

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



NATIONAL
Growth Areas
ALLIANCE



Cr Matthew Deeth
Mayor of Wollondilly
Shire Council

Chair's Report

The National Growth Areas Alliance had an effective and influential financial year 2021 – 2022 against the background of the ongoing pandemic and a long lead-up to the 2021 Federal Election in May.

During the election campaign, the NGAA focused on the broad policy areas of infrastructure, cities policy, jobs and training, and community services in growth areas. In November 2021 we launched Priorities for Australia's Outer Metropolitan Growth Areas. Mayors from our Member Councils set out the Alliance's priorities, with the Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities; Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure and the Shadow Minister for Infrastructure all participating.

Four national priorities for growth areas were informed by our research and Member input:

1. A Minister for Growth Areas
2. Transformational infrastructure in outer urban growth areas
3. Support the outer suburban workforce and industries
4. Community recovery and resilience in the outer suburbs.

We called for a focus on policy and funding decisions that would have a long-term, considered impact on growth areas. We were pleased with responses from both major parties in line with our priorities including commitments from the Labor Party to renewing the independent role of Infrastructure Australia, establishing a new Australian Cities and Suburbs unit and producing an annual state of the cities report to inform policy-making with evidence.

We continued to put our case to Ministers, Shadow Ministers, other Parliamentarians and bodies such as Infrastructure Australia in meetings and at NGAA events throughout the financial year.

I was very pleased that this year we were able to hold National Congress in-person at Werribee in March 2022 – the first time since our pre-pandemic 2019 Congress. As public life gradually resumed nationwide, it was wonderful to be able to represent the concerns of growth areas in a panel session during the ALGA NGA in June 2022 and to catch up with NGAA members there.

The NGAA's advocacy was supported by the extremely high media profile that we achieved for the growth area concerns and the Alliance throughout 2021 - 2022. We had significant, widespread national media coverage of NGAA spokespeople and case studies from Member Councils on issues such as the lag in vital infrastructure, sporting and other community facilities; health care services and planning; the missed opportunity that was the Commuter Car Parks project; and the electoral impact of changing growth area demographics. The extensive media attention we generated around the NGAA National Congress in March 2022 also strengthened our calls for a co-ordinated national response to outer urban growth area issues.

Rigorous, independent research on cities and the outer suburbs underpins the work of our Alliance, and this year we continued to grow our knowledge and evidence base. Our output included collating and presenting Member research and practice at the three-day 2021 Research Symposium, held online because of ongoing lockdowns. We also commissioned new research to understand and highlight the impact of the pandemic on growth areas, drawing links between high COVID rates, high outbreak risk factors and the lag in social infrastructure provision in growth areas. The research showed that one in five Australians in the outer suburbs was living in "financial survival mode" during the pandemic and is more likely to feel stressed, frustrated and anxious than the national average.

None of this work would be possible without the continued involvement and cooperation of our Members. I would particularly like to thank the Mayors, Councillors and officers who have given their time and expertise on the Strategic Advisory Committee, Committee of Management, Research and Practice Reference group, our professional networks, and those who have contributed to our submissions, reports and media presence. A special thank you goes to our former Deputy Chair and now Member for Pearce, Tracey Roberts, for her valuable contributions to the NGAA over the last 8 years.

On behalf of all Members, I would also like to thank the NGAA Secretariat for their efforts and the tremendous value they deliver to our Members. As you look through this annual report, you will see that the small team's hard work ensures that the Alliance has a large impact.

NGAA Governance

Strategic Advisory Committee

- Chair – Cr Matthew Deeth, Mayor, Shire of Wollondilly
- Deputy Chair – Mayor Tracey Roberts, City of Wanneroo (until April 2022)
- Cr Charishma Kaliyanda, Liverpool City Council
- Mayor Ann Ferguson, Mount Barker District Council
- Mayor Glenn Docherty, City of Playford
- Cr Collin Ross, Cardinia Shire Council
- Cr Peter Maynard, Wyndham City Council
- Mayor Carol Adams, City of Kwinana (from February 2022)
- Cr Brett Treby, City of Wanneroo (from June 2022)

Strategic Advisory Committee Meetings

2021
26 July
13 September
29 October

Committee of Management Meetings

27 August
22 October
10 December

2021

2022

28 February
10 June

18 February
29 April

Strategic Advisory Committee

Cr Matthew Deeth
Shire of Wollondilly
(NGAA Chair)



Mayor Tracey Roberts
City of Wanneroo



Mayor Ann Ferguson
Mount Barker
District Council



Cr Charishma Kaliyanda
Liverpool City Council



Cr Collin Ross
Cardinia Shire Council



Mayor Glenn Docherty
City of Playford



Cr Peter Maynard
Wyndham City Council



NGAA Governance

Committee of Management

NSW

- Ben Taylor, CEO, Wollondilly Shire Council
- Chris Shannon, Manager Strategic Planning, Blacktown City Council
- Rachel Pleasant, Head of Corporate Strategy, Wollondilly Shire Council (2021)

SA

- Sam Green, CEO, City of Playford

VIC

- Stephen Wall, CEO, Wyndham City Council
- James Collins, Director City Planning & Infrastructure, City of Casey
- Justin O'Meara, Director Planning and Development, City of Whittlesea
- Natalie Walker, Head of Strategy and Policy Impact, Wyndham City Council (2021)

WA

- Daniel Simms, CEO, City of Wanneroo
- Tony Brun, CEO, City of Cockburn

Research and Practice Reference Group

NSW

- Dr Anne Hurni, Coordinator – Research and Policy, Penrith City Council

SA

- Greg Sarre, Manager Economic Development and Sustainable Futures, Mount Barker District Council
- Dr Greg Pattinson, Executive Strategic Advisor, City of Playford

VIC

- Joanne Kyrkilis, Manager Equity and Inclusion, City of Whittlesea
- Joanna Noesgaard, Head of Infrastructure and Facilities Planning, City of Casey

WA

- Maria Cooke, Director City Regulation, City of Kwinana
- Steve Marmion, Manager Advocacy and Economic Development, City of Wanneroo
- Sinead Bullock, Research and Reporting Officer, City of Gosnells



Committee of Management Report

We are pleased to report the 2021-22 Operational Plan resulted in significant outcomes for our Members.

The Secretariat's KPIs were set out in 12 strategies that reflected the four goals contained in the 2021-24 Strategic Plan.

Measurable actions were set out under each strategy, and 90% of those actions were completed.

Some achievements of the year included:

- Meetings held with Government and Opposition Members of Parliament, and key Ministers attended and participated in NGAA events
- 2021/22 election campaign achieved aims of generating substantive engagement with key government and opposition Members of Parliament resulting in favourable policy commitments particularly from the (then) opposition, and a high profile for growth area issues
- Media profile was significantly increased through more than 600 individual pieces of media coverage, including several in-depth major metropolitan television news stories, multiple stories in major metropolitan daily newspapers and two national opinion-editorials by Cr Matthew Deeth, NGAA Chair.
- New research commissioned on how growth areas navigated the pandemic, resulting in significant media coverage, and a collaboration with University of Western Australia and University of Melbourne on Peripheral Centralities workshops
- Ongoing collaboration with Infrastructure Australia, including NGAA CEO Bronwen Clark invited to speak at launch of 2021 Australian Infrastructure Plan
- Three submissions to government including Budget submission and submission to Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration on the Administration and expenditure of funding under the Urban Congestion Fund
- All NGAA members continued to be engaged with strong participation in governance and networks.
- Staffing structure stabilised and new shared Advocacy Support Officer position (0.4EFT) created.



Catherine King MP at Growth Area Priorities launch

Chief Executive Officer Report



Bronwen Clark
Executive Officer

The 2021-22 financial year focused on preparing and delivering an effective Federal Election advocacy campaign, while ensuring business continued as usual.

Election campaigns are the measure of the ongoing impact our Alliance has on the national political agenda. The emphasis given to growth areas in media and political commentary during the May 2022 election shows NGAA, as the only national group advocating specifically about population and housing growth, has successfully put our issues in the spotlight.

This campaign was very different to the previous two I have worked on, with very few major policy announcements and only a small number of funding commitments made. However of the commitments, there were some significant wins for growth areas in the areas jobs and skills, childcare, university places, city deals and infrastructure assessment.

Record levels of media coverage and numerous references by the Coalition and Labor to fast-growing outer suburbs shows our messaging is hitting the mark. As part of a long-term strategy, NGAA is definitely changing the national narrative about growth areas.

I am proud of and grateful to the NGAA team who delivered some fantastic outcomes for our Members during a challenging year. Their dedication is second to none and I am sure all Members will join me in thanking them.

I am also grateful to NGAA's Strategic Advisory Committee and Committee of Management who offer such strong support and guidance, and who make this Alliance more effective every year, and to our auspicing council the City of Whittlesea with whom we continue to work towards improvements and efficiencies.



Delivering on the 2021-22 Operational Plan

1. Federal and State Government policies impacting outer urban growth areas better meet local government needs and expectations

ADVOCACY

Discussions with:

- Shadow Infrastructure Minister Catherine King
- Shadow Cities and Urban Infrastructure Minister Andrew Giles
- Rebekha Sharkie MP
- Senior Advisor to Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure, Paul Fletcher MP
- Senior Advisor to Minister for Housing, Michael Sukkar MP
- NSW Shadow Minister for Roads
- Centre for Population in Treasury
- Head of Cities Division in the Department of Infrastructure

Addresses by:

- Andrew Giles MP, Shadow Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure at launch of Growth Area Priorities 2021 and at National Congress 2022
- The Hon. Catherine King MP, Shadow Minister for Infrastructure at launch of Growth Area Priorities 2021
- The Hon. Paul Fletcher MP, Minister for Cities and Urban Infrastructure at launch of Growth Area Priorities 2021
- Senator Sarah Henderson for the Government at National Congress 2022

Submissions:

- Submission to Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration on Administration and expenditure of funding under the Urban Congestion Fund
- 2021 – 2022 Pre-Budget Submission

Collaboration:

- Memorandum of Understanding with Suburban Futures



Senator Sarah Henderson, Andrew Giles MP and NGAA Mayors and Councillors at National Congress 2022 in Werribee



Delivering on the 2021-22 Operational Plan

2. Member Councils have increased capacity to build liveable, resilient communities

RESEARCH STRATEGY AND PARTNERSHIPS

- 2021 Symposium – Research and Practice in Growth Areas – 26 presenters and the best-attended to date
- Published new commissioned research - How growth areas navigated the pandemic
- Members attended Peripheral Centralities workshops held in collaboration with University of Western Australia and University of Melbourne on urban planning and development
- Professional networks – the Advocacy Network, the Planners Network and the Research Advisory Committee enabled regular knowledge sharing and collaboration with officers in similar roles in other growth area councils.

3. Both the challenges and opportunities in growth areas are positively represented in national discourse

- More than 600 separate pieces of media coverage of NGAA research, events or opinions including TV, radio, print and online
- Two opinion-editorials in major metropolitan publications
- CEO, NGAA Chair and State representatives are regularly sought by media for interviews or commentary

- Bronwen Clark, NGAA CEO, invited to appear live on ABC's Q&A to ask Minister for Skills and Training, Brendan O'Connor MP, "How will government end the infrastructure postcode discrimination for outer suburban residents?"
- Social media posts, followers and interactions increased from previous year

4. The Alliance is sustainable, accountable and engaged

- All members were represented in our governance structure and officer-level networks, or in attendance at our events.
- 31 e-newsletters, policy and event updates were published
- 9 Member events were held including:
 - 2022 National Congress, Werribee
 - 2022 NGAA Awards Ceremony and Dinner
 - 2021 Research Symposium - three day event
 - NGAA Member's lunch and research presentation, Canberra
 - Peripheral Centralities Workshops, presented with the Urban Studies Foundation
 - NGAA Election Priorities Launch
 - Annual Member's Meeting

Finance

NGAA continues to work with the City of Whittlesea finance team to implement robust procedures for financial management and to ensure membership invoices are sent when required, after an administrative error meant some NGAA Membership invoices for FY21-22 were not distributed until late June 2022.

NGAA finished FY21-22 with a carry forward (surplus) of \$86,726.

Regular Membership Fees (\$495,000 income) covered costs associated with:

- our nine events, including a small deficit for NGAA Congress in March 2022 due to lower than expected attendance in person and online
 - and ongoing high costs associated with livestreaming events (Annual meeting, Election Launch, Symposium).
- lower than expected travel costs due to ongoing lockdowns
- stable staffing costs of 2.4 FTE
- regular operating costs

The additional \$5000 per Member Council as a contribution to the election campaign allowed for two research projects (How growth areas navigated the pandemic by Quantum Market Research and Benefits of Infrastructure Investment in Growth Areas by RMIT), public relations assistance to secure substantial media coverage and a virtual launch event with three political speakers.

Secretariat

- Secretariat staffing levels remained at approximately 2.4FTE
 - Chief Executive Officer – Bronwen Clark
 - National Communications Coordinator – Helen Wells
 - National Research and Policy Coordinator – Nicola Ward
 - Advocacy Support Officer - Katherine Sorrell from May 2022
- Events Coordinator, April Glossop – 2021 to March 2022



Member Councils 2021 - 2022

