





AUSTRALIAN PLACEMAKING SUMMIT


13-14 May 2026
Sydney Masonic Centre,
Sydney, NSW

 placemakingsummit.com.au

Conference Agenda

Day 1 - 13th May 2026

 **07:50 - 08:50**
REGISTRATION

 **08:50 - 09:00**
MC OPENS

 **09:00 - 09:30**

Speed Networking

This speed networking session will allow delegates to introduce themselves and swap business cards with other conference attendees.

 **09:30 - 09:50**

Keynote Address by Placemaking NSW

- Developing, managing and caring for high quality public places
- Placemaking NSW creates, manages and cares for Sydney's harbourside precincts including The Rocks, Barangaroo and Darling Harbour, Luna Park and waterfront areas in Pyrmont



Annie Tennant, Director - Design and Place, Placemaking NSW

 **09:50 - 10:15**

Sydney 2070: Towards a Greener, Better, Urban Future

Philip Vivian, Managing Director, BATESSMART



🕒 10:15 - 10:40

Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation



- Largest cultural infrastructure project in Australian history
- The Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation will provide a major rejuvenation to the city and Southbank, delivering The Fox: NGV Contemporary – a new gallery dedicated to contemporary art and design, significant upgrades to Arts Centre Melbourne's Theatres Building, and a new 18,000 square metre urban garden for people to enjoy
- Placemaking journey

Katrina Sedgwick OAM, CEO & Director, Melbourne Arts Precinct Corporation

🕒 10:40 - 11:00

Creating better places with local communities



Professionals in governments and businesses are often stretched to breaking point. How can they be more effective by collaborating with and enabling action by local businesses and residents?

This presentation will share some key lessons learned by Town Team Movement and the global placemaking movement, including:

- Breaking out of negative 'place spirals'
- Finding and supporting local changemakers
- The four modes of doing: To / For/ With and By
- Moving from "No, because ..." to "Yes, if ..."
- Reinvigorating volunteering
- Proven tactics for building and maintaining momentum, including quick wins, microgrants and community organising

Dean Cracknell, Co-Founder, Town Team Movement, Creator, Placemaking Education

🕒 11:00 - 11:30
TEA BREAK

🕒 11:30 - 12:00

The Vital Role of Public Domain in Creating Great Places



Featuring case studies:

- Central Park Public Domain
- Sydney Olympic Park Masterplan 2050
- Commonwealth Park Vision 2025, located in Canberra's Parliamentary triangle and revitalising a 40 hectare 9-kilans featuring a permanent home for Floriade, upgrade to the Regatta Point National exhibition Centre, a new City Aquatic centre adjacent the new light rail stop, enhanced pedestrian connections to Civic and a new city outdoor performance space with adjoining event facilities.
- Leagues Club Park Gosford
- Sydney Park
- Sydney University Campus Activation 2024 a playful post Covid rework and overlay of two public spaces for returning students

Mike Horne, Founder and Director, Turf Design Studio

🕒 12:00 - 12:45

24 Hour Economy – Creating Global Night-Time Destinations



- New ways to make cities vibrant and inclusive at all hours
- Tackling challenges in the 24-hour economy
- Incorporating Indigenous narratives to enrich the cultural tapestry of precincts
- Libraries after dark program

Andrew Coward, Co-Founder/ Director - Reactivate Consulting, Chair - ULI Australia Sydney District Council

🕒 12:45 - 13:15

The city as a story you walk through: Rethinking how we design identity in places

We don't remember places because of what they're called, but we remember the story they reveal as we move through them. This talk challenges the habit of treating identity as a late-stage precinct-wide identity or brand exercise, instead showing how local DNA, heritage, art, viewpoints and journeys can define the narrative structure of a masterplan. Tom Oliver Payne outlines how these elements can shape street alignments, public spaces, character zones and the wider spatial logic of a precinct from day one.



Tom Oliver Payne, Partner & Place Strategy Director, Hoyne

🕒 13:15 - 14:15
LUNCH BREAK

🕒 14:15 - 14:40

Placemaking Under Pressure: Creating Vibrant, Safe Places through Protective Placemaking



Will people feel safe here? That question now defines the future of our public places. Rising social tensions, climate impacts, and global threats have made safety both a design problem and a trust problem. Yet the more we fortify our cities, the less safe they feel. Drawing on three years of research with practitioners and communities, this session introduces Protective Placemaking, a framework for calibrating security needs with user experience. It shows how designers and government authorities can shape vibrant public places that are both safe and welcoming through embedding safety in both design principles and place outcomes

Codee Ludbey, Managing Director and Co-Founder, CORE42

🕒 14:40 - 15:05

Broadmeadow Place Strategy



Broadmeadow is a vibrant destination and loveable place with highly-connected and distinct neighbourhoods that balance the needs of a dynamic community and growing Newcastle.

- Newcastle context and projected growth
- Development of the Broadmeadow Place Strategy
- Key learnings: Collaboration, Housing, Infrastructure, Resilience, Community Engagement, Aboriginal Engagement

Sara Kelly, Senior Strategic Planner, City of Newcastle

🕒 15:05 - 15:35

Panel Discussion Digital Placemaking and the Built Environment



- Adding value to public spaces through digital placemaking
- Creative use of technology to transform environments

Dr Sarah Barns, Co-Founder, Studio ESEM

Stephen Minning, Founder & CEO, PAM

🕒 15:35 - 16:05
TEA BREAK

🕒 16:05 - 16:35

Who isn't in the room? Uncovering the hidden sages of the public domain through arts and cultural accelerators



The true key to achieving vibrant, people-centred places, is the engagement of public domain specialists who deeply understand the specifics of a place—its communities, histories and physical character. Activists, horticulturalists, park rangers, choreographers, Aboriginal elders, artists and other sages of the public domain - can make your projects better. They can challenge assumptions, bring different lenses to interpretation and create truly imaginative, place-based outcomes. Informed by City People's experiences as practicing artists working in the public domain, our arts and culture accelerators are a structured way of bringing diverse experts over a short period of time to learn, inspire and create rigorous projects ready for execution. Learn about how accelerators with unsung public domain specialists can translate lofty place visions into concrete, executable steps towards a unique place identity.

Dr Michael Cohen, Director, City People

Dylan Goh, Producer, City People

🕒 16:35 - 16:55

Indigenous Placemaking



- Indigenous Placemaking and the Built Environment
- Urban design, public art and architecture by, for and in collaboration with Aboriginal people
- Contribution of aboriginal artists to cities' urban fabric

Auntie Donna Ingram, Senior Community & Cultural Services Consultant, Murawin

Dr Annie Burgess, Senior Consultant, Murawin

🕒 16:55 - 17:00

MC CLOSES

🕒 17:00 - 18:00

NETWORKING & DRINKS

Day 2 - 14th May 2026

🕒 08:45 - 09:15

REGISTRATION

🕒 09:15 - 09:20

MC OPENS

🕒 09:20 - 09:50

Speed Networking

Introduce yourself, swap business cards, and form new and lasting business connections during a series of one-on-one exchanges with fellow conference delegates.

🕒 09:50 - 10:20

Showcasing the Victorian Good Practice Guide Collaborative approaches to Multicultural Business Precinct Planning & Activation

- Victoria's multicultural business precincts are hubs of economic activity that have been shaped by successive waves of migration, business and government investments, and sustained community efforts.
 - The Good Practice Guide (the Guide) offers practical advice to assist business associations, local councils and other partners to strengthen these precincts.
 - As the first of its kind in Australia, the Guide encourages collaboration to attract visitors, increase trade and create more vibrant and welcoming places for everyone to enjoy.
 - It showcases the many ways this can be achieved, drawing on real examples from across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.
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🕒 10:20 - 10:45

Creating People-Centred Places in the AI Age



AI is revolutionising how we create human-centred places – providing fast, affordable insights into what people truly want, democratising feedback and injecting voices into design at an unprecedented scale. Frost* is utilising AI-powered research on major projects out of its studios in Australia and the UK, including place visioning for London's South Kensington precinct, and public infrastructure and housing projects in Sydney. However, technology alone isn't enough. Combining this speed with the critical empathy and insight gained through workshops and face-to-face engagement is key. This dual approach unlocks the 'p factor': leveraging human psychology to give places a distinct personality that is magnetic, appealing, and delivers lasting returns.

Cat Burgess, Head, Frost*Place

🕒 10:45 - 11:05

How Road Safety is important in Placemaking, drawing on:



- Town Teams Safer Speeds Better Places toolkit, which PJA has a small part to create
- The Local Street Design Guide PJA are preparing from Main Roads WA, which focuses on creating safer community streets
- Street Alive projects PJA have been involved in – which reimagines local streets and local places using road safety engineering principles as a core aim for project acceptance and deliver

Tim Judd, Director, PJA

🕒 11:05 - 11:35
TEA BREAK

🕒 11:35 - 12:10

Panel Discussion Placemaking and Property Development



- Creative Placemaking in the Real Estate Industry
- Analysing social and economic impacts of placemaking in real estate

Cat Burgess, Head, Frost*Place

🕒 12:10 - 12:30

Retrofitting Suburbia: Creating villages in our suburbs



Frank's presentation will seek to take the audience through the journey involved in gaining the necessary buy-in and support of various stakeholders and highlight the role that local government plays in supporting local activity centres to transform and absorb population growth.

Retrofitting Suburbia seeks to 'sweat the asset' and get more out of our streetscapes and public spaces and encourage projects that deliver placemaking and complete street outcomes. Particularly, with the community and public engagement at heart to contribute to developing robust and effective strategic planning work to achieve positive and collaborative outcomes.

Frank's presentation will talk through the strategies he has developed to embed and implement Placemaking initiatives in planning. Most recently, these include the [Liveable City Strategy 2040](#), [Vibrant Villages Action Plan](#) and [Placemaking Policy 2021](#).

Frank Vassilacos, Director Planning, Environment and Strategy, Nillumbik Shire Council

🕒 12:30 - 13:00

Panel Discussion Landscape Design and its key Role in Urban Placemaking



- What makes a great place?
- The role of landscaping in the placemaking process
- Designing for the public realm
- Creating meaningful experiences for people in public spaces

Hamish Dounan, Director, CONTEXT

Sacha Coles, Global Design Director, Aspect Studios

Stephen Burton, Design Director, POMO

🕒 13:00 - 14:00
LUNCH BREAK

🕒 14:00 - 14:30

Perspectives from Queensland: Building legacy through people-centred placemaking

- Integrating placemaking principles in planning strategies
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🕒 14:30 - 15:00

Community-led Placemaking in Transport and Commercial Precincts

- Exploring the Sydney Metro Martin Place Precinct
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🕒 15:00 - 15:30

Waterfront Placemaking

- Creating an active waterfront destination
 - Waterfront regeneration and successful placemaking
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🕒 15:30 - 16:00
TEA BREAK

🕒 16:00 - 16:20

Perspectives from Western Australia: Placemaking in the City of Fremantle

- Redevelopment and transformation of Fremantle Walyalup's Inner Harbour precinct
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🕒 16:20 - 17:00

Workshop/Masterclass

🕒 17:00 - 17:05
MC CLOSSES

Agenda is subject to change
*Speakers to be confirmed

An Event by:



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