

# MUNICIPAL WORKS CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

## MWA Bendigo 2026

### Resilience & Reinvention

Prince of Wales Showgrounds | Bendigo  
WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> MARCH AND THURSDAY 19<sup>th</sup> MARCH



Municipal Works Australia (MWA) is the peak body for professionals building and maintaining our communities. We provide vital professional development, networking, and peer support across all facets of municipal works—from roads and drainage to parks, waste management, and public facilities.

In an era of rapid change, our sector is not just responding—it's leading. The 2006 MWA Conference, "Resilience and Reinvention," showcases how we are building stronger, more adaptable communities.

**Resilience:** Ensuring the strength and reliability of the essential infrastructure that communities depend on.

**Reinvention:** Embracing innovation, new technologies, and sustainable practices to deliver services smarter and more effectively.

CONFERENCE PARTNERS



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## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2026

- 8.00 am REGISTRATION OPEN  
9.00 am EXHIBITION HALL OPEN
- SESSION 1 – WELCOME AND KEYNOTE ADDRESSES**  
CHAired BY: Alan Jones | Manager Operations, Central Goldfields Shire
- 8.30 am to 8.45 am • **MUNICIPAL WORKS TRANSFORMED: Resilience & Reinvention in Action**  
*Dr Peter Ali | CEO, Municipal Works Australia*
- 8.45 am to 9.30 am • **RESILIENCE IN MOTION: Building Modus and Navigating the Road Ahead**  
*Negin Vaez | CEO, Modus Transport and Traffic Engineering*
- 9.30 am to 10.00 am • **REINVENTING MUNICIPAL WORK AND ORGANISATIONS IN THE AGE OF AI**  
*Prof Daswin De Silva | Professor of AI and Analytics, La Trobe University*
- 10.00 am to 10.30 am • **FROM INNOVATION TO IMPACT: Reinventing Municipal Solutions**  
*Zoran Ovuka | Chief Technology Officer, Smarterlite*
- 10.30 am to 11.30 am **MORNING TEA & EXHIBITION HALL VISIT**
- SESSION 2 – ROAD SAFETY AND MAINTENANCE**  
CHAired BY: Brian Weeks | President MWA Queensland
- 11.30 am to 12.00 am • **BALANCING COST, CONDITION AND COMMUNITY: Asset Management for Gravel Roads**  
*Craig Maffescioni | Manager Operational Services, Gannawarra Shire*
- 12.00 am to 12.30 pm • **PRACTICAL TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
*Thuan Nguyen | Traffic Lead, Safe System Solutions*
- 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm • **REINVENTING ROAD ASSET INSPECTIONS WITH AI**  
*Michael Cybulsk | CEO, Retina Visions*
- 1.00 pm to 1.45 pm **BUFFET LUNCH & EXHIBITION HALL VISIT**  
HOSTED BY: Darren Findlay | Works Coordinator, City of Hobson Bay
- SESSION 3 – KNOWLEDGE SESSION**
- 1.45 pm to 2.30 pm • **WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS: Practical Environmental and Sports Turf Management for Local Government**  
*Steve Hampton | National Business Dev. Manager, Greenway Solutions*
- 2.30 pm to 3.30 pm • **NEXT GEN PANEL: Shaping the Future of Municipal Works**  
HOSTED BY: Sheridan Kilner | AGA Intowork  
Olivia Salamone | Knox City Council  
*The Next Gen Panel brings together emerging and established voices from across the municipal works profession to discuss trends and share insights on building a successful, sustainable career in the sector.*  
FEATURING:  
*Bernadette Torresan | Griffith Hub Manager, One Basin CRC*  
*Rodney Claxton | CEO, Everlon*  
*Vanessa Huxley | Senior Partner - Public Sector, Davidson Search and Advisory*
- SESSION 4 – OUTDOOR DEMONSTRATIONS**  
HOSTED BY: Darren Findlay | Works Coordinator, City of Hobson Bay
- 3.30 pm to 4.30 pm • *Experience firsthand the exciting product and service demonstrations highlighting the cutting-edge innovations in municipal works. Don't miss out on this opportunity to witness the latest advancements!*
- 6.00 pm to 10.30 pm **KOMATSU CONFERENCE DINNER**
- **INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME**  
*Mauro Starc | Board Chair, Municipal Works Australia*
  - **DINNER ENTERTAINMENT**  
*Darren Carr | Comedian and Ventriquoist*

### Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026

- 7.00 am REGISTRATION OPEN  
8.00 am EXHIBITION HALL OPEN
- SESSION 5 – BUSINESS BREAKFAST**  
CHAired BY: Peter Donato | President MWA Tasmania
- 8.00 am to 8.30 am **BREAKFAST SERVED**
- 8.30 am to 8.40 am • **OPENING THE DAY: Business Breakfast with MWA**  
*Peter Donato | President MWA Tasmania*
- 8.40 am to 8.50 am • **WELCOME FROM THE CITY OF GREATER BENDIGO**  
*Mayor Cr Thomas Prince | City of Greater Bendigo*
- 8.50 am to 9.30 am • **RESILIENCE IN RURAL MEN: Preventing Suicide Together**  
*Mary O'Brien | Founder, Are You Bugged Mate*
- 9.30 am to 10.15 am **COFFEE BREAK & EXHIBITION HALL VISIT**
- SESSION 6 – LOCAL GOVERNMENT CASE STUDIES**  
CHAired BY: Brett Quarrier | Civil Construction Coordinator, Greater City of Bendigo
- 10.15 am to 10.45 am • **LESSONS IN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT: Insights from the R&S Grating Study Award**  
*Aaron Ficken | Works Coordinator, City of Ballarat*
- 10.45 am to 11.15 am • **SAFETY BY DESIGN: Cycling Corridor Implementation in Torquay**  
*Daniel Mustata | Principal Road Safety Engineer, Road Solutions*
- 11.15 am to 11.45 am • **DESIGNING DURABLE STORMWATER PIPES WITH POST-CONSUMER RECYCLATE**  
*Ryan Kerr | Technical Specification Manager, Vinidex*
- 11.45 am to 12.30 pm **LUNCH**
- SESSION 7 – PARKS & OPEN SPACE**  
CHAired BY: Tim Greenham | Conference Committee Chair
- 12.30 pm to 1.00 pm • **POTATOES IN THE PARK: Melbourne Case Studies of Community Food Production in Urban Green Space**  
*Dr Chris Williams | Lecturer Urban Horticulture, Melbourne University*
- 1.00 pm to 1.30 pm • **MAINTAINING URBAN WETLANDS: Lessons from Whittlesea**  
*Anthony Eid & Patrick Jeschke | City of Whittlesea*
- 1.30 pm to 2.00 pm • **OVERCOMING SETBACKS: Resilient Delivery of the Rosehill Park Upgrade**  
*Nick Vincett & Shyan Devapriya | City of Moonee Valley*
- SESSION 8 – CONFERENCE CLOSE**
- 2.15 pm to 3.00 pm • **CONNECTIONS**  
*Brendan Fevola | Former AFL Player*  
*Nick Cody | Media Personality*
- 3.00 pm to 3.30 pm • **FINAL REMARKS**  
*Dr Peter Ali | CEO, Municipal Works Australia*
- Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2026**
- 9.30 am to 11.00 am **SITE TOUR: The Bendigo Lowline**  
*Brett Flavell & Brett Quarrier | City of Greater Bendigo*  
*The Bendigo Low Line transforms a historic gold rush-era waterway into a 4.4 km active transport corridor through the heart of the city. Completing a missing link in the Bendigo Creek Trail, it creates a safe, inclusive route for walking and cycling, connecting 95,000 residents with nature, history, and each other.*
- Meeting Point:** Bendigo Regional Tennis Centre  
21 Nolan Street, Bendigo.

# KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



## Negin Vaez

CEO, Modus Transport and Traffic Engineering

**Resilience in Motion: Building Modus and Navigating the Road Ahead**

*Negin Vaez is the CEO and owner of Modus Transport & Traffic Engineering, a rapidly expanding consultancy with offices in Queensland and Victoria. With over 16 years of experience, she has built her career on resilience, reinvention, and leadership in a traditionally male-dominated industry. Holding a Bachelor of Civil Engineering, a Master's in Transport and Traffic, and accreditation as a Senior Road Safety Auditor, Negin is also passionate about mentoring young women, advocating for safer communities, and promoting diversity in engineering.*



## Thuan Nguyen

Traffic Lead, Safe System Solutions

**Practical Traffic Management Solutions for Local Government**

*Thuan Nguyen is the Traffic Lead at Safe System Solutions, where he specialises in road safety, traffic engineering, and transport planning. With extensive experience delivering projects across local government and state jurisdictions, Thuan applies a Safe System approach to create safer, more efficient transport networks. He is passionate about evidence-based solutions that improve community safety and support resilient infrastructure.*



## Zoran Ovuka

Chief Technology Officer, Smarterlite

**From Innovation to Impact: Reinventing Municipal Solutions**

*Zoran Ovuka is the Chief Technology Officer at Smarterlite, where he leads the development of innovative technologies that enhance safety, sustainability, and performance in municipal infrastructure. With extensive experience in engineering and technology leadership, Zoran is passionate about driving reinvention through practical innovation that delivers real community impact.*



## Mary O'Brien

Founder, Are You Bugged Mate

**Resilience in Rural Men: Preventing Suicide Together**

*Mary O'Brien is the founder of Are You Bugged Mate?, a nationally recognised initiative addressing men's mental health and suicide prevention, especially in rural and regional areas. With a background in agriculture and a strong connection to the land, Mary has a unique talent for breaking down barriers and starting honest conversations with men who are often hesitant to seek help. Through practical, straightforward messaging, she has become a powerful advocate for resilience, awareness, and saving lives Australia-wide.*



## Prof. Daswin De Silva

Professor of AI and Analytics, La Trobe University

**Reinventing Municipal Work and Organisations in the Age of AI**

*Professor Daswin De Silva is a leading academic in the fields of artificial intelligence and data science at La Trobe University. His research and industry collaborations focus on applying AI and advanced analytics to address complex challenges across various sectors, including healthcare, transportation, and regional development. A recognised expert in digital innovation, he is passionate about bridging the gap between research and real-world impact, fostering resilience and reinvention through technology.*



## Brendan Fevola

Former AFL Player

*Brendan Fevola is a former AFL star best known for his goal-kicking with Carlton and Brisbane. A two-time Coleman Medal winner and fan favourite, he's gone on to become a popular radio host and TV personality, loved for his humour as much as his footy talent.*



## Nick Cody

Media Personality

*Nick Cody is a leading Australian comedian celebrated for his sharp wit and laid-back storytelling. He's performed at major festivals worldwide, including Just for Laughs and Edinburgh Fringe, and is a familiar voice on Melbourne's Fox FM. Nick's humour blends honesty, charm and everyday relatability, earning him a loyal following.*



## Darren Carr

Comedian and Ventriloquist

**MC and Dinner Entertainment**

*Darren Carr is Australia's leading comedy ventriloquist, with over 20 years of experience performing across the country and overseas. A favourite in the corporate event scene, he has entertained top companies like Qantas, Telstra, and Mercedes-Benz. Darren is a seven-time winner of the prestigious MO and ACE "Australian Performer of the Year" awards and has appeared on The Footy Show, 60 Minutes, and Australia's Got Talent.*

# REGISTRATION OPTIONS

The 2026 National Municipal Works & Engineering Conference in Bendigo offers three registration options:

- Full Conference (\$1,175):** Two-day access to all sessions, the exhibition, networking events, catering, and the Conference Dinner.
- Day Registration (\$650):** Full access for a single day, with the option to purchase a dinner ticket separately.
- Field Day (Free or \$50):** A free half-day for hands-on equipment demonstrations, or \$50 to include catering.

For registration assistance, contact Jess Bellissimo at MSE Events: +61 3 9872 4999 or [jess@mse-group.com.au](mailto:jess@mse-group.com.au).

For general information, contact Peter Ali, CEO of Municipal Works Australia: 0408 129 394 or [ceo@municipalworks.com.au](mailto:ceo@municipalworks.com.au).



[www.municipalworks.com.au](http://www.municipalworks.com.au)

