



NGAA Research Strategy

Building the evidence base to advocate for fast growing cities, towns and suburbs

October 2019

Contents

1	Executive Summary	3
1.1	Aim	3
1.2	Implementation	3
2	Building the Evidence Base to Advocate for Fast Growing Cities, Towns and Suburbs..	4
2.1	Purpose	4
2.2	The National Growth Areas Alliance	4
2.3	Our Role	4
3	Research Strategy	5
3.1	Aim	5
3.2	Objectives	5
3.3	Governance	5
3.3.1	Research and Practice Group.....	6
3.3.2	University Reference Group.....	6
4	Research Framework.....	6
4.1	NGAA Research	6
4.1.1	Commissioned Research.....	6
4.1.2	Member Policy Briefs	6
4.2	Member-Led Research	6
4.2.1	RAP Call Out	6
4.2.2	Symposium.....	6
4.3	Partner-led Research.....	7
4.3.1	Current Partner–Led Research	7
5	Research Plan	7
5.1	Methodology	7
	Appendices	7

1 Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to outline the Research Strategy and Plan that underpins the National Growth Area Alliance (NGAA) policy platform and advocacy.

1.1 Aim

The aim of the Research Strategy is to provide a research framework that enables the Alliance to build its Policy Platform on a sound contemporary evidence base.

We do this by placing the needs of growth area communities at the centre of a process of inquiry to determine the policy settings and actions required to support the rapid growth our nation's capital cities are experiencing.

We ground our research in discovery, exchange and impact.

1.2 Implementation

The Research Strategy is implemented through a Research Plan (reviewed annually) that details the proposed broad line of inquiry, priorities and actions. Annual research investment is detailed in a Research Investment Plan.

To ensure that NGAA resources are optimized for the best outcomes, three broad categories of research are used:

- NGAA research
- member-led research and
- partner-led research.

Each will inform key areas of inquiry to support the NGAA Policy Platform.

2 Building the Evidence Base to Advocate for Fast Growing Cities, Towns and Suburbs

2.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide a research framework that will underpin the NGAA Policy Platform.

2.2 The National Growth Areas Alliance

The National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA or the Alliance) is the peak body for Local Government Areas across Australia which are experiencing rapid and sustained population growth and are located on the outskirts of our capital cities. We refer to these areas as Australia's fastest growing cities, towns and suburbs.

2.3 Our Role

The Alliance advocates to federal and state government for changes to policies that support the strategic priorities of Member Councils.

Members' priorities are informed by deep consultation with the communities that live and work in growth areas. Despite the diversity in geography, nationally there are strong themes that transcend state and local government boundaries that are best amplified by a collective voice.

As a collective voice, the Alliance brings together rigorous member and NGAA-commissioned research, drawing from domestic and international best practice, to ensure that we advocate for policy change which supports growth and builds stronger communities not only within fast growing cities, towns and suburbs, but across the nation.

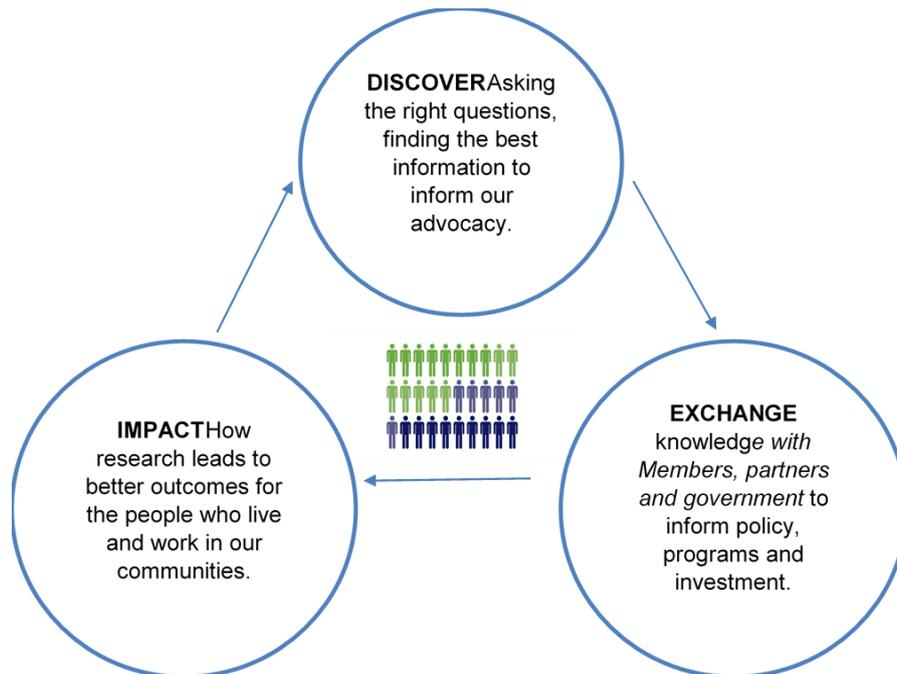
Maintaining a dynamic advocacy strategy through a continuous cycle of **plan–advocate–evaluate** ensures that we are always striving for the best outcomes for the people and industries that have chosen to live and invest in growth areas.

3 Research Strategy

3.1 Aim

The aim of the Research Strategy is to provide a research framework that enables the Alliance to build its Policy Platform on a sound contemporary evidence base.

We do this by placing the needs of growth area communities at the centre of a process of inquiry to determine the policy settings and actions required to support the rapid growth our nation's capital cities are experiencing.



3.2 Objectives

By continuing to ground our research in discovery, exchange and impact, we will:

1. Embed the Alliance and its Members as leaders in contemporary evidence and forward thinking on growth areas.
2. Leverage relevant current and planned research activities undertaken by Members and other stakeholders to advance a national policy position.
3. Catalyse knowledge sharing between Members of place-based research and practice to advance the collective and individual advocacy efforts of Members
4. Provide an engagement framework which allows Members, individually or collectively, to participate in leading edge research.
5. Measure the impact of evidence-based advocacy through regular review of the Policy Platform.

3.3 Governance

This Strategy is informed by input from the Member Research and Practice (RAP) Reference Group and is approved by the NGAA Committee of Management. The Strategy forms part of NGAA's Strategic and Operational Plans which are approved by the Strategic Advisory Committee.

3.3.1 Research and Practice Group

The Research and Practice (RAP) Reference Group comprises six members who are officers of Member Councils. They are selected through an Expression of Interest process and appointed for a period of 2 years. The RAP Group provides feedback on research subjects and curates member research activities that might have national application.

3.3.2 University Reference Group

The University Reference group (URG) consists of leading academics from universities from around Australia. The URG both acts as a sounding board for the development of NGAA's research plan and undertakes research commissioned by NGAA.

4 Research Framework

To ensure that NGAA resources are optimised for the best outcomes, research is pursued through a three-tier framework: NGAA research, member-led research and partner-led research.

4.1 NGAA Research

The NGAA will undertake research where there is a specific need for additional evidence to advance the national advocacy position. This may take the form of a commissioned study sourcing new primary data or analysis of existing data to answer specific lines of inquiry.

4.1.1 Commissioned Research

NGAA has regularly commissioned research to support specific policy and advocacy activities. This research is funded through Membership fees and additional contributions if required.

The list of NGAA commissioned research is at Appendix 1

4.1.2 Member Policy Briefs

Member policy briefs are prepared by the NGAA Secretariat and are targeted papers which inform Members of a government policy change or an emerging policy field. They are available to NGAA Members only.

4.2 Member-Led Research

Members undertake significant research to support their local advocacy agendas. Where the issue is of national significance, we encourage Members to share the findings for the benefit of other Members.

Member-led research is curated by the RAP group through the RAP Call Out and Symposium.

4.2.1 RAP Call Out

The RAP Call Out invites Members to "opt in" to participate in sharing and extending member-based research that will support a broader policy or advocacy position.

4.2.2 Symposium

The NGAA convenes a regular symposium to encourage the sharing of research of national significance with other Members. The first symposium was held in 2019. See Appendix 2 for topics.

The aim of the Symposium is to catalyse the sharing of knowledge, research and practice between growth councils and to add to the evidence base on which the NGAA Policy Platform is built.

4.3 Partner-led Research

NGAA is a sought-after organisation for collaborative research projects by industry partners, research institutions and government. NGAA has contributed “in kind” and financial resources to support research initiatives that support the advocacy plan for Members.

Research projects may be federally funded through the Department of Industry, Innovation and Science as a part of a Co-operative Research Grant, Australian Research Council-Linkage grant or through specific research institutions.

4.3.1 Current Partner-Led Research

The current partner-led research projects NGAA has been invited to participate in are listed in Appendix 3. As they progress, NGAA will offer the opportunity for Members to “opt in” to the research programs.

5 Research Plan

The Research Plan brings new evidence to support the NGAA Policy Platform. The detailed 2019 – 2022 Research Plan is available for NGAA Members.

5.1 Methodology

There is a five-step process to develop the Research Plan:

1. Reviewing the policy platform in light of the current political setting. This involves desktop research of government policy and consultation with federal politicians and advisors.
2. Reviewing member priorities for further knowledge and evidence base. This is informed through the Symposium and the RAP group.
3. Identifying the lines of inquiry that will best support the policy platform. This is informed through the RAP group.
4. Aligning current Member-led and Partner-led research activities to the identified gaps in knowledge.
5. Identifying evidence and knowledge gaps that will inform the Research Plan during the current government.

Appendices

1. NGAA Commissioned Research
2. NGAA Symposium 2019
3. Current Partner-led Research projects
4. NGAA Research Plan Priorities 2019 – 2022

Appendix 1. NGAA Commissioned Research

Report Title	Year	Source
State of Australia's Fast Growing Outer Suburbs	2018	.ID the population experts
Transformational Infrastructure in Australia's Fast Growing Outer Suburbs	2018	RMIT Centre for Urban Research
Dedicated Infrastructure Fund for Australia's Outer Suburban Growth Areas	2016	Price Waterhouse Coopers
Meeting Growth Area Infrastructure Investment Needs	2015	SGS Economics and Planning
Error! Unknown document property name.	2013	Elton Consulting
Addressing Skills and Employment Gaps in Outer Metropolitan Areas	2012	Essential Economics
Cost Benefit Analysis of Investment in Growth Areas	2009	SGS Economics and Planning
Community Benefit Infrastructure	2007	SGS Economics and Planning

Appendix 2. NGAA Symposium 2019

The inaugural National Growth Areas Alliance (NGAA) Symposium was held on Thursday, 4 July 2019 at Wyndham City Council in Victoria. It was attended by growth area councils from around Australia and representatives from government departments and industry.

Symposium submissions revolved around the themes of innovative planning, governance and financing, and building liveable and resilient communities. The resulting program was curated by the RAP Group to showcase 10 presentations:

- Auditing the Built Environment for Determinants of Health
- Building the Case for Active Playing Spaces and Community Infrastructure
- Place Planning in a Growth Context
- Creativity and Youth Services
- What We Build, Where We Build
- Turn Down the Heat
- For Value Australia
- Partnering for Better Planning Outcomes
- Street Tree and Public Open Space Spatial Data Capture
- Smart Wyndham- 3D Development Activity Model

Appendix 3. Current Partner-led Research Projects - 2019

Topic	Description	Duration	Source	Status
AHURI <i>Link to</i> https://www.ahuri.edu.au/	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) Inquiry Panel - Urban Productivity and Affordable Rental Housing Supply University of Sydney, RMIT, Swinburne	End 2019		Underway
Future Cities CRC <i>Link to</i> https://futurecitiescrc.org/	The proposed Cooperative Research Centre (CRC) will be Australia's national research and innovation hub for the future of cities. The CRC will engage with government, industry and community to undertake research aimed at developing and implementing integrated science-based policy and practice solutions to current and future urban challenges. The programs of the Future Cities CRC will address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Program 1: Smart Connected Places ▪ Program 2: Efficient integrated infrastructure ▪ Program 3: City analytics and foresighting ▪ Program 4: Liveable cities and regions 	7 years 2020-27	Cooperative Research Centre program	Under consideration
Life Science <i>Link to</i> https://www.lifecoursecentre.org.au/	The Australian Research Council (ARC) Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course (called Life Course Centre or LCC) is investigating the critical factors underlying disadvantage to provide life-changing solutions for policy and service delivery. The aim is to identify the drivers of disadvantage, characterised by the spread of social and economic poverty within families and across generations, and to develop innovative solutions to reduce disadvantage	TBA	ARC Centre of Excellence: University of Queensland, the University of Western Australia	Pending
Infrastructure Incubator <i>Link to</i> https://sydney.edu.au/henry-halloran-trust/	The Henry Halloran Trust (HHT) at Sydney University has begun a 3 year research incubator project on Infrastructure Governance. The focus of the incubator project is to better understand infrastructure governance balanced with the growth of sustainable, prosperous and socially just cities. Greater Sydney and Greater Melbourne will be used as case studies and living labs to test frameworks and potential models.	2019-21 3 years	Henry Halloran Trust at University of Sydney	Underway

	We look forward to future involvement with HHT as the research program is confirmed.			
<p>Future Earth Australia</p> <p>Link to https://www.futureearth.org.au/</p>	<p>Future Earth Australia, hosted by the Australian Academy of Science, has undertaken an ambitious process of consultation across the Australian landscape of urban practitioners, researchers, stakeholders and communities to produce the <i>Urban Systems Transformation Decadal Plan</i>.</p> <p>Based on the vision Australians have for their cities and their future, the Plan outlines six strategies to transform our settlements into powerful drivers for just and equitable sustainable development.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have a vision for our cities and regions to drive progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. 2. Build an integrated national urban knowledge system that links research, policy and practice. 3. Strengthen local urban and regional innovation systems to engage with the research sector. 4. Build the urban knowledge management infrastructure to facilitate information sharing and best practice. 5. Support new capability and capacity for cross-sectoral urban knowledge, development and sharing. 6. Embed stakeholder and community engagement in knowledge building, policy and practice. 	2018-19	Australian Academy of Science	Underway