional case study

Following on from Jonathan's presentation, Andrew will build on the theme of opportunity through density, especially important in regional communities, and explore how the seeds of success lie in the emergence of new initiatives through community. This will be discussed through the lens of an Independent Living initiative, born of local agency and understanding in response to what is becoming an endemic problem in regional communities. Andrew will reflect on the important roles of designers and architects, local government and policy makers, to facilitate outcomes for the common good.

Brett Ince

Regional Director
Regional Development
Victoria

Civic and Cultural Infrastructure for Community Cohesion

Brett's session will explore how Civic and Cultural Infrastructure strengthens Community Cohesion, with a focus on Regional Victoria.

He will explore how Government investment in Central Geelong has driven transformative change - unifying place, boosting the economy and enhancing community outcomes.

Through one case study, Brett will highlight the importance of continued investment in thriving CBDs to support regional centres and growing populations.

A short Q&A session will follow with the speakers.

This panel will be joined by Wadawurrung Woman Corrina Eccles, representing the Wadawurrung People.

PANEL MODERATOR:

Professor Tuba Kocaturk

Acting Head of School of Architecture & Built Environment
Deakin University

1:00pm Lunch Break

1:45 pm Session 3

REGIONAL DENSITY CASE STUDIES: MICRO Built In Place: Architectural and community-led models for regional infill and medium density

Rosella Sciurti
Architect
Cumulus Studio

Beyond the Building

This presentation explores the Goulburn Street Social Housing project in Hobart, a design-led response to the question of how social housing can foster dignity, community, and connection all while sensitively responding to its heritage context.

Matt Delroy-Carr
Principal
MDC Architects

Patterns and Models for Suburban Density

Matt is passionate about how architectural practice can deliver housing at scale across a wide range of typologies, while balancing the challenges of construction costs, planning requirements, and the financial realities of home ownership.

In this session, he will share insights from recent MDC Architects projects, highlighting how the practice adapts its approach to different housing models, the benefits of construction standardisation, and why embedding sustainable design from the outset is key to creating resilient and enduring homes.

Damian Madigan
Associate Professor
University of South
Australia

Bluefield Housing: Co-located infill for the suburbs

Damian will be presenting his Bluefield Housing infill model, which has just been legislated in South Australia as a new Land Use Definition called Co-located Housing. It allows additional housing on a single block with no minimum lot size and no maximum dwelling numbers.

The kicker is that the title gets transferred to a Community (ie: strata) Title, that the original house has to be incorporated into the development via adaptive reuse, and the dwellings need to share a high-amenity garden.

The new housing can be added as any combination of a division of the original house and/or an extension to it, and/or the addition of a detached backyard home.

A short Q&A session will follow with the speakers.

PANEL MODERATOR:

Lucia Amies
Associate Editor
Architecture Media

3:00pm Afternoon Tea

3:30 pm Session 4

REGIONAL DENSITY FORUM

Level the Field: Equity, visibility and growth for regional design practices

PANEL MODERATORS:

Kim Irons

Stonehouse + Irons
Architecture

Moderated by our MC Mena Kubba and Kim Irons of Stonehouse + Irons Architecture, this forum brings together our speakers from all facets of the industry, including regional practitioners, government agencies, and metro-based allies to confront the barriers facing regional professionals in accessing larger and public projects.

Mena Kubba

Victorian Regional
Committee Chair

Through honest discussion and shared strategies, this session will aim to build momentum for a more equitable and collaborative procurement landscape across Victoria.

4:30 pm Closing Remarks

5:00 pm Symposium Concludes

5:30 pm Networking Drinks

Join us at Deakin University for post-event networking drinks.

Enjoy light refreshments and the opportunity to connect with peers while viewing **Density Done Well**, a curated exhibition in conjunction with Australian Institute of Architects open for this occasion.

Our volunteers from Deakin University will escort you to the next location

7:00 pm EmAGN Bar Crawl

Staying the night in Geelong? Connect with our local Emerging Architects and Graduates Network (EmAGN) and explore three iconic architectural venues near the Geelong waterfront.

[TICKETS AND FULL DETAILS HERE](#)

SATURDAY 18 OCTOBER

10:00 am Tours with
Robin Boyd Foundation

Departing from Carousel Pavilion, this bus tour explores local buildings and venues around Geelong.

[TICKETS AND FULL DETAILS HERE](#)

SPEAKERS



Andrew Milward-Bason

Andrew is a passionate designer with a breadth of experience and skills developed over 30 years working across a range of award-winning architectural and urban design projects within an international context. His practice, Urban Creative Studio, is committed to making a positive transformational contribution to our built landscape and seeks an architecture that engages with its urban, social, and historical context, and that fosters a sustainable future through innovation, rigorous analysis, and inspiration.



Brett Ince

Brett is the Regional Director of Regional Development Victoria Barwon South West and is the Executive Officer for Regional Development Australia Barwon South West, the Barwon Regional Partnership, and the Great South Coast Regional Partnership. Regional Development Victoria (RDV) is the Victorian Government's lead agency responsible for rural and regional economic development. RDV operates in partnership with regional businesses and communities, and all tiers of government to deliver the Government's regional development agenda and instigate positive change for regional and rural Victorians. Our work includes enabling businesses to invest to consolidate and grow jobs, strengthen regional economies and enrich the social fabric of Victoria's regional cities and towns.



Corrina Eccles

Corrina Eccles is a proud Wadawurrung Woman, and founder of Mok-Borreeyn Bagoork. She embeds Wadawurrung knowledge through narratives to be embedded in architecture and landscape through her lens to "Design with Country," guiding projects like Geelong Arts Centre, Nyaal Banyul, Geelong Conference Centre. Corrina brings many years of experience in cultural governance, truth-telling, and Country-led design.



Clare Richards

Clare is the Housing Solutions Broker with Mount Alexander Shire Council. She has over 35 years' experience across social services and community development and has worked at every level of government. She works within a complex systems framework and has a history of identifying change opportunities and successfully implementing innovations.

SPEAKERS



Colleen Peterson

Before taking on her role as Head of State Planning, Colleen was a part of the private planning sector for over thirty years. For the past twenty years, Colleen has been part of Ratio where she has enjoyed a long tenure on the leadership team, occupying the roles of Director, Managing Director and CEO, where she played a significant role in establishing the company's standing as a prominent professional consultancy.

As the Head of State Planning, Colleen leads both the statutory planning functions and the planning reforms at the department. Colleen is known for her passion for planning and its role in creating a liveable and more equitable future, as well as creating real and meaningful change for the benefit of all Victorians. Recognised as a thought leader in planning and the issue of social impact, Colleen advocates strongly for the role of planners in contributing to liveable and equitable communities.



Associate Professor Damian Madigan

Damian is the creator of 'Bluefield Housing' – a re-definition of established suburbs and an accompanying adaptive reuse infill model. In May, 'Co-located Housing' became a new Land Use Definition and permitted form of infill in South Australia; the first time in Australia a new housing model has been legislated through a bottom-up design-led process.



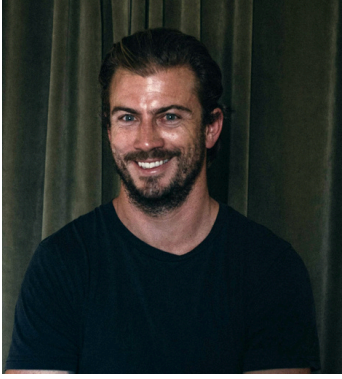
Geoff Crosby

Geoff Crosby, director of CROSBY architects has 30 years of experience in housing and sustainability, first in Melbourne, and the last 15 years in the regional Victorian town of Castlemaine. His latest project, a 27 unit cluster housing development won the 2025 Vic Chapter Sustainability Award and is short listed in the National awards.



Dr Jonathan Daly

Dr Jonathan Daly is Director of Precincts in the Victorian Government Department of Transport and Planning. He has 25 years of experience in urban renewal working across private consulting, academia and more recently in local and state government. He received his PhD in urban design from the University of Melbourne.



Matt Delroy-Carr

Matt Delroy-Carr is the principal of MDC Architects, a practice founded to fulfil a vision to make sustainable architecture more affordable for more people.

Matt established MDC Architects as a platform to research and advocate for an improved status quo in the quality of our housing, with particular focus on the affordable and sustainable, including single homes and multi-residential developments. Matt's interests extend to the development of good planning policy to inform the evolution of our urban environments.



Rosella Sciurti

Rosella is an experienced architect at Cumulus Studio, based in Naarm/Melbourne. She works on medium to high-density residential, commercial, and public projects. Early exposure to large-scale, community-oriented projects helped shape her appreciation for architecture that not only functions well but also inspires and engages. She is particularly drawn to concept design, where the foundation of a project is laid through narrative, context, and creative vision.



PANEL MODERATORS



Kim Irons

Kim is co-partner of regionally based architecture practice Stonehouse + Irons Architecture. She serves on State and local Design Review Panels, and is a former AIA Victorian chapter councillor and Regional Chair. Her advocacy for regional architecture and profession was recognised the awarding of the 2024 Regional Practice Prize. Kim advocates high quality architecture believing small interventions in the regions can significantly impact Country and community.



Lucia Amies

Lucia Amies is associate editor of ArchitectureAu, a registered architect and a writer based in Naarm/Melbourne. Lucia studied at the University of Queensland and at the University of Melbourne, where she also tutored design studio and architectural history. She has served as a juror for various architectural awards, and was previously a co-curator of New Architects Melbourne and co-editor of Inflection Journal.



Margie McKay

Margie is an experienced public sector leader who finds creative, innovative solutions and delivers complex design and planning programs. With over 20 years' industry experience, Margie is passionate about improving social outcomes in cities. Margie has a broad range of expertise in architecture, urban design, placemaking, strategic policy and planning in both public and private sectors.



Professor Tuba Kocaturk

Professor Tuba Kocaturk is Deputy Head of School of Architecture & Built Environment at Deakin University and Director of the Mediated Intelligence in Design (MInD) Lab. She collaborates with governments, industry, and communities to pioneer circular economy strategies and system-level design, creating pathways for resilient, intelligent, and future-ready built environments.

YOUR MC TODAY



Mena Kubba

Mena Kubba is an Architect and Urban Designer based in Ballarat on Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung Country. Her work spans transport, infrastructure, cultural, and residential projects across Victoria. She is the founder of KUBBA, an empathy-driven design studio grounded in collaboration and partnership.

As Chair of the AIA Regional Committee for the Victorian Chapter, Mena advocates for architectural practice and design excellence across regional Victoria. A committed public transport user and avid walker, she also champions safer, more inclusive environments for women, girls, and marginalised communities. She frequently contributes to panels on social infrastructure and community-focused design, with recent collaborations involving the City of Melbourne, Open House, and the Department of Planning and Transport.

Mena works closely with both state and local government, bridging the gap between policy and design to deliver projects that are responsive, inclusive, and community-centred. “As Chair, I am honoured to contribute to the Regional Architecture Symposium, supporting conversations that shape design across Victoria.”





ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS

Image: Courtesy of @pamhutchinsonphoto

To assist you, here are just some recommendations for accommodation in and around Geelong.

Quest Geelong Central

Self-contained apartments in the heart of Geelong. Use our exclusive promo code **AIOAQGC25** to receive 15% discount.

www.questgeelongcentral.com.au



Oaks R Suites

Apartments with stunning views in a heritage-listed building. Use our exclusive code **RAIA25** to secure a discount on your booking.

[Book here](#)



Oaks Vue Suites

Self-contained apartments close to Geelong Waterfront. Use our exclusive code **RAIA25** to secure a discount on your booking.

[Book here](#)

Timber Door Luxury Accommodation

Luxury in the heart of Geelong CBD. A sophisticated and sensual urban industrial accommodation that boasts open-plan living with wellness-inspired amenities the perfect blend for work, life or love.

www.timberdoorluxuryaccommodation.com.au

Rydges Geelong

Four-star service in the heart of the Geelong Central Business District.

www.rydges.com/geelong

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