

# 2019 REGIONAL CO-OPERATION & DEVELOPMENT FORUM

**SUNDAY 16 JUNE**  
**NATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE**  
**CANBERRA**



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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT**  
ASSOCIATION

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## PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2019 Regional Co-operation and Development Forum!

It's an exciting time to be gathering at the National Convention Centre here in Canberra, not least because it's our first chance as members of Australia's local government sector to engage with the incoming federal government after last month's election.

We're also looking forward to hearing from both the Minister for Regional Development and the Opposition counterpart, who will outline their priorities for the next parliament.

There have been changes since our last forum, but what has remained constant are the challenges for regional Australia relating to growth, employment and climate action, and ensuring our communities thrive.

I know you are here to learn all about how we can overcome the obstacles our regions face. We're pleased to be able to hear from a range of expert speakers. In particular, they will include Dr Kim Houghton, Co-CEO of the Regional Australia Institute. Kim will give us an insightful snapshot of the current state of regional Australia.

Other invaluable presentations will address housing affordability, technological developments and the roles tourism, art and cultural can play in developing our regions.

I want to thank our ALGA team and Conference Coordinators for all their hard work in making the forum happen. I also wish to thank our foundation sponsors McArthur, JLT and the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Cities and Regional Development without whose support our forum would not be possible.

I hope you enjoy the day, feel inspired and challenged by our speakers, meet our exhibitors and fellow delegates, and can apply some of what you've learned to your local region.

I'm looking forward to engaging with you throughout the forum.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David O'Loughlin'.

**Mayor David O'Loughlin**  
ALGA President

# PROGRAM

## SUNDAY 16 JUNE

**Program Facilitator** - Gretel Kileen

**9.30am Opening Ceremony**  
Wally Bell – Welcome to Country

**9.40am ALGA President's Opening Address**  
David O'Loughlin, President, ALGA

**9.50am Keynote Address – Overview of Regional Australia: Where are We At?**  
Dr Kim Houghton, Co-CEO, Regional Australia Institute

**10.20am Keynote Address – Making Connections to Renew Regions**  
Natalie Egleton, CEO, Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal

**11.00am Morning Tea**

**11.30am Launch of State of the Regions Report**  
**Population, Productivity and Purchasing Power** – Peter Brain,  
National Economics

**11.40am Panel Discussion – Public Interest Journalism**

**The Outlook of Local News and Information Availability**  
Margaret Simons, Public Interest Journalism Initiative

**How Digital News is Disrupting the Grassroots Media Landscape**  
Genevieve Jacobs, Editor, Region Group

**The Value and Future of Authentic Local Reporting**  
Ben Taylor, Managing Director, Taylor Group Newspapers

**12.30pm Lunch**

**1.30pm Panel Discussion – Housing in Regional Australia**

**Local Government and Housing in Rural Communities: Tradition, Innovation and Community**  
John Martin, Emeritus Professor, La Trobe University

**Is there an Affordable Housing Crisis in Non-Metro Australia?**  
Jessica Porter, PhD Scholar, UniSA

**Non-Metropolitan Housing Affordability**  
Max Eastcott, General Manager, Gwydir Shire Council

## SUNDAY 16 JUNE

### 2.30pm Panel Discussion – Technology in Regional Australia

#### Technology in Regional Australia

Samantha Kennedy, Head of Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific, Pivotal  
 Christine Kershaw, CEO, Stirlings to Coast Farmers Inc  
 Andrew Howe, Emergency Management Adviser, Civil Defence and  
 Emergency Management, Canterbury

#### Connecting Indigenous Communities

Apolline Kohen, Chair, Broadband for the Bush Alliance

#### Unlocking the Potential of 5G

Chris Althaus, CEO, Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association

### 3.15pm Afternoon Tea

### 3.45pm Panel Discussion – Tourism in Regional Australia

#### The Elvis Festival: Attracting Tourists to Parkes

Mayor Ken Keith OAM, Parkes Shire Council

#### Taming Tourism in Noosa

Mayor Tony Wellington, Noosa Council

### 4.15pm Panel Discussion – Culture and the Arts: Building Our Regions

#### The Critical and Growing Role Local Government Plays in Public Investment in Culture

Kate Fielding, Program Director, A New Approach

#### Our Region, Our Rivers

John McLinden, CEO, Swan Hill Rural City Council

### 4.45pm Minister for Regional Services, Decentralisation and Local Government

The Hon Mark Coulton MP

### 5.00pm ALGA President's Closing Address

### 5.00pm Welcome Reception and Exhibition Opening



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## FACILITATOR



### **GRETEL KILEEN**

#### **JOURNALIST**

Gretel started her career after dropping out of law studies and accidentally performing comedy while reading a serious poem. Since then she's written several best-selling novels, been a leading voice artist, hosted Logie award winning TV, directed a documentary on AIDS orphans in Zambia and won a Mo Award for her TV presenting. Gretel writes regularly as a journalist and is seen weekly on TV as a social/political commentator. She is currently in development for a movie adaptation of her novel *The Zebra Who Licks its Spots* and has just launched the groundbreaking podcast, *Handsome and Gretel*.

## SPEAKERS



### **CHRIS ALTHAUS**

#### **CEO, AUSTRALIAN MOBILE TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

Chris was appointed as Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Mobile Telecommunications Association (AMTA) in 2005.

AMTA is the peak industry organisation representing Australia's mobile telecommunications sector and operates programs covering all aspects of the mobile ecosystem, including: telecommunications policy, mobile network infrastructure, radiofrequency spectrum, health and safety, product stewardship / e-waste and recycling, national security, content regulation and consumer awareness and education.

Prior to joining AMTA, Chris held Chief Executive roles with national industry associations representing the Australian road transport and logistics industry and the Australian forests and forest products sector.

Chris has a Bachelor of Science from the Australian National University; Graduate Diploma in Economics from the University of Canberra; and a Business Administration Diploma from Georgetown University, Washington, DC.



## PETER BRAIN

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC AND INDUSTRY RESEARCH**

Peter Brain is the Executive Director of the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research (National Economics) and is one of Australia's most experienced econometric model builders, building national, annual, quarterly, trade, energy, state and regional models for Australia and overseas. Peter has spent many years developing the Institute's IMP model of the Australian economy and he has specialised in medium to long-term projections, industry policy and regional and energy issues.

Peter is the principal author of the State of the Regions report, published annually since 1998. He has conducted more than 2,000 economic research projects, including numerous studies on the cost-benefit of physical infrastructure expansion such as power stations, transport (roads, railways) infrastructure, community infrastructure and airports.

Peter has written four books on the structure and performance of the Australian economy, with one focusing on the role of energy in the Australian economy. His latest book (with Dr Ian Manning) is *Credit Code Red: how financial deregulation and world instability are exposing Australia to economic catastrophe*, published by Scribe.



## NATALIE EGLETON

**CEO, FOUNDATION FOR RURAL AND REGIONAL RENEWAL**

Natalie is passionate about facilitating effective responses to issues facing rural communities. She joined FRRR in 2012 and was appointed CEO in November 2015. She is responsible for shaping FRRR's strategy, designing new programs and developing and nurturing new funding partnerships. In her previous roles at FRRR, she was responsible for managing natural disaster recovery and preparedness programs, as well as those addressing social innovation.

Before joining FRRR, Natalie consulted with Matrix on Board, working with numerous not-for-profit organisations in program evaluation, undertaking research analysis and developing business plans. She also worked with clients to develop financial policies and procedures, strategic plans, organisation reviews, service mapping, feasibility studies and governance models.

Natalie has also held in-house roles at Evolve (Typo Station) and at ANZ Banking Group, implementing projects that made a tangible difference to the lives of people living in rural, regional and remote Australia.

She lives in the small rural town of Maldon in central Victoria.



## MAX EASTCOTT

GENERAL MANAGER, GWYDIR SHIRE COUNCIL

Max is the General Manager of Gwydir Shire Council, having been previously the General Manager of Bingara Shire Council immediately prior to the 2004 amalgamation of Bingara, Yallaroi and part of Barraba Shires to form Gwydir.

Max has had extensive experience across a range of local government areas over more than 45 years in local government.

His practical management experience is complemented by a Bachelor of Business Degree and Masters' Degrees in Sustainable Management and Philosophy.



## KATE FIELDING

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, A NEW APPROACH

Kate is the inaugural Program Director for A New Approach, an independent think tank championing effective investment and return in Australian arts and culture. A New Approach was established in 2018, with seeding from a \$1.65M commitment by The Myer Foundation, the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation and the Keir Foundation. The Australian Academy of the Humanities is the lead delivery partner for this initiative, which is based in Canberra.

For the last decade Kate has lived and worked in regional and remote Australia. Prior to her move to Canberra, Kate was the Chair of the Goldfields-Esperance Development Commission and of Regional Arts Australia. She has been a member of the Board of the Australia Council for the Arts and of Country Arts WA. She was named a 40Under40 WA Business Leader in 2017.



## **DR KIM HOUGHTON**

**CO-CEO, AUSTRALIAN MOBILE  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

Kim is the co- Chief Executive Officer of the Regional Australia Institute where he leads the think tank's policy and research work. Kim was previously the Institute's General Manager Policy and Research, and in both these roles has worked to ensure the Institute's outputs have practical application and support a better policy environment and more vibrant regional economies. Having worked on regional economic development in Australia for almost 20 years, Kim has a passion for engaging, motivating, informing and connecting regional leaders from business, community and government.



## **GENEVIEVE JACOBS**

**EDITOR, REGION GROUP**

Genevieve has been a journalist for 30 years, working in print and radio. She spent 12 years as a broadcaster with ABC Canberra, and is now the Group Editor for Region Media and a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Genevieve sits on the boards of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, the National Folk Festival and Canberra International Music Festival, and is a director of the Conflict Resolution Service. She chairs the ACT Arts minister's creative advisory council and co-chairs the ACT Reconciliation Council. Genevieve has an enduring interest in building and strengthening community engagement.



## **DR CHRISTINE KERSHAW**

**CEO, STIRLINGS TO COAST FARMERS INC**

Christine is the Chief Executive Officer at Stirlings to Coast Farmers Inc. She has extensive experience in agriculture, regional development and natural resource management, gained from working with farmer organisations, government agencies and as an agribusiness consultant. Christine holds a BSc, PGDp. Agribusiness, and a PhD in Agricultural Policy and Economics. Christine is working closely with SCF members and partners to implement a strategic business plan that will expand SCF's capability and continue to move the organisation forward to achieve its goal of being a self-sustaining, farmer-driven group.



## **ANDREW HOWE**

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADVISOR, CIVIL DEFENCE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CANTERBURY**

During a 20 year career in the New Zealand Army Andrew got a taste for emergency management by being the Defence Liaison Officer for various local councils which included planning for various flooding responses, training activities and exercises.

For the past 14 years Andrew has held various roles in the Canterbury Regional Emergency Management Office based in Christchurch. For the last past 8 years he has been the Operational Readiness Coordinator which includes ensuring the Regional Emergency Coordination Centre is operational from a staffing, ICT and telecommunications point of view. During these 14 years Andrew has been involved with snow, flooding, wind storm, rural fires, earthquakes and shooting responses which all had various challenges.

With the extensive rebuild of Christchurch following the February 2011 earthquake Andrew was part of the multi-agency working group responsible for the design and development of the dedicated Emergency Operations Centre located in the Justice and Emergency Services Precinct (JESP)

Andrew is also an instructor for Emergency Operations Centre and specialized Logistics training and has assisted as a subject matter expert for the development of a national Civil Defence Emergency Management Logistics Guideline.



## **SAMANTHA KENNEDY**

**HEAD OF AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND ASIA PACIFIC, PIVOTEL**

Samantha Kennedy spearheads Pivotel Group as the Head of Australia, New Zealand and Asia Pacific operations. Pivotel is an Australian owned and operated telco with unrivalled expertise in critical, remote and maritime communications, supporting more than 35,000 Australians and New Zealanders who travel or operate outside of mobile coverage. As the former Director of Strategy and Innovation at Optus and Gold Coast Innovation Hub's current executive in residence, Samantha has more than 26 years' senior industry experience, with a focus in disruptive digital technologies and strategic partnerships. A passionate supporter of local government, Samantha is also Chair of Redland City Council's economic development advisory board.



## **CR KEN KEITH OAM**

**MAYOR, PARKES SHIRE COUNCIL**

Cr Ken Keith OAM was first elected in 1983 and is currently serving his 11th term on Council

Cr Keith was educated at Yanco Agricultural High School and the University of Sydney, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, specialising in agricultural education. He taught at Forbes and Windsor High Schools before returning home to the family farm. Married to Susan they have three sons James, Max and Douglas and together manage a farm 6 kilometres west of Parkes. He runs a fine wool Merino sheep flock and a Merino X Border Leicester first cross lamb production enterprise. Cr Keith also has a small minimum tillage cropping operation consisting of wheat, canola, barley, lupin and oats.

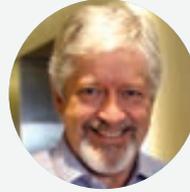
Cr Keith has a regional approach to issues previously serving as Centroc Chairman, E Division Representative and BLEG member and previously E-Division Representative to the NSW Local Government and Shires Association (now LGNSW). He believes in regional co-operation to achieve the best outcomes, while still promoting all of the Shire of Parkes. Cr Keith has encouraged Parkes Shire Council to remain non-political, considering each issue on its merit and reaching consensus in a harmonious manner where possible.



## **APOLLINE KOHEN**

**CHAIR, BROADBAND FOR THE BUSH ALLIANCE**

Apolline is an experienced researcher and policy adviser who has been working for over twenty years in senior positions in the not-for profit, research and public service sectors. Apolline was a founding member of the Broadband for the Bush Alliance, a group of organisations committed to the digital inclusion of remote and rural Australia. From 2014 to 2018, Apolline was the Chair of the Broadband for the Bush Alliance Forum Committee, which organised forums with stakeholders to inform policy and deliver better broadband and skills for those living and working in rural and remote Australia.



## **JOHN MARTIN**

**EMERITUS PROFESSOR, LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**

John is a public policy and management scholar who has focused on local government across Australia throughout his career (University of Canberra 1978-98). This has included setting the strategic direction of the council, and understanding what makes for an effective working relationship between elected councilors and senior managers (Queensland University of Technology 1998-02). As the director of two regional research centres (RMIT Hamilton 2002-05 and La Trobe Bendigo 2006-14), his research and consulting have also included working with water authorities, regional development associations and agricultural industries.

John has also worked for international development agencies including the World Bank, the ADB, UNDP and AusAID in the Asia Pacific region and South Africa in the development of local government. In 2015 he was visiting professor in public sector performance management at the University of Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy.

John's undergraduate degree is in ecology and natural resource management. He holds postgraduate qualifications in public administration, sociology, higher education and a PhD in political science.



## JESSICA PORTER

PHD SCHOLAR, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Jessica is a PhD scholar at the University of South Australia Business School. Jessica's research considers the policy measures that have been developed to boost the supply of affordable housing; and investigates how governance arrangements at the state and local government levels shape affordable housing outcomes in Australian regional cities.

Professionally, Jessica is an urban and regional planner with over fifteen years' experience in the local government sector. Throughout her career, Jessica has gained a strong working-knowledge of urban and regional planning and its relationship with local government. Jessica's roles have primarily been in statutory and strategic planning; however, she has also been involved in a wide range of council projects, including community development and council governance. Jessica obtained a Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) at the University of South Australia, and has also completed post-graduate studies in social planning. In addition to this, Jessica has undertaken and completed further study in government management and business administration. In 2007, Jessica was awarded the South Australian Young Planner of the Year by the Planning Institute of Australia (SA Division).



## JOHN MCLINDEN

CEO, SWAN HILL RURAL CITY COUNCIL

John currently serves as the Chief Executive Officer for the Swan Hill Rural City Council. This is a rural municipality with a population of 20,000 people. He has worked in local government in Australia for 34 years. All but three years of this service has been in rural municipalities.

John holds a degree in civil engineering, a Graduate Diploma in Municipal Engineering and Management and an MBA.

He was born in 1960 into a farming family and has always enjoyed a connection to agriculture. In his spare time, he manages the family farm, a mixed farming enterprise of 1200 acres, where he produces cereals and legumes.

His career has taken him through southern Australia in senior engineering and management roles and he has been a CEO in rural municipalities for the last 13 years. His work has largely revolved around assisting small rural communities to flourish, often in the face of adversity. He particularly enjoys helping to unlock the potential of small communities.

He describes his great loves as family, friends, farming and fishing. He is married to Therese and together they have raised five children.



## **BEN TAYLOR**

**MANAGING DIRECTOR, TAYLOR GROUP NEWSPAPER**

Ben is a fourth-generation newspaper proprietor with a group of five regional weekly newspapers. Four of those are located in the Riverland region of SA and one on the north eastern outskirts of Adelaide.

He is currently serving his term as President of Country Press Australia, which represents over 150 newspapers across Qld, NSW, Vic., Tas. and SA.

He's a 'one eyed' Crows supporter, and lover of water skiing and all things the mighty Murray has to offer; but he's also passionate about the role regional newspapers play in supporting and promoting their communities.



## **MARGARET SIMONS**

**CHAIR, PUBLIC INTEREST JOURNALISM INITIATIVE**

Margaret is an award-winning freelance journalist and author, who is currently an Associate Professor in the School of Media, Film and Journalism at Monash University. She is well known as a writer and thinker on the future of journalism.

From 2012-2017 Margaret was director of the Centre for Advancing Journalism and the coordinator of the innovative Master of Journalism degree at the University of Melbourne. Before joining the University of Melbourne, she was Convener of Journalism at Swinburne University of Technology.

Margaret has won one Walkley Award, two Quill awards and has published ten books.

Margaret was the founding chair, and remains a board member of, the Public Interest Journalism Foundation, which was established in 2009 at the Swinburne Institute of Social Research to promote and enable innovation in public interest journalism. She is also a principal of the Media, Education,

Training and Advice (META) Centre, where she provides training services to a variety of news organisations and tertiary institutions.

Margaret holds a Doctorate in Creative Arts from the University of Technology Sydney.



## **CR TONY WELLINGTON**

**MAYOR, NOOSA SHIRE COUNCIL**

Tony is Mayor of Noosa Shire Council. He was previously a Councillor on both Noosa and Sunshine Coast Councils.

Under Tony's Mayoralty, Noosa Council has introduced a zero emissions target for 2026, orchestrated a radical environmental deal that will see a 2,400-hectare corridor of former plantation land reforested and converted into national park, and established a broad-based Sustainable Tourism Stakeholder Reference Group.

Tony graduated from Macquarie University in 1976 with a BA and university prize in media and communications.

He worked for many years on a freelance basis in the film and television industry as a director, first assistant director, screenwriter and editor. Tony is the author of five books and many newspaper and magazine articles.

Tony has also worked as a photographer and a professional artist, exhibiting in galleries around the nation. His finely-detailed painting style has resulted in commissioned artwork for book jackets and other publications.

# ORDERING THE STATE OF THE REGIONS

**THE STATE OF THE REGIONS REPORT (SOR) PROVIDES AN ANNUAL STOCK-TAKE OF THE ECONOMIC WELL-BEING OF AUSTRALIA'S REGIONS AND THEIR PROSPECTS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH.**

The SOR divides Australia into 67 regions. The core objectives of the SOR are to:

- present the latest statistical indicators of how Australian regions are performing;
- analyse the indicator trends in terms of growing equality and inequality between Australian regions;
- make suggestions for the policy implications of current Australian regional performance;
- steadily expand the indicators used to measure regional performance;
- describe the reality of regional economics; and
- assist local government to understand their regions and to provide useful planning tools.

**Order your copy of the full report online at [www.alga.asn.au](http://www.alga.asn.au)**

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## REGISTRATION DESK OPENING HOURS

Sunday 16 June 2019  
8.00 am–4.00 pm  
National Convention Centre

## CAR PARKING

Parking for delegates is available underneath the National Convention Centre for a cost of approximately \$18.00 per day. Alternatively, voucher public parking is available 200m from the entrance at a cost of approximately \$13.50 per day. The voucher machines are coin operated.

## PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMING

During the National General Assembly, there will be a contracted photographer, who will take images throughout the event, and a film crew present who will film various sessions and social functions.

If you have your picture taken or are recorded, it is assumed that you are giving consent for ALGA to use the digital content.

Any images or recordings may be used for promotional, advertising or reporting of the Assembly and may be used on broadcast television.

**If you do not want to be included in any photography or recordings, please advise the conference organisers who can be found at the registration desk.**

