



**Victorian  
Municipal Building  
Surveyors Group<sup>INC</sup>**  
Safety • Integrity • Advocacy



# Conference Program

## **VMBSG 2025 Annual State Conference**

## **Keeping Pace with Innovation:**

Adaptive thinking with the  
progress of AI and automation

VMBSG 2025 Annual State Conference | 2 - 3 October 2025 | Held in Yarrawonga



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# About the Conference

## Welcome from the VMBSG President

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the VMBSG 2025 Annual State Conference here in Yarrawonga. Each year our conference brings together Municipal Building Surveyors, industry experts, regulators and colleagues from across Victoria and beyond. It is a time for us to connect, to share knowledge and to reflect on the challenges and opportunities facing our profession.

This year's program is one of our most exciting yet. With a strong focus on innovation, technology and the future of building surveying, we will explore how artificial intelligence, robotics, 3D printing and sustainability are reshaping the way we work. Alongside these future-focused sessions, we also return to the fundamentals that remain at the heart of what we do: safety, compliance, collaboration and service to our communities.

I would like to thank our speakers, sponsors and partners for their commitment and support. Without them, events like this simply would not be possible. I would also like to acknowledge the VMBSG Committee of Management and our working groups who dedicate countless hours to ensure our members and the wider industry continue to have opportunities to learn, develop and connect.

A special thanks to our committee who all volunteer their time and expertise to VMBSG, and their contributions are the backbone of our organisation. I also wish to thank Jodie Bowker, who provides outstanding operational support, and Caitlin Hall, who delivers our website services and graphic design.

Most importantly, thank you for being here. Whether this is your first conference or your tenth, I encourage you to take every opportunity to engage with the sessions, ask questions, share your own experiences and build connections with colleagues. The conversations you have in the breaks and over dinner can be just as valuable as the sessions themselves.

I look forward to what promises to be an inspiring, thought-provoking and enjoyable few days together.

A handwritten signature in dark blue ink that reads "Peter Jolly". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Peter" and "Jolly" being capitalized and prominent.

**VMBSG President**

# About the Conference



## VMBSG Annual State Conference

### Dates

Thursday 2 October and  
Friday 3 October, 2025

### Venue

Yarrowonga-Mulwala Golf Club Resort  
Golf Club Rd, Mulwala NSW

## Conference Objectives

- Explore how AI, robotics and new technologies are reshaping building, planning and regulation.
- Provide practical strategies and legal guidance to strengthen enforcement and compliance.
- Foster collaboration, networking and professional growth across the sector.
- Examine reforms and future challenges to ensure building surveyors lead with confidence.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet today, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We extend that respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.



# General Information

## Registrations

All delegates are required to sign in on the first day they attend the Conference. Please attend the Conference Information Table to sign in and collect your name tag.

At the conclusion of the Conference program on Thursday a QR code shall be made available for delegates to register their attendance again.

Sign in is also required for the Friday Q&A session presented by Russell Kennedy. A QR code will be available to sign out at the conclusion of the session.

Certificates for CPD points shall be provided to all delegates approximately 1-2 weeks after the Conference close.

## Name Tag

We ask that all delegates wear their Conference name tags throughout the Conference.

## Pagers and Mobile Phones

Please turn your pager and mobile phone off or to silent mode during Conference sessions.

## Recording and Photography

We ask that delegates do not record sessions (photographic, audio, or visual). Where the presenter is able to share the presentations these will be made available to all delegates after the Conference.

## Exhibition and Resource Stalls

A number of exhibition and resource stalls are present at the Conference in the dining area. These stalls will be open during break times.

## Courtesy Bus

A Courtesy Bus is available for delegates travelling from the Lakeside Motel to the Yarrawonga & Border Golf Club (the conference venue).

**This must be prebooked with VMBSG.**

## Conference Dinner

Included in your Conference registration are pre-Conference dinner on Wednesday for early arrivals and the Conference Dinner on Thursday evening.

Both dinners shall be held in the Grandview Room at the Yarrawonga & Border Golf Club (the Conference venue).

- **Wednesday pre-Conference Dinner at 6pm:** Includes the main meal only. You'll need to pay for drinks and dessert separately.
- **Thursday Conference Dinner at 7pm:** Includes the main meal, dessert, and a drink voucher for each person. Any additional drinks will need to be paid for separately.

## Outdoor Activity Registrations

An outdoor networking activity has been arranged for delegates – this activity has been pre-booked via your Conference registration.

On-the-day registration will be at 6.30am on Friday 3 October, with tee-off at 7am sharp - late comers may miss out. This activity shall take approximately 5 hours, and a drinks cart will be available on the course.

## Disclaimer

The Conference program is correct at the time of printing. However, the organisers reserve the right to change the information where necessary, without notice.

## Proud VMBSG Platinum Alliance Partner



**Russell Kennedy is delighted to announce that we are now the VMBSG Platinum Alliance Partner and preferred legal services provider.**

For VMBSG members, this means continued collaboration through expert-led seminars, networking opportunities and ongoing support for the VMBSG Women's Network.

We operate one of Victoria's largest and most experienced compliance and enforcement legal teams. In various ways, we work with all 79 of Victoria's municipal councils, as well as many state and federal statutory authorities.

We regularly represent local councils to provide comprehensive support across a wide range of matters under the *Building Act* and the *Building Regulations*.

Our team appears on behalf of councils before the Magistrates' Court, the Building Appeals Board, the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal, the County Court (in appeals), and in Supreme Court proceedings.



**Elizabeth Flanagan**  
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Scan the QR code  
to learn more.

# Conference Program

***Keeping Pace with Innovation: Adaptive thinking with the progress of AI and automation***

MC: Maryanna Grzan

## Thursday 2 October

<b>8.00am</b>	Registration and Coffee
<b>8:40am</b>	Welcome: Peter Jolly, President VMBSG Inc.
	Door Prize 1 (Sponsor: Russell Kennedy)
<b>10.20am</b>	Opening address: Anna Cronin, Commission and CEO Building Plumbing Commission <i>Topic: The Role and Reform of the Building and Plumbing Commission</i>
	Steve Baxas, State Building Surveyor <i>Topic: Strengthening Municipal Building Control: OSBS Initiatives and Reform in Action</i>
	Mel Rohan and Craig MacDonald, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors <i>Topic: AI and Compliance Disruption: Global Shifts and Australia's Next Moves</i>
	Door Prize 2 (Sponsor: ASA Building Consultants)
	Morning Tea (Sponsor: Weir Legal & Consulting)
	Keynote speaker: Tane Hunter, Future Crunch <i>Topic: The Next Economy: a field guide for what's coming</i>
	Door Prize 3 (Sponsor: Russell Kennedy)
	Paul Mulholland, Director DDEG <i>Topic: Performance, Compliance, and Sustainability: Navigating Building Regulation in the Age of AI</i>

	<p><b>Mat Sherwell, Sherwell Harrison Munro</b>  <i>Topic: Enforcement in an Age of Accelerated Innovation</i></p>
<p><b>12:20pm - 1:30pm</b></p>	<p><b>AGM for VMBSG Members only (in conference room)</b>  - Will be livestreamed to remote attendees</p>
	<p><b>Lunch</b></p>
	<p><b>Hon. Harriet Shing, Minister for Housing and Building</b>  <i>Topic: Strengthening Victoria's Building Framework: Reforms, Buyer Protections, and Supporting Surveyors</i></p>
	<p><b>Leanne Platt and Leanne Wilson, Elizabeth Flanagan, VMBSG Women's Network</b>  <i>Topic: VMBSG Women's Network: The Year that Changed the Conversation</i></p>
	<p><b>Sarah and Peco Dimitrievski, Chandolin Construction</b>  <i>Topic: Beyond Bricks - Intelligent Homes, Intelligent Futures</i></p>
	<p><b>Door Prize 4 (Sponsor: ASA Building Consultants)</b></p>
	<p><b>Rob Mitchelmore, Director Ryt Business Solutions</b>  <i>Topic: Dealing with Uncooperative or Aggressive Homeowners or Occupants</i></p>
<p><b>3:00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea (Sponsor: Ryt Business Solutions)</b></p>
	<p><b>Elizabeth Flanagan, Russell Kennedy (VMBSG Platinum Partner)</b>  <i>Topic: Tiny Homes and Building Permits: Navigating Legal and Regulatory Challenges</i></p>
	<p><b>Door Prize 5 (Sponsor: Russell Kennedy)</b></p>
	<p><b>Scott Matheson, Head of Planning myLot</b>  <i>Topic: Using AI-powered tools to inform and empower residents to understand planning &amp; building rules</i></p>

	Door Prize 6 (Sponsor: ASA Building Consultants)
	Panel Discussion: <i>The Role of Building Surveyors in 2030</i> Moderator: Brett Turner
	Damien Wadsworth, Director DWA Wadsworth & Associates (VMBSG Gold Sponsor) <i>Topic: Resolving Building Notices: Practical Insights from Collaboration</i>
5:10pm	Maryanna Grzan - Summary, overview, and close - Scan QR code for CPD points
5:15pm	Round of drinks at the bar (Sponsor Damien Wadsworth & Associates)
7:00pm	Conference dinner (with 1 x round of drinks on VMBSG)

## Friday 3 October

6:30am	Registrations for networking / golf
6:30am - 8:45am	Breakfast
7:00am – 12.00pm	Outdoor networking activity - GOLF (Sponsor: Russell Kennedy) - Drinks cart on the course (beer, wine, soft drink, water)
9:00am	Q&A Session Elizabeth Flanagan and Daniel Silfo, Russell Kennedy (VMBSG Platinum Partner) <i>Topic: MBS Strategies for Unoccupied, Incomplete and Abandoned Buildings: Section 72 Cancellations of Occupancy Permits</i>
11:30am onwards	BBQ Lunch / Networking





# Notice to Resolution

Specialist consulting services for  
non-compliant and illegal building works.

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# Meet the Speakers - Keynote Speaker



## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

### Tané Hunter

#### CO-FOUNDER, CANCER RESEARCHER

Cancer researcher, bioinformatician, data scientist, and CEO of Future Crunch. First making a name for himself as a professional mountain biker and former US champion, a broken back sent Tané on a journey that today speaks to the power of adaptability (literally). Earning a Masters in Bioinformatics from the University of Melbourne, he went on to work at the Royal Children's Hospital diagnosing rare genetic diseases, and the Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre using AI and molecular biomarkers in DNA to help improve treatments for people living with cancer.

Today, Tané is one of Australia's most compelling science communicators. Through Future Crunch, he's on a mission to share stories of progress and possibility - helping people make sense of the future with intelligence, curiosity, and a healthy dose of optimism.

# Meet the Speakers - Keynote Speaker

## TOPIC

### THE NEXT ECONOMY

#### A FIELD GUIDE FOR WHAT'S COMING...

The coming years will be amongst the most important in human history, in which the decisions we make as a species will determine the fate of multiple generations. How do today's leaders ensure they're creating sustainable businesses and organisations that work for people and the planet? The first step is understanding what's coming next.

Future Crunch draws on their latest, gold-plated research to explore the fundamental technologies shaping our future. We've all heard that "software is eating the world", but hardware is the teeth.

AI, robotics, blockchain, 3D printing, web 3.0, vertical agriculture, synthetic biology - each of these technologies is transformative in their own right, and together, they constitute a true industrial revolution creating unprecedented change in every industry at once.

In the face of extraordinary change, this keynote is a field guide for navigating major technological disruption with confidence, global uncertainty with curiosity, and offers essential knowledge for anyone looking to harness the opportunities of a rapidly changing economic landscape. It's designed for individuals and organisations seeking to maintain a strategic and creative edge while contributing to a more sustainable, equitable future. Because ultimately, the most important part of this transformation isn't the technology – it's us. Being human is not a bug in the system; it's the key to shaping what comes next.

#### Key Takeaways:

- **What's Next?** Take a fast-paced, mind-expanding journey through the breakthrough technologies transforming our world, and explore what they unlock for the future of our industries and organisations.
- **Big Picture Thinking:** Learn how to cut through the hype and think strategically about disruption, transformation, and long-term impact.
- **Actionable Foresight:** Discover how to prepare your organisation for a future defined by convergence, complexity, and exponential change.
- **Purpose:** Understand how to use technology as a force for good and create sustainable, equitable outcomes while staying ahead of the curve.

In a world where industries are being reinvented in real time, how do you build something that lasts?

Welcome to The Next Economy, where innovation meets intelligence, and progress serves people and planet.



# Simplify development approvals, for everyone.

Instantly answer building enquiries and free up your team for higher-value work with our powerful AI planning & building enquiries tool – purpose-built for Australian councils.



**Express your interest**

# Meet the MC

## Maryanna Grza

### Building Surveyor, MC

Maryanna has over 30 years of experience in Building Surveying.

Over the years Maryanna has worked in all sides of Building Surveying, from large private Building Surveying companies, to smaller private and then to a Council operating in a competitive nature for Building Permits. For a majority of the last 15 years, Maryanna's focus has been on the enforcement space within Council, though she did have a short stint at the Victorian Building Authority Cladding team. During COVID, Maryanna started her business, MG Build Solutions which focuses on offering services to assist owners and builders to obtain their Building Permits. These include report and consent applications, preparation of Protection Works packages for service, review of Protection Works etc. For the last 4 years, Maryanna has worked as a contractor for City of Hume primarily dealing with enforcement.



Maryanna has found that giving back to the industry is rewarding on many fronts.

Maryanna was on the AIBS Victorian Executive Committee for 13 years, which included 2 years as the State President. Maryanna was the first female on the Executive Committee and the first female president. During this time, Maryanna also served as the Building Surveyor representative on the then Building Practitioners Board. The Practitioners Board were responsible for assessment of applicants for registration, monitored conduct and ability to practice.

Maryanna has been the recipient of some industry awards for her contribution to the industry, including the AIBS Municipal Building Surveyor award and the Sandy Blythe Memorial Award. In 2016, Maryanna was further recognized by the AIBS with Fellow membership.

# Meet the Speakers

## Anna Cronin

### Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer

Anna was appointed Chief Executive Officer at the Victorian Building Authority – now The Building and Plumbing Commission – in June 2023, then Commissioner and CEO in March 2024.

After graduating with a Bachelor of Economics degree from the ANU, Anna's career started as an economist in the Federal Government. She has considerable experience in leadership, policy development and administration work across many areas including tax, trade, agriculture, mining and complex regulatory approvals for major projects.

Over the last 25 years Anna has been the CEO of the National Farmers' Federation and a senior executive in the Victorian and Western Australian Governments. She was appointed as Victoria's first Commissioner for Better Regulation in 2015.

Anna led the Victorian Government's review into planning and building approvals in 2019 and chaired the Victorian Government's Expert Panel on Building Reform.



### **Opening Address:**

#### ***The Role and Reform of the Building and Plumbing Commission***

Anna Cronin will speak about the establishment of the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) and the reasons it was created. She will provide an overview of the significant overhaul of its regulatory operations and the new legislative framework shaping its work. This presentation will set the context for the Commission's future role, explain how it is reshaping the regulatory landscape, and outline the vision for stronger governance and improved outcomes across Victoria's building and plumbing sectors. frameworks can adapt to remain effective in an era defined by accelerated change.

# Meet the Speakers

## Steven Baxas

### State Building Surveyor

Steven Baxas is the Statutory State Building Surveyor and has more than 33 years of Local Government experience.

Steven was the Municipal Building Surveyor at the City of Melbourne for seven years and the Municipal Building Surveyor at the City of Port Phillip for 11 years. Prior to that, he spent 15 years at the City of Monash.

He has formal qualifications in Building Surveying and Fire Engineering.

Steven is passionate about building control, and is:

- An Accredited Member of the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors
- A Professional Member of the Fire Protection Association of Australia,
- A Member of the Society of Fire Safety at Engineers Australia,
- A long-standing former member of The Building Regulations Advisory Committee (BRAC) as appointed by the Minister for Planning, and
- The former Vice President of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group.



### ***Topic: Strengthening Municipal Building Control: OSBS Initiatives and Reform in Action***

Steven Baxas will provide an update from the Office of the State Building Surveyor (OSBS), including the team he is building around him to support municipal building surveyors. He will outline progress on the Municipal Building Control Plan and the pilot program currently underway and discuss how the OSBS and the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) are navigating the government's reform agenda. This presentation will highlight the practical steps being taken to strengthen oversight, improve consistency, and position local government to respond effectively to emerging regulatory challenges.

# Meet the Speakers

## Mel Rohan and Craig MacDonald

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

### ***Topic: AI and Compliance Disruption: Global Shifts and Australia's Next Moves***

The construction industry is on the edge of disruption – AI, robotics, and digital technologies are rewriting the rulebook worldwide. From predictive analytics driving compliance to robotics transforming on-site delivery, the pace of change is relentless.

In this session, Mel and Craig will cut through the hype to explore:

- What's happening globally: the boldest applications of AI and automation already reshaping construction across international markets – and the lessons Australia can't afford to ignore.
- Australia's reality check: where our industry stands on the adoption curve, the emerging technologies already in play, and the regulatory challenges that lie ahead.

This isn't just about technology – it's about survival, adaptation, and seizing opportunity. For surveyors, regulators, and councils, the question is clear: will you lead the shift, or be left catching up?





# Meet the Speakers

## Scott Matheson

### Head of Planning, myLot

Scott Matheson is the Head of Planning at myLot, and an experienced planning and local government leader. Scott currently heads up policy development, customer success and technical efficacy at myLot, an Australian startup company designing AI-powered planning and building software.

Previously, Scott led statutory planning teams in local government and guided the technical delivery of the award-winning Better Planning Approvals project that partnered with 36 planning teams across Victoria.

He is passionate about delivering more accessible and equitable development services to the Victorian community and supporting local government in a changing regulatory environment.



### ***Topic: Using AI-powered tools to inform and empower residents to understand planning & building rules***

For decades, industry has struggled with providing clear, simple answers to inexperienced users of the planning & building systems. Hear from myLot's Head of Planning – Scott Matheson – on how Victorian Councils are using AI-powered guidance to respond to common community enquiries.

Scott will share data insights and use cases from the first 12-months of this tool and share a preview of myLot's new Building Enquiries tool, which provides approval sequencing, class of building and requirements for common project types.

# Meet the Speakers

## Paul Mulholland

### Director, DDEG

Paul Mulholland is a nationally registered Building Surveyor and Director of DDEG, with over 15 years of experience spanning municipal roles and specialised consulting. He leads strategic operations across Australia, delivering performance-based solutions for complex commercial and residential developments.

Paul's dual accreditation in building surveying and disability access consulting enables him to provide expert guidance on innovative design compliance. A member of RICS, AIBS, and ACA, Paul is known for his deep regulatory insight and collaborative approach to solving challenging design and compliance issues.



### ***Topic: Performance, Compliance, and Sustainability: Navigating Building Regulation in the Age of AI***

As the building industry wrestles with the tension between performance-based assessments and deemed-to-satisfy provisions, AI and digital tools are rapidly changing how we approach compliance, risk, and sustainability. But even in an age of automation, the industry still needs qualified and experienced professionals to sign off — ensuring projects remain accountable and defensible.

His session will ask the tough questions: should performance solutions still sit at the heart of compliance after high-profile failures? How can AI unlock smarter pathways to risk management and sustainability?

And how do we train the next generation of professionals in a way that embraces automation without losing hard-won expertise? Expect a bold look at how emerging tools like ChatGPT can help deliver more sustainable, cost-effective buildings, while keeping human judgement where it matters most.

# Meet the Speakers

## The Hon. Harriet Shing

### Minister for Housing and Building

Harriet Shing has served as a Labor Member for Eastern Victoria since 2014. She is honoured to represent this diverse and beautiful region in the Victorian Legislative Council.

In December 2024, Harriet was appointed Minister for the Suburban Rail Loop, Minister for Housing and Building and Minister for Development Victoria and Precincts.

Previously, Harriet has served as Minister for Water, Equality, Regional Development and Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy. She was also the Parliamentary Secretary for Creative Industries, Digital Government, Equality, Water, Emergency Services, and Mental Health.

Before her election to the Victorian Upper House, Harriet worked as a lawyer. An accomplished negotiator and advocate, she has extensive experience in industrial relations, employment and discrimination law, and dispute resolution at State and Federal levels.

As Member for Eastern Victoria Region, Harriet is committed to identifying and enhancing opportunities across the entire region that ensure our local communities thrive.



### **Topic: Strengthening Victoria's Building Framework: Reforms, Buyer Protections, and Supporting Surveyors**

Minister Shing will talk about housing Victoria's future population, including the government's Housing Statement initiatives, unlocking government land to create more homes, priority precincts, social housing, and building reforms.



# Meet the Speakers

## Elizabeth Flanagan, Leanne Platt, and Leanne Wilson

VMBSG Women's Network

### Leanne Wilson

Municipal Building Surveyor,  
Maroondah City Council

Leanne Wilson is the Municipal Building Surveyor at Maroondah City Council, bringing over 25 years of building surveying experience in local government. Prior to her current role, Leanne served as Deputy Building Surveyor at both Maroondah and Knox City Councils and has played a key role in disaster recovery efforts following bushfires, storms, and flooding.

Leanne is passionate about community safety in the built environment and is dedicated to mentoring the next generation of building professionals. Her project work includes the Women's Building Surveying Program, Maroondah's Hoarding Network, the CSV Combustible Cladding Program, and the Municipal Building Control Plan Pilot Program.

A VMBSG member since 2000, Leanne is currently Treasurer on the executive committee and a founding member of the VMBSG Women's Network. She has been instrumental in fostering networking and training opportunities for women in local government, contributing to a growing and vibrant community.



### **Topic: VMBSG Women's Network: The Year that Changed the Conversation**

This past year has been a big one for the VMBSG Women's Network. We've grown stronger, built partnerships with Russell Kennedy and the Building & Plumbing Commission, and seen just how much women in building surveying value having a place to connect and be heard. We'll share highlights, challenges, and what's next for the year ahead.

# Meet the Speakers

## Elizabeth Flanagan, Leanne Platt, and Leanne Wilson

VMBSG Women's Network

### Leanne Platt

Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor,  
City of Casey

Leanne Platt has dedicated her entire career to the Building Industry, beginning as a Junior Administrative Assistant in Local Government prior to amalgamation. Over more than two decades, she gained extensive experience in Local Government, serving as both a Municipal Building Surveyor and Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor. Her career also includes 11 years as a private Building Surveyor and 3 years as a Project Manager with a medium-sized volume builder.

Leanne is now about to embark on an exciting new chapter as Manager, Council Support with the Building Plumbing Commission, Office of the State Building Surveyor. In this role, she looks forward to shaping a new team from the ground up - fostering collaboration and supporting Municipal Building Surveyors and councils in delivering building control functions across Victoria.

While eager to embrace this challenge, Leanne's one regret is stepping down as Vice President and Committee of Management member of the VMBSG, roles she has greatly valued.



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VMBSG Women's Network

### Elizabeth Flanagan

Principal, Russell Kennedy

Elizabeth is a Principal at Russell Kennedy, working predominantly for local government clients. She advises them on the Building Act and the Building Regulations; in building prosecutions and enforcement in the Magistrates' Court; and in Building Appeals Board proceedings.

Her clients value her comprehensive knowledge of legislative and regulatory enforcement, her efficient and pragmatic approach and her ability to achieve optimal results.

Elizabeth is a committee member of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group Women's Network and is passionate about the development of women in the profession of building surveying and building inspecting.



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# Meet the Speakers



## Sarah and Peco Dimitrievski

Chandolin Construction

### ***Topic: Beyond Bricks - Intelligent Homes, Intelligent Futures***

Get ready for a thought-provoking and interactive session with Sarah and Peco Dimitrievski of Chandolin Construction. This dynamic duo will challenge the way you think about housing, innovation, and the future of building in Australia. From tackling the housing crisis and supporting regional communities to reimagining how technology and new methods can transform the way we live, Sarah and Peco bring real passion and fresh ideas to the stage. With award-winning experience and a track record of delivering projects that truly make a difference, they'll inspire you to see that the homes of tomorrow are about much more than bricks and mortar.

## Sarah Dimitrievski

Sarah Dimitrievski is a highly recognised leader in the construction industry. In 2022, she was honoured with Woman of the Year by the Master Builders Association Western Region for her dedication and contribution to the industry.

Sarah continues to devote her time to finding real solutions to Australia's housing crisis and homelessness. A strong supporter for innovation in construction and a mentor and advocate to attract more women in the construction industry.

Growing up in the remote town of Bourke, Sarah experienced first-hand the need for more housing in regional communities. Over the past year she has dedicated herself to researching new ways of building that will streamline the way homes are delivered and introduce a new era of construction in Australia.

## Peco Dimitrievski

Peco Dimitrievski is an award-winning Master Builder renowned for his commitment to craftsmanship, integrity, and innovation. Recognised by the Master Builders Association, Peco has built a reputation for delivering exceptional quality across both commercial and community-based construction projects.

With a career spanning major national retailers such as Woolworths, Big W, Dan Murphy's, and Rebel Sport, Peco's portfolio also includes impactful work within the NDIS sector delivering meaningful outcomes for organisations like Glenray Industries, Veritas House and Housing Plus.

As co-director of a successful family-owned construction company alongside his wife Sarah, Peco is now driving the next generation of construction innovation in Australia. From precision renovations to pioneering new building methodologies, he remains dedicated to improving the lives of Australians one project at a time.



# Meet the Speakers

## Mat Sherwell

### Sherwell Harrison Munro

Mat Sherwell is someone who knows exactly what to do when your dog's off-leash, your fence is too high, or your neighbour decides their shed is now a nightclub.

Mat Sherwell, Principal Lawyer at SHM Lawyers and a true veteran of local government law - with over 20 years of experience wrangling the legal beasts of planning, environment, food safety, building regs, and, yes, even rogue chooks.

Mat has worked with councils across Victoria, helping them navigate everything from dodgy developments to overenthusiastic backyard builders. He's a master of turning dense legislation into practical action - and doing it all without falling asleep in the process.

When he's not in court or giving sharp legal advice, Mat's busy mentoring young lawyers and keeping the SHM team running smoothly - usually with less paperwork than a planning permit application.



### ***Topic: Enforcement in an Age of Accelerated Innovation***

Innovation and disruptive business models often move faster than regulation, leaving enforcement agencies struggling to keep pace. This presentation will explore the challenges of enforcement in a rapidly evolving landscape, blending high-level discussion of policy, people, and practice with practical insights into specific issues such as surveillance, information management, and regulatory application.

Delegates will gain a deeper understanding of how enforcement frameworks can adapt to remain effective in an era defined by accelerated change.

# Meet the Speakers

## Elizabeth Flanagan

### Principal, Russell Kennedy

Elizabeth is a Principal at Russell Kennedy, working predominantly for local government clients. She advises them on the Building Act and the Building Regulations; in building prosecutions and enforcement in the Magistrates' Court; and in Building Appeals Board proceedings.

Her clients value her comprehensive knowledge of legislative and regulatory enforcement, her efficient and pragmatic approach and her ability to achieve optimal results.

Elizabeth is a committee member of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group Women's Network and is passionate about the development of women in the profession of building surveying and building inspecting.



### ***Topic: Tiny Homes and Building Permits: Navigating Legal and Regulatory Challenges***

Tiny homes are gaining popularity across Victoria as affordable and flexible housing solutions, but they also raise complex questions around building permits, and regulatory compliance. This session will examine how the Building Act and Regulations apply to tiny homes, including when a building permit is required, and the challenges posed by movable dwellings. Russell Kennedy will highlight recent case examples, grey areas in the legislation, and provide practical guidance on assessing applications, enforcing compliance, and advising councils.challenges, and what's next for the year ahead.

# Meet the Speakers

## Panel Discussion | *Topic: The Role of Building Surveyors in 2030*



### Brett Turner

MBS Bayside City Council and  
VMBSG Committee Member

#### Moderator

Brett Turner has been involved in the Building Surveying industry since the early 1980s, gaining experience in both private and Local Government roles. He's a former President of the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors (AIBS) Vic Chapter, where he served on the executive for over 13 years and earned the title of Fellow of the Australian Institute of Building Surveyors. Brett is also a dedicated committee member of the VMBSG and held a long-standing position as Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS) at the City of Casey. Currently, he serves as the MBS at Bayside City Council and is looking forward to retirement in the next five years – but still has plenty of passion for the industry!



### James Cox

MBS City of Melbourne

James Cox is the current Municipal Building Surveyor for the City of Melbourne. With extensive experience across both public and private sectors, James Cox has worked in the private building surveying industry with a focus on Class 2–9 buildings, and held senior roles at the Victorian Building Authority, including as a Senior Technical Advisor and Registrar to the Building Appeals Board. James Cox is a current member of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee and serves on the committee of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group, contributing to policy and regulatory reform across the sector.

# Meet the Speakers

## Panel Discussion | Topic: *The Role of Building Surveyors in 2030*



### Jim Ploumis

Senior Building Officer,  
City of Kingston

Jim has a well-rounded experience spanning local government, state government and private industry. He has played a role in legislative and regulatory reform, compliance oversight, technical advisory work and general building surveying duties giving him a rare perspective across the full building surveying landscape. Passionate about collaboration between government and industry, Jim is driven by how building surveyors can harness emerging and evolving technology, embracing change and sees digital acceleration opportunities where others see digital threats. He brings a future a focused outlook on what it will take for the profession not just to survive, but to thrive in 2030 and beyond.



### Joseph Genco

MBS, City of Yarra

Joseph Genco has worked in multiple sectors of the building industry for just over 40 years now. He started off as a Structural Engineer before expanding his skillset into Building Surveying and some project management. His experience has seen him work in local government, private industry, ABCB, BC, and the VBA.

Most people would know him through his work at City of Melbourne as the MBS dealing with some controversial issues e.g. Swanston St wall collapse, LaCrosse and Corkman Hotel. Others may have come across him through BC/VBA sessions on BCA. He has been on various committees with AIBS, ACSEV, BRAC and technical editor for LexusNexus on the BCA. He and has a particular interest in regulatory reform in particular technical provisions.



# Meet the Speakers

## Panel Discussion | *Topic: The Role of Building Surveyors in 2030*



### Sarah Ford

Building Coordinator,  
Benalla Rural City Council

Sarah Ford has over two decades of dedicated service to Benalla Council and she has grown from a building administration role to her current position as Building Coordinator. Sarah holds a Diploma, Advanced Diploma, and Bachelor Degree, and is currently pursuing her Graduate Diploma in Building Surveying. She is a registered Building Inspector Unlimited and Building Surveyor Limited. Born and raised in Benalla, Sarah is proud to serve her community both professionally and as a SES volunteer. Outside of work, she is a busy mum to two wonderful girls and a cat lover. Sarah's goal is to achieve BS-U registration and become the Municipal Building Surveyor for Benalla Council.



### Sijad Baryalai

Senior Building Surveyor,  
Knox City Council

Sijad Baryalai, a Registered Building Surveyor at Knox City Council with over 11 years of experience across Local and State Government. I'm driven by a sincere commitment to public safety and integrity, aiming to simplify the regulatory process and deliver reliable building outcomes for our community.

I am enthusiastic about creating safer, more compliant built environments through focused regulatory expertise and hands-on service.

# Meet the Speakers

## Panel Discussion | *Topic: The Role of Building Surveyors in 2030*



### Vikki Ryan

Senior Building Surveyor,  
Bayside Council

With over 40 years of experience in the building industry, Vikki brings a wealth of practical knowledge and leadership to her role. She began her career as an architectural draftsman and, driven by a passion for building and design, returned to study Building Surveying in 2012, and she became a registered Building Inspector and Building Surveyor in 2015.

Starting at Bayside City Council in 2013 as a Technical Officer, Vikki is now the Senior Building Surveyor, and she also coordinates Report and Consents and leads Bayside's team of Building Surveying Assistants. Her dedication to the profession continues to shape the future of the next generation in Municipal Building Surveying.

# Meet the Speakers

## Damien Wadsworth

### Director DWA Wadsworth & Associates

Damien Wadsworth is a highly experienced Building Surveyor with over 25 years in the industry, including a decade of service within local government. After graduating from Swinburne University in 1998 with a Bachelor of Building Surveying, Damien honed his expertise as a Municipal Building Surveyor for four years, developing an in-depth understanding of council practices, compliance requirements, and the nuances of public-sector workflows. Damien worked for small, medium and large building surveying firms including PLP Building Surveyors before forming Damien Wadsworth and Associates in 2021.



### ***Topic: Tiny Homes and Building Permits: Navigating Legal and Regulatory Challenges***

Damien Wadsworth and Associates have partnered with Amy Catterall of MAKK to strengthen approaches to resolving building notices, drawing on both regulatory expertise and client-focused practice. Together, this partnership highlights how technical knowledge and a people-centred approach can ease what is often a complex and stressful process for building owners.

Damien will share insights from more than 25 years as a building surveyor across local government and the private sector, with experience spanning residential, commercial, and industrial projects. He will discuss common issues that arise in building notice resolution, practical strategies for achieving compliance, and lessons learned from working alongside MAKK to improve outcomes for owners, councils, and regulators alike.

# Meet the Speakers

## Russell Kennedy

## Elizabeth Flanagan

### Principal, Russell Kennedy

Elizabeth is a Principal at Russell Kennedy, working predominantly for local government clients. She advises them on the Building Act and the Building Regulations; in building prosecutions and enforcement in the Magistrates' Court; and in Building Appeals Board proceedings.

Her clients value her comprehensive knowledge of legislative and regulatory enforcement, her efficient and pragmatic approach and her ability to achieve optimal results.

Elizabeth is a committee member of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group Women's Network and is passionate about the development of women in the profession of building surveying and building inspecting.



### ***Topic: MBS Strategies for Unoccupied, Incomplete and Abandoned Buildings: Section 72 Cancellations of Occupancy Permits***

Unoccupied, incomplete, and abandoned buildings create safety and compliance risks for councils and communities. This session will outline practical strategies for Municipal Building Surveyors, including the use of Section 72 of the Building Act to cancel occupancy permits. Russell Kennedy will provide guidance on when and how these powers apply, key legal considerations, and steps to ensure decisions are defensible and effective in protecting public safety.1be heard. We'll share highlights, challenges, and what's next for the year ahead.

# Meet the Speakers

## Russell Kennedy

### Daniel Silfo

#### Principal, Russell Kennedy

Daniel has over a decade of experience in providing legal services to local government. He has acted for over 50 municipalities, both suburban and rural and specialises in all matters to do with local government prosecutions and enforcement.

Daniel has extensive experience in conducting prosecutions throughout Victoria and has obtained great results for clients for breaches in relation to building, planning and environment, public health, food, parking, domestic animals and local laws. He also provides advice and training to local government in these areas.

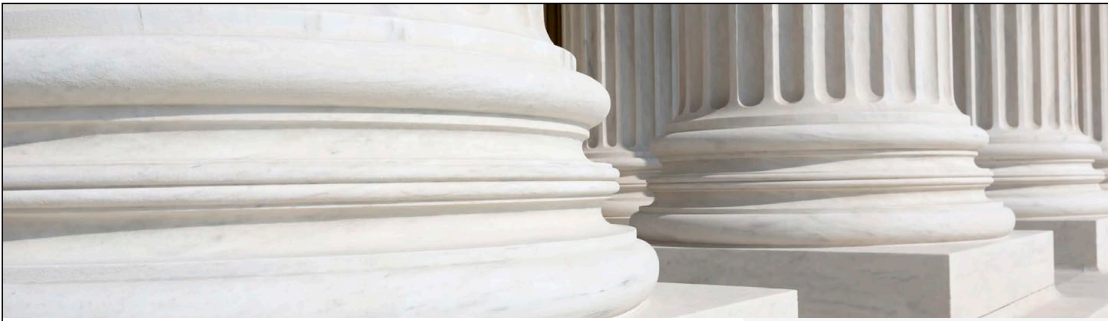
In addition to acting for councils, since 2009, Daniel has regularly provided advice to the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group Inc (VMBSG).



#### ***Topic: MBS Strategies for Unoccupied, Incomplete and Abandoned Buildings: Section 72 Cancellations of Occupancy Permits***

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Russell Kennedy's large team of local government legal specialists offers deep expertise in all local government law: environment, building, local laws, prosecutions, planning, governance, commercial, property, workplace relations and employment. We draft, implement, interpret, advise and enforce.

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At Russell Kennedy, we understand that the strength of our firm lies in the lasting relationships we build with our clients, our people and the broader community.



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### Ryt Business Solutions

Ryt Business Solutions collaborates with the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group (VMBSG), providing specialised investigative and compliance support to local government building control officers.

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—Training Participant, August 2025

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# Our Sponsors

## The VMBSG Annual State Conference 2025 is proudly sponsored by

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Our portfolio encompasses a wide array of projects, including residential, fit-out, commercial, industrial, government work, and projects in regional Victoria.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

# ASA

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# Charities

In lieu of a physical gift, we are proud to make a donation on behalf of each of our speakers at this year's VMBSG Annual State Conference to a charity of their choice. This initiative reflects our appreciation for their valuable contributions while supporting causes that are meaningful to them.

Steven Baxas and  
Anna Cronin



**Australian Kidney Foundation**

[kidney.org.au](http://kidney.org.au)

Mel Rohan and  
Craig MacDonald (FRICS)



**MATES in Construction**

[mates.org.au](http://mates.org.au)

Tane Hunter



**Bonorong Wildlife Sanctuary**

[bonorong.com.au](http://bonorong.com.au)

Paul Mulholland



**Disabled Winter Sports Australia**

[disabledwintersport.com.au](http://disabledwintersport.com.au)

# Charities

Russell Kennedy



**Prostate Cancer Foundation**  
[pcfau.org.au](http://pcfau.org.au)

Scott Matheson



**Pets of the Homeless**  
[petsofthehomeless.org.au](http://petsofthehomeless.org.au)

Brett Turner and James Cox



**White Ribbon Australia**  
[whiteribbon.org.au](http://whiteribbon.org.au)

Jim Ploumis



**Deadly Coders**  
[deadlycoders.org.au](http://deadlycoders.org.au)

Joseph Genco



**Movember**  
[au.movember.com](http://au.movember.com)

Sijad Baryalai



**Royal Children's Hospital Foundation**  
[rchfoundation.org.au](http://rchfoundation.org.au)



# Charities

Vikki Ryan



**Victorian Homeless Fund**  
[vichomelessfund.org.au](http://vichomelessfund.org.au)

Damien Wadsworth



**Big Group Hug**  
[biggrouphug.org](http://biggrouphug.org)

Sarah and Peco Dimitrievski



**YWCA**  
[ywca.org.au](http://ywca.org.au)

Hon. Harriet Shing



**Australian Red Cross**  
[redcross.org.au](http://redcross.org.au)

Mat Sherwell



**The Salvation Army**  
[salvationarmy.org.au](http://salvationarmy.org.au)

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