



# REGIONS RISING TASMANIA

## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

10.00am - 5.00pm, Wednesday, 23 October 2024  
The Tramsheds Function Centre, Launceston

# ABOUT THE RAI

**The Regional Australia Institute is the nation's first and only independent think tank dedicated to empowering our regions to thrive.**

Through our research, advocacy, capacity-building, membership collective, community engagement and policy work, the RAI actively works to support the prosperity of regional Australia.

Our partnerships with all tiers of government, corporate Australia and local organisations, enable us to advocate for policy solutions aligned to the priorities on the ground.

In 2022, the RAI launched our 10-year framework to guide Australia's regional growth, the Regionalisation Ambition 2032 – A Framework to Rebalance the Nation.

Co-designed with our members, the Ambition states our goal to increase regional Australia's population to 11 million by 2032, and charts 20 goals across five key pillars:

1. Population
2. Jobs & Skills
3. Liveability
4. Productivity & Innovation
5. Sustainability & Resilience

The RAI is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, for-purpose organisation. We were founded in 2011 with seed funding from the Federal Government to capture nuanced data and research from across Australia's diverse regions to inform better policy and decision-making.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Regional Australia Institute acknowledges all Traditional Custodians across this vast land.

We respect Elders past and present and are grateful for the enrichment such living cultures bring to our lives.

# ABOUT REGIONS RISING

Regions Rising is RAI's national series of conferences run in regional centres across Australia.

Regions Rising events attract regional, government and industry leaders, policymakers, local organisations, academics and community champions for solutions-focused conversations and ideas-sharing on key topics relevant to the host region and state.

The RAI's events play an important role in bringing regional stakeholders together for networking, collaboration, thought leadership and ideation on a range of issues impacting the regions. They provide a platform for the RAI to share our research and insights to help enhance and grow regional Australia.

The RAI has a diverse annual program of events that includes our National Summit, topic-focused events, webinars, research forums, and exclusive member-only events.

## REGIONS RISING TASMANIA: EVENT SPONSORS

Thank you to our dedicated supporters and sponsors for your unwavering commitment to empowering regional Australia. Your support is instrumental in making Regions Rising a success and ensuring the future prosperity of our regions.

### National Event Series Sponsors



### Tasmania Event Sponsor



## REGIONS RISING TASMANIA: EVENT ATTENDEES

**FIND OUT WHO IS ATTENDING**

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

## 10:00 - 10:05 MC WELCOME

**James McKee**  
CEO, RDA Tasmania

## 10:05 - 10:15 WELCOME TO COUNTRY

**Graeme Gardner**  
Aboriginal Community Engagement  
Advisor, TasNetworks

## 10:15 - 10:20 WELCOME TO LAUNCESTON

**Mayor Matthew Garwood**  
City of Launceston

## 10:20 - 10:45 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**The Hon. Jeremy Rockliff**  
Premier of Tasmania, Minister for  
Tourism and Hospitality, Minister  
for Trade and Major Investment

**Q&A – 10 mins**

## 10:45 - 11:10 RAI ADDRESS

**Liz Ritchie**  
CEO, Regional Australia Institute

**Q&A – 5 mins**

## MORNING TEA – 30 MINS

## 11:40 - 12:05 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**The Hon. Catherine King MP**  
Federal Minister for Infrastructure,  
Transport, Regional Development  
and Local Government

**Q&A – 10 mins**

## 12:05 - 12:15 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Simon Pryor**  
Director Research and Policy,  
Regional Australia Institute

## 12:15 - 1:00 CIRCULAR ECONOMY PANEL

**Facilitator: Simon Pryor**  
Director Research and Policy,  
Regional Australia Institute

**Panellists:**

**Peter Freak**  
Vice Chair & TAS Director,  
Charitable Reuse Australia

**The Hon. Pam Allan**  
Chair, Tasmanian Waste and  
Resource Recovery Board

**Michael Attard**  
Team Leader Sustainability,  
Infrastructure & Assets Network,  
City of Launceston

**Diane Rae**  
CEO, Ewenique Enterprises

## 1:00 - 1:25 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**Chris Cusack**  
General Manager, nbn Local, nbn co.

**Q&A – 10 mins**

## LUNCH – 40 MINS

## 2:05 - 2:50 TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION & ENTREPRENEURISM PANEL

**Facilitator: Sam Marshall**  
Regional Development and  
Engagement Manager, nbn co.

**Panellists:**

**James Riggall**  
Founder, Bitlink

**Tom Woolley**  
Managing Director, FoodTech Tasmania

**Adam Mostogl**  
CEO & Chief Entrepreneur,  
The van Diemen Project

## 2:50 - 3:15 KEYNOTE ADDRESS

**James Cornish**  
State General Manager Tasmania,  
Elders Limited

**Q&A - 10 mins**

## 3:15 - 4:00 JOBS, SKILLS & WORKFORCE PANEL

**Facilitator: Professor Natalie Brown**  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (Launceston)  
Executive Dean (Regional),  
University of Tasmania

**Panellists:**

**John Brown**  
General Manager, Break O'Day Council  
and Chair, Regional Jobs Hub, St Helens

**Sheree Vertigan AM**  
CEO, Cradle Coast Authority

**Craig Limkin**  
Secretary, Department of State Growth

## AFTERNOON TEA – 20 MINS

## 4:20 - 4:50 TASMANIA'S ENERGY FUTURE PANEL

**Facilitator: Liz Ritchie**  
CEO, Regional Australia Institute

**Panellists:**

**Rachel Johnson**  
Head of Communications & Stakeholder  
Relations, Hydro Tasmania

**Professor Richard Eccleston**  
Founding Director, Tasmanian Policy  
Exchange, University of Tasmania

## 4:50 - 5:00 CLOSING REMARKS

# MEET THE SPEAKERS

## JAMES MCKEE

### CEO, RDA Tasmania

James McKee has held senior roles across various sectors, including CEO of NRM North and Director of Northern Transformation at UTAS. He has chaired boards like Tourism Northern Tasmania and AusCycling Tasmania. With a background in agricultural science, he's passionate about regional development, innovation and strategy.



## GRAEME GARDNER

### Aboriginal Community Engagement Advisor, TasNetworks

Graeme Gardner, a Palawa man from the Trawlwoolway people, is passionate about First Nations health, social justice, and cultural identity. At TasNetworks, he fosters connections with the Tasmanian First Nations community. Previously, he led the Aboriginal Land Council for 19 years and supports youth through sports like AFL Tasmania.



## MAYOR MATTHEW GARWOOD

### City of Launceston

Born and raised in Launceston, Matthew Garwood lives in the northern suburbs with his wife, daughter, and three pups. After eight years in local radio, he became Mayor of Launceston. Matthew's vision focuses on connectedness through infrastructure, arts, culture and communication, bringing fresh ideas, energy, and leadership to the role.



## THE HON. JEREMY ROCKLIFF

### Premier of Tasmania, Minister for Tourism and Hospitality, Minister for Trade and Major Investment

Jeremy Rockliff is a proud North West Tasmanian and fifth-generation farmer. He has a long history of community service and leadership. Serving 22 years in Parliament, he's held roles as Deputy Premier and Premier. His vision for Tasmania is one of inclusivity and support, where everyone can thrive.



## LIZ RITCHIE

### CEO, Regional Australia Institute

Liz Ritchie's had a lifelong affiliation with the regions, having spent her childhood in Deniliquin, NSW. As RAI CEO, her goal is to empower regions to thrive through leadership, activation, and impact. Liz spearheaded the development of the Regionalisation Ambition – a framework to 'rebalance the nation' by ensuring greater equity for regional communities.



## THE HON. CATHERINE KING MP

### Federal Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government

Catherine King, the first woman elected to represent Ballarat, has held the seat since 2001. With a background in social work and public policy, she worked in health and as a KPMG consultant before entering politics. A passionate advocate for her community, she lives in Ballarat with her husband and son.



## SIMON PRYOR

### Director Research and Policy, Regional Australia Institute

With over three decades of experience in economic policy, Simon Pryor has held roles in business and government. He was Executive Director at the Business Council of Australia, leading policy on population, infrastructure and more. Simon has also worked in the Victorian Government, major businesses and as a consultant.



## PETER FREAK

### Vice Chair & TAS Director, Charitable Reuse Australia

Peter Freak is Deputy Chair and Tasmanian Director of Charitable Reuse Australia, with 10+ years in the NFP sector. Currently, he manages Assets and Projects at Launceston City Mission. With 29 years in banking, he led Westpac's Commercial and AgriBusiness in Tasmania. Peter enjoys golf, bushwalking and family life.





## THE HON. PAM ALLAN

### Chair, Tasmanian Waste and Resource Recovery Board

Adjunct Professor The Hon. Pam Allan has extensive experience in waste and resource recovery, natural resource management, corporate governance, and public sector administration. A former NSW Environment Minister, she has served as director and chair on various boards. Pam is based in northern Tasmania.



## SAM MARSHALL

### Regional Development and Engagement Manager, nbn co.

Sam is the Regional Development and Engagement Manager for nbn co., based in Launceston. With nearly 15 years in telecommunications, his background includes journalism, strategic planning and small business ownership. Outside of work, he supports live music and the arts while raising a young family with his wife.



## MICHAEL ATTARD

### Team Leader Sustainability, Infrastructure & Assets Network, City of Launceston

Michael Attard is a waste and recovery professional with the City of Launceston, leading sustainability initiatives for 8 years. With a science background, he's focused on reducing landfill impact through FOGO, recycling, and reuse. His past roles include hatchery manager and ecosystem health assessor.



## JAMES RIGGALL

James Riggall is an entrepreneur and academic based in Launceston. He is the founder and managing director of Bitlink and a Senior Industry Fellow at the University of Tasmania. James teaches at Bellevue College and serves on several boards, including RDA Tasmania and the Queen Victoria Museum. He's a Fulbright Scholar and a Benson Award winner.



## DIANE RAE

### CEO, Ewenique Enterprises

Diane Rae is an expert in innovative business strategies, passionate about startups. She specialises in agribusiness, food manufacturing, brand management, marketing, and agritourism. Diane consults for international dairy businesses, offering solutions in dairy sheep and camel milk product development, breeding innovation, and marketing.



## TOM WOOLLEY

### Managing Director, FoodTech Tasmania

Tom Woolley is Managing Director of Foodtech Tasmania, a global accelerator for innovation in agritech and food sectors. With over 20 years of experience, he guides early-stage businesses, focusing on sustainability and technology. Tom brings strong governance and strategic direction, connecting startups with industry and investors across various industries.



## CHRIS CUSACK

### General Manager, nbn Local, nbn co.

Chris Cusack has been General Manager of nbn Local since March 2020, with roles at nbn co. since 2017. A telecommunications executive with over 30 years of experience in stakeholder management, sales and community engagement, he holds an MBA and a Bachelor in Business. Chris lives in Nelson Bay, NSW, with his wife and two children.



## ADAM MOSTOGL

### CEO & Chief Entrepreneur, The van Diemen Project

Adam Mostogl, CEO of The van Diemen Project, fuels innovation across communities, businesses and education. He empowers aspiring entrepreneurs and young people to create change, while also leading Tasmania's first social impact incubator, The Shift Lab. Recognised as a Top 40 Under 40 Entrepreneur, Adam is dedicated to fostering positive change.





## JAMES CORNISH

### State General Manager Tasmania, Elders Limited

James Cornish is a highly motivated leader with extensive experience in business improvement and change management. He excels in commercial acumen and people management. Driven by technical problem-solving, James fosters strong internal and external relationships to achieve success.



## CRAIG LIMKIN

### Secretary, Department of State Growth

Craig Limkin has over 20 years of government experience across Queensland, New South Wales, and Tasmania. He led significant change agendas and was awarded a Public Service Medal for his COVID-19 recovery efforts. Craig has overseen major cultural infrastructure projects and serves on various boards, including Theatre Royal Hobart.



## PROFESSOR NATALIE BROWN

### Pro Vice-Chancellor (Launceston), Executive Dean (Regional), University of Tasmania

Professor Natalie Brown is committed to fostering innovative partnerships to enhance educational attainment in Tasmania. With a background in teaching and a PhD in Plant Science, she has received multiple teaching awards, including a National Teaching Excellence award.



## RACHEL JOHNSON

### Head of Communications & Stakeholder Relations, Hydro Tasmania

Rachel Johnson has over 20 years of experience in the energy sector. She has worked across government relations, policy, regulation, communications, and marketing. Rachel holds a Bachelor of Economics and a Masters in Regulatory Economics and is passionate about the outdoors and traveling.



## JOHN BROWN

### General Manager, Break O'Day Council and Chair, Regional Jobs Hub, St Helens

John Brown is the GM of Break O'Day Council. He also chairs Break O'Day Employment Connect (BODEC), part of the Regional Jobs Hub Network, and has been instrumental in its development over the past four years. John advocates for the Jobs Hub Network and works closely with Jobs Tasmania.



## PROFESSOR RICHARD ECCLESTON

### Founding Director, Tasmanian Policy Exchange, University of Tasmania

Richard Eccleston is a professor of public policy and founding director of the Tasmanian Policy Exchange. Specialising in social and economic policy, he has contributed to major government reviews on tax, housing, regional development, and climate. Richard also serves on multiple advisory councils.



## SHEREE VERTIGAN AM

### CEO, Cradle Coast Authority

Sheree Vertigan studied at the University of Tasmania and held various roles in the Tasmanian Department of Education, including Principal of Reece High School. As CEO of Cradle Coast Authority, she focuses on building stronger councils and regions. Sheree also serves as Deputy Chancellor of UTAS Council, reflecting her commitment to regional development.



## RAI MEMBERSHIP

RAI's members are committed to elevating regional Australia. RAI collaborates with our members to inform our advocacy, research and policy work to ensure it aligns on key priorities. Together, our collective voice and united influence can have a greater impact on shifting the dial for regional outcomes and communities.

We have three tiers of membership designed to suit the needs of our diverse partners that help shape our regions:



Ideal for national government organisations and large corporates



Designed for state-based corporates, government bodies, and universities



For place-based organisations, local governments and RDAs

### Benefits of membership

- Support RAI's vital work as regional Australia's only independent think tank
- Grow the reputation and awareness of your organisation across regional Australia
- Have input into RAI's advocacy, research and policy work
- Leverage RAI's brand and national channels to share your stories and initiatives
- Receive free and discounted event tickets to network with other like-minded individuals and organisations
- Exclusive member-only events and workshops, including Ministerial access and Parliamentary events
- Exclusive promotional opportunities, including speaking at events, being featured in case studies, media opportunities, sponsorships, co-branded initiatives and regional profiles on Move To More, our national campaign
- And much more.

[FIND OUT MORE](#)



## REGIONAL AUSTRALIA COUNCIL



# REGIONAL ACTIVATORS ALLIANCE



## REGIONAL ACTIVATORS ALLIANCE



# REGIONAL AUSTRALIA COUNCIL ASSOCIATE



## REGIONAL AUSTRALIA COUNCIL ASSOCIATE





# UPCOMING EVENTS

**07/13  
NOV**

2024

🌐 Virtual

Other dates  
available

## Building the Future with your Community – Elected Members

As an Elected member, you play a key role in shaping regional improvement and the vitality of your community. The Regional Australia Institute are presenting a series of highly practical, online workshops designed to support you to empower thriving communities.

**FIND OUT MORE**

**12  
NOV**

2024

📍 Adelaide  
Hybrid

## Regional Research Insights Forum – Adelaide

Designed to enhance the regional understanding of decision-makers and policy practitioners, this **free-to-attend** research forum will explore the RAI's latest research on the net zero transition, regional labour markets, and the circular economy to help inform positive policy solutions for the regions.

**REGISTER NOW**

**01  
DEC**

2024

📍 Mandurah  
In-person

## Regions Leading Their Own Development WA – Executive Program

Join us to grow your impact, influence and performance in regional systems development and innovation. This exclusive program for CEOs and senior executives will help you drive serious, sustainable change in Australia's regions while building a cross-sectoral network of senior regional leaders.

**FIND OUT MORE**

**05  
DEC**

2024

📍 Perth  
Hybrid

## Regional Research Insights Forum – Perth

Designed to enhance the regional understanding of decision-makers and policy practitioners, this **free-to-attend** research forum will explore the RAI's latest research on regional vulnerability in the net zero transition and regional labour markets to help inform positive policy solutions for the regions.

**REGISTER NOW**

## CONTACT US

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