



**Victorian
Municipal Building
Surveyors Group** INC
Safety • Integrity • Advocacy



Conference Program

VMBSG 2026 Annual State Conference

15 - 16 October 2026 | Held in Yarrowonga

Judgement Calls in Complex Building Issues:

*Navigating constraints,
existing conditions and
competing priorities*



Contents (Tap to jump to section)

General Information

Program

Meet the Speakers

Our Sponsors

Charities

Program Welcome

It is a great privilege to welcome you to the VMBSG 2026 Annual State Conference in Yarrawonga-Mulwala, and particularly so as I write my first conference welcome as President of the VMBSG.

Our annual conference has always been an important opportunity for building surveyors/inspectors, regulators, government and industry to come together, share knowledge and learn from one another. It also gives us the opportunity to step away from the demands of our day-to-day roles and consider some of the broader challenges facing our profession.

This year's theme - **Judgement Calls in Complex Building Issues: Navigating constraints, existing conditions and competing priorities** - goes to the heart of building surveying.

Our work rarely involves simply finding a provision and applying it in isolation. We are regularly required to deal with existing buildings, incomplete information, competing risks and objectives, and the interaction between legislation, the NCC, Australian Standards and real-world conditions. In those circumstances, technical knowledge is essential, but so too are professional judgement, experience, communication and an ability to make balanced and defensible decisions.

The program this year has been developed with that reality in mind. Across the two days we will explore practical case studies and complex issues including risk management, performance solutions, legal considerations, waterproofing, and the challenges associated with water-damaged buildings. Importantly, the conference is also designed to encourage discussion. There is enormous experience within our profession, and some of the most valuable learning comes from hearing how others have approached the same difficult problems.

That sharing of knowledge is also central to the role of the VMBSG. Our organisation is at its strongest when municipal building surveyors and the broader building control profession are connected, willing to exchange ideas and able to contribute collectively to the issues affecting our industry.

I would like to sincerely thank our presenters, sponsors and industry partners for supporting this year's conference. Their contribution allows VMBSG to continue delivering high-quality professional development and creating opportunities for our members and the wider profession to connect.

I also want to acknowledge the VMBSG Committee of Management and everyone who contributes their time and expertise to the organisation throughout the year. VMBSG relies heavily on the commitment of people who volunteer their time for the benefit of the profession, and I am extremely grateful for their contribution.

Finally, thank you to everyone attending this year's conference. I encourage you to participate in the discussions, challenge ideas, ask questions and share your own experiences. Just as importantly, take the opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and establish new relationships. The conversations that happen outside the formal program are often every bit as valuable as those that happen within it.

I hope you find the next two days practical, thought-provoking and enjoyable, and I look forward to meeting and speaking with many of you throughout the conference.

James Cox, VMBSG President

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.

united BUILDING CONSULTANTS

United Building Consultants is an independent consulting firm providing specialist Building Surveying services across Australia's property and construction industry.

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- Building Appeals Board Applications
- ESM Maintenance Schedules
- Resolution of Building Notices
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"It is our job to allow the Architect's vision to be realised, with compliance complementing that vision, rather than impeding it."

Euan Morrison, Principal



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General Information

Registrations and Name Tags

All delegates are required to sign in when they arrive at the Conference. Please visit the registration table on arrival to sign in and collect any event information.

VMBSG members are asked to use their VMBSG member card as their name tag for the day.

Non-VMBSG members will be provided with a name tag at the registration table.

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

Attendance and Certificates

At the conclusion of the Conference, a QR code will be made available for delegates to scan before leaving. Please make sure you scan the QR code at the end of the day, as this will confirm your attendance and allow us to prepare certificates of attendance for those who request one.

If you need to leave before the end of the Conference, please scan the QR code at the registration table before you depart. This will help us record which sessions you attended so that we can prepare an accurate certificate of attendance, if requested.

Certificates for CPD purposes will be made available to delegates based on confirmed attendance.

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 can 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 will be present at the Conference in the dining area. These stalls will be open during break times.

Courtesy Bus

Yarrawonga Golf Club Resort operate a free shuttle service which can transport delegates between their accommodation and the conference venue if required. Please book this at the Golf Club Resort reception.

Conference Dinner

Included in your Conference registration is 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 (golf)

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 16 October, with tee-off at 7am sharp - late comers may miss out. This activity shall take approximately 5 hours, and a drinks cart, thanks to Damien Wadsworth & Associates, 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 pleased and proud to be 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.



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Scan the QR code
to learn more.

Conference Program

Judgement Calls in Complex Building Issues: Navigating constraints, existing conditions and competing priorities

Conference Host: Maryanna Grzan

Thursday 15 October

Time	Presenter
8.00am	Registration and Coffee
8:30am	Welcome: James Cox, President VMBSG Inc.
	Opening address: Todd Bentley, Building & Plumbing Commission, Chief Strategy Officer & Joint Executive Lead Regulatory Operations <i>Topic: Building Industry Reform Update</i>
	Steven Baxas, State Building Surveyor <i>Topic: OSBS update and current building inspection practices</i>
	Gene Isaacs, e-Vis <i>Topic: Greenlight in Five: Smarter Digital Regulation for Local Government</i>
	James Cox <i>Topic: Risk-Based Enforcement: From Triage to Action</i>
	John Anagianis Award
11.05am	Morning tea (Sponsor: Government Shared Services)
	Keynote speaker: Dr Nicole Bijlsma, Building Biology <i>Topic: Water-Damaged Buildings: Opportunities and Ramifications for Building Surveyors</i>
12:50pm	Lunch

	Anita Dorfer-Mehanic, Elizabeth Flanagan, Leanne Wilson, Suada Ramic, VMBSG Women's Network <i>Topic: Topic: VMBSG Women's Network: Support. Connect. Lead. The Women's Network in Their Words</i>
	Presenter: Paul Horton <i>Topic: Fire Safety in Focus: Lessons from Operation Eclipse and Supporting ESM Compliance</i>
	Presenter: Kim Lovegrove and Ziggy Lovegrove <i>Topic: Victoria's Building Act and the IBQC Model Building Act: What Remains Contemporary and What Could be Reformed to Accord with International Best Practice</i>
3:10pm	Afternoon Tea (Sponsor: Ryt Business Solutions)
	Jordan Bartlett <i>Topic: Design of Non-Structural Elements Seismic & Wind, and the IL4 Special Study</i>
	Russell Kennedy (VMBSG Platinum Partner) <i>Topic: Legal Lens on Judgement Calls</i>
	Panel Discussion: When Disaster Strikes: The Building Surveyor's Role in Emergency Response Moderator: Brett Turner Panellists: Chris Watson, Barry Nicholl, Leanne Platt, Chris Dal Santo
	Maryanna - Door prize - Summary, overview, and close - Scan QR code for CPD points
5:15pm	Round of drinks at the bar with thanks to Damien Wadsworth & Associates
7:00pm	Conference dinner

Friday 16 October

Time	Presenter
6:30am	Registrations for networking / golf
6:00am - 8:30am	Breakfast
7:00am – 12.00pm	Outdoor networking activity - GOLF (Sponsor: Russell Kennedy) - Drinks cart on the course (beer, wine, soft drink, water) – sponsored by Damien Wadsworth & Associates
9:00am	Q&A Session Elizabeth Flanagan and Daniel Silfo, Principals Russell Kennedy (VMBSG Platinum Alliance Partner) <i>Topic: Managing Dangers Across Boundaries: Enforcement and Non-Compliance Issues Affecting Multiple Properties</i>
11:30am onwards	BBQ Lunch / Networking

The VMBSG Annual State Conference 2026

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ASA

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ASA Building Consultants

Established in 2003, ASA Building Consultants provides comprehensive building surveying and consultancy services across metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria.

Our expertise includes building permits, mandatory inspections, authority liaison, pre-development advice and practical guidance on building compliance. We work across residential, commercial, industrial, fit-out and government projects, supporting clients from initial advice through to completion.

We also offer specialist services, including Regulation 231 subdivision reports, pool barrier inspections, protection works advice, performance solutions and independent compliance assessments.

Building Notice resolution is an important part of our consultancy work. We assist owners and their consultants to understand the matters raised, assess existing conditions and develop practical pathways to compliance. By working collaboratively with councils, designers, engineers and contractors, we help identify solutions and progress matters towards resolution.

With more than two decades of experience, ASA has built a reputation for professional, reliable service. Our **six building surveyors and inspectors** are supported by a dedicated **customer service and administration team**, who keep enquiries, bookings and day-to-day processes running smoothly. Together, we bring technical expertise, clear communication and practical support to both straightforward projects and complex building matters.

As Gold Sponsor of this year's VMBSG Annual State Conference, ASA is proud to support the municipal building surveying profession and strengthen collaboration between private practitioners and councils.

We welcome enquiries and referrals from councils for owners requiring independent building surveying advice or assistance with resolving compliance issues. We also welcome discussions with council's requiring additional building surveying, inspection or technical consultancy support.

ASA — practical advice, collaborative solutions.

- ✓ **20+ years' experience** in building surveying
- ✓ **Six building surveyors and inspectors** — experienced, professional and reliable
- ✓ **Fast and reliable permit approvals**
- ✓ **Building Notice resolution** — practical compliance pathways
- ✓ **Collaborative approach** — working with councils and project teams
- ✓ **Specialist services** — subdivision reports, pool barrier checks and protection works resolution
- ✓ **All project types** — residential, commercial, industrial, government and regional

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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

Dr Todd Bentley

Chief Strategy Officer and Joint Executive Lead Regulatory Operations, Building and Plumbing Commission

Todd leads the Strategy and Assurance team and has been responsible for leading the establishment of the Building and Plumbing Commission. Todd's role and function seeks to facilitate the understanding of the BPC's strategic objectives, associated risks, and how to best leverage their resources to achieve positive outcomes for Victorian Consumers. Todd is Joint Executive Lead for the Regulatory Operations Office (with John Sullivan). Todd's areas include Compliance and Enforcement, Inspectorate and Regulatory Intelligence.

Prior to joining the BPC, Todd was a senior executive and industry leader in the Australian rail industry in the areas of assurance, governance, safety, engineering, and systems design and thinking. Todd has a PhD in Human Factors, is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and is a Certified Professional Ergonomist.



Opening Address:

Building Industry Reform Update

Todd will give an update on the programme of reforms underway at the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) and highlight opportunities for cooperation between the BPC and Council Municipal Building Surveyors as co-regulatory partners.



Meet the Speakers

Steven Baxas

State Building Surveyor | Office of the 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: OSBS update and current building inspection practices

Steven will provide an update on activities in the Office of the State Building Surveyor over the past year and discuss current building inspection practices, emerging regulatory concerns and the role of data-informed oversight in strengthening consistency, compliance and public safety.

Particular focus will be given to in situ concrete inspections, industry feedback on existing guidance, and the appropriate exercise of professional judgement by building surveyors.

Office of the
State Building Surveyor

Meet the Speakers



Gene Isaacs

e-VIs

Gene Isaacs has more than 24 years of experience delivering complex digital projects across organisations including Accenture Consulting, Oracle, Salesforce, Telstra and TechnologyOne.

His focus is on helping clients get real value from technology by understanding their challenges, building a strong case for investment and delivering practical outcomes that matter.

At E-VIS, Gene works closely with councils to improve the digital experience for customers, employees and trusted partners, with a particular focus on making council processes more efficient, connected and easier to navigate.

Topic: Greenlight in Five: Smarter Digital Regulation for Local Government

In this quick five-minute introduction, **Gene Isaacs from E-VIS** will give delegates a snapshot of Greenlight and how it can help councils make regulatory processes simpler, more connected and easier to manage.

Gene will touch on how Greenlight supports areas such as Building, Planning, Infringements, Asset Protection, Environmental Health and Council Registers, with a focus on reducing manual administration and improving the experience for council staff, customers and other people involved in the process.

It's only a brief introduction, so if something sparks your interest, **catch up with Gene and Amit during the conference**. They'll be happy to show you more, answer questions and talk through how Greenlight might work for your council.



Meet the Speakers

James Cox

Municipal Building Surveyor,
City of Melbourne.

President, Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group

James Cox is the Municipal Building Surveyor for the City of Melbourne and President of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group.

With extensive experience across both the public and private sectors, James has worked in private building surveying with a focus on Class 2–9 buildings and has held senior roles at the Victorian Building Authority, including Senior Technical Advisor and Registrar to the Building Appeals Board.

James is also a current member of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee, where he contributes to policy development and regulatory reform across the sector. Through his work with VMBSG, he continues to advocate for strong professional standards, practical regulatory outcomes and the important role of municipal building surveying in Victoria.



Topic: Risk-Based Enforcement: From Triage to Action

Municipal Building Surveyors routinely need to prioritise competing compliance and enforcement matters, often with limited resources and incomplete information. This interactive workshop explores practical risk-based approaches to ESM and general building enforcement through realistic scenarios, group decision-making and practical assessment tools.

Participants will assess risk, prioritise responses and consider appropriate regulatory interventions while comparing how professional judgement can lead to different, defensible outcomes.



CITY OF MELBOURNE



Meet the Keynote Speaker

Dr Nicole Bijlsma
PhD, ND, BHScAc(HONS),
Grad Dip OHS, Adv. Dip.
Building Biology

Dr Nicole Bijlsma is a building biologist, bestselling author of *Healthy Home Healthy Family*, and founder of the Healthy Home (Building Biology) movement in Australia.

She established the Australian College of Environmental Studies in 1999 - a Registered Training Organisation delivering the nation's only accredited training in Electromagnetic Field Testing and Mould Testing, through which she has trained more than 400 restorers and tradespersons.

Nicole co-authored the RACV insurer report *The Perfect Storm: Implications of Mould in Australian Homes*, and served as a committee member for the development of Australia's first national Standard on mould. She was also the lead author of the first randomised controlled trial investigating the effects of Wi-Fi exposure on sleep in real-world conditions.

With over 30 years of tertiary teaching experience and numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals, Nicole is a respected authority on environmental health. She is regularly consulted by the media and lectures nationally and internationally on the health impacts of mould, electromagnetic fields, and toxic chemicals.

PRESENTATION TOPIC

Water-Damaged Buildings: Opportunities and Ramifications for Building Surveyors

Water damage remains one of the most frequent and costly building defects in Australia, often leading to disputes, structural degradation, and occupant health issues. This presentation explores the technical, and professional implications of water intrusion and mould growth for building surveyors.

It will examine common construction failures contributing to water damage, highlight current standards and inspection protocols, and outline how surveyors can identify risks early, document evidence effectively, and work alongside remediation professionals to ensure compliance and occupant safety.

The session will also discuss future opportunities for surveyors to expand their scope of services through preventative auditing, post-remediation verification, and collaboration with environmental health experts.

Meet the Speakers

VMBSG Women's Network

Anita Dorfer-Mehanic

Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor,
City of Melbourne

Anita Dorfer-Mehanic is the Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor at the City of Melbourne, with over 22 years of experience in building surveying across private practice and all levels of government - Local, State and Federal.

She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Building Surveying, a Certificate in Performance-Based Building and Fire Codes and a TAE40116 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment.

As a registered Building Surveyor Unlimited, Anita brings extensive expertise in enforcement and municipal building control.

She is deeply committed to the safety of building occupants, the public and emergency services personnel, and plays an active role in shaping industry standards.

Anita is an Accredited Member of the Institute Australian Building Surveyors, a Committee Member of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group and a Committee Member of the Building Regulations Advisory Committee - nominated by the Municipal Association of Victoria and appointed by the Minister for Planning.



Topic: Support. Connect. Lead. The Women's Network in Their Words

What does the VMBSG Women's Network mean to the people who take part? This year, we're handing over the microphone. Hear directly from members about the connections made, practical knowledge gained and professional support they've experienced through the Network in 2026. We'll also take a brief look back at the year's highlights before celebrating two outstanding members of our profession through the 2026 VMBSG Women's Network Awards.



Meet the Speakers

VMBSG Women's Network

Elizabeth Flanagan

Partner, Russell Kennedy

Elizabeth is a Partner 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. She has experience in prosecution, enforcement and compliance for the Building Act, Planning & Environment Act, Public Health and Wellbeing Act, Domestic Animals Act and local laws.

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

VMBSG Women's Network

Leanne Wilson

Municipal Building Surveyor, City of Maroondah

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.



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Meet the Speakers

VMBSG Women's Network

Suada Ramic

Suada Ramic holds a degree in Building Surveying and has been a registered Building Practitioner (BS-U) for over 25 years. Throughout her career, she has worked across local government and the Victorian Building Authority, developing extensive expertise in regulatory compliance, statutory enforcement, building control, and municipal building surveying.

In 2013, Suada became the first woman in Victoria to be appointed as a Municipal Building Surveyor when she took on the role at the City of Ballarat. She currently works at Surf Coast Shire Council as Coordinator Building Services and Municipal Building Surveyor, leading the delivery of building regulatory services and community safety initiatives.

Passionate about advancing the building surveying profession, Suada is an active committee member of the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Group (VMBSG) and the VMBSG Women's Network. She is committed to supporting professional development, fostering leadership, and encouraging greater participation of women within the building surveying profession.



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Meet the Speakers

Paul Horton

Commander, Building Inspection & Compliance, Fire Rescue Victoria

Paul commenced his Fire Service career in September 1987. Working at various stations in outer Melbourne he took a regional role in June 1995 on promotion that broadened his vision of Community and the impacts of unplanned fire.

His career has allowed him knowledge of major infrastructure (Latrobe Valley power stations), significant tourist locations such as Victoria's Alpine resorts, significant infrastructure through trains, tunnels, and the ongoing urbanisation of the state.

Paul currently leads the Building Inspection and Compliance Unit (BICU) team at Fire Rescue Victoria. As the Commander he is responsible for the coordination of legislative requirements for existing buildings and the safety of the occupants and responding crews.

Now into a journey of 39 years Paul is a Graduate of the Institute of Fire Engineers, former member of Victorian Association of Fire Investigators, is a 40 year life member of CFA, received commendations for rescues and work in the Alpine areas and is a current Rotarian supporting engagement and sustainability.

Paul is married to Amy and has two adult children each with significant others. The family loves to travel locally and globally and enjoys the experiences travel and exploring new things brings.



Topic: What happens when fire safety compliance is tested in the real world?

Drawing on **Operation Eclipse**, this presentation examines the recurring compliance issues identified through FRV inspections of licensed premises across Victoria, including missing occupancy permits, compromised fire-rated construction, blocked exits, inadequate emergency lighting and poor understanding of fire safety responsibilities. Paul will also look at the role of Municipal and Relevant Building Surveyors, opportunities for stronger industry collaboration, and how improved Essential Safety Measure compliance can support safer buildings, better enforcement and improved outcomes for occupants and emergency responders.



Meet the Speakers



Adjunct Professor Kim Lovegrove, HonD.Litt (WSU), FRSN, MSE, RML

Lovegrove & Cotton

Kim is the founding Chair of the International Building Quality Centre and founder of Lovegrove & Cotton.

He is an internationally recognized construction lawyer and law reformer with nearly four decades of experience in the development of building regulation.

He led the development of Australia's National Model Building Act and played a principal role in developing and implementing Victoria's Building Act 1993.

A former senior World Bank law-reform consultant, he has undertaken regulatory reform deployments in India, China, Malawi and Malaysia and participated twice in Japanese Government law-reform think tanks. He prepared the drafting instructions for the IBQC International Model Building Act and continues to advise on international best-practice building regulatory systems.

Topic: Victoria's Building Act and the IBQC Model Building Act: What Remains Contemporary and What Could be Reformed to Accord with International Best Practice

We will compare Victoria's Building Act 1993 with the IBQC International Model Building Act, identifying where the Victorian framework remains contemporary, where it is being left behind and which features of the Model Act could inform future Victorian reforms.

The presentation will also address the need to reform the National Construction Code and recast it as a genuinely risk-based building code, so that regulatory scrutiny, inspection regimes and compliance requirements are better calibrated to a building's risk profile and the consequences of failure.

The discussion will draw on our work with the IBQC and our international experience, including World Bank building-law reform deployments in China and separate engagements with Japanese government think tanks - all of which focused on international best-practice approaches to the design of building regulatory ecosystems.



Meet the Speakers



Ziggy Lovegrove Tsigereda ("Ziggy") Lovegrove, LLB, Adjunct Fellow (SCU)

Lovegrove & Cotton

Ziggy is a construction and planning lawyer and senior practice executive at Lovegrove & Cotton.

She is a Board Member of the International Building Quality Centre and an Adjunct Fellow at Southern Cross University.

Her practice focuses on building disputes, regulatory compliance, practitioner disciplinary matters, cladding litigation and planning law.

She has contributed to IBQC initiatives concerning inspection protocols, dispute resolution, and regulatory frameworks for emerging economies.

Her work promotes practitioner accountability and international best-practice approaches to modern building regulation. She was part of the Lovegrove and Cotton law reform team that advised the NZ government on liability and insurance law reform to the NZ Building Act.

Topic: Victoria's Building Act and the IBQC Model Building Act: What Remains Contemporary and What Could be Reformed to Accord with International Best Practice

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Meet the Speakers



Jordan Bartlett

Resilience Planner – Natural Hazards, Proactive Design

Jordan specialises in capturing post-disaster functions of critical infrastructure and converting them into resilience measures for natural hazard events. Jordan consults with government, engineers, architects, and project delivery teams across Australia & New Zealand and curates industry guidance from standards, technical societies, and conferences.

Topic: Design of Non-Structural Elements Seismic & Wind, and the IL4 Special Study

If the building is still standing after an earthquake or major wind event, will everything inside it still be safe and operational?

This presentation takes a practical look at the seismic and wind design of non-structural elements, including building services, equipment, ceilings and architectural components, and the requirements of AS 1170.4 and AS/NZS 1170.2. Jordan will also explore the often-overlooked IL4 Special Study, including critical functions, performance objectives, resilience and the requirement for essential facilities to remain operational for immediate use following a major event.

**proactive
design**
think. change.



Meet the Speakers



Elizabeth Flanagan

Partner, Russell Kennedy

Elizabeth is a Partner 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. She has experience in prosecution, enforcement and compliance for the Building Act, Planning & Environment Act, Public Health and Wellbeing Act, Domestic Animals Act and local laws.

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.



Thursday Topic: Legal Lens on Judgement Calls

Building regulatory decisions often involve more than technical and legislative considerations. Complaints, political escalation, competing stakeholder expectations and time pressures can all add complexity to already difficult judgement calls.

This session will explore the legal lens behind those decisions, with a focus on managing liability, record-keeping, natural justice and sound decision-making processes. Practical examples will highlight how clear reasoning, good documentation and fair process can help ensure decisions remain lawful, defensible and capable of standing up to scrutiny.

Friday Topic: Managing Dangers Across Boundaries: Enforcement and Non-Compliance Issues Affecting Multiple Properties

This practical workshop will examine how municipal building surveyors can navigate complex situations under the Building Act 1993 (Vic) when ownership, responsibility and risk are disputed. The session will explore common enforcement challenges, including determining the appropriate recipient of enforcement action, managing competing expert opinions, coordinating outcomes between multiple owners and responding to situations where civil disputes intersect with Council's safety obligations.

Drawing on recent practical examples, the workshop will focus on developing defensible enforcement strategies, identifying when intervention is appropriate and managing risks where immediate safety concerns remain unresolved.

Meet the Speakers



Daniel Silfo

Partner, Russell Kennedy

Daniel is a Partner at Russell Kennedy and 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) (the peak association of municipal building surveyors encompassing nearly all Councils in Victoria).



Thursday Topic: Legal Lens on Judgement Calls

Building regulatory decisions often involve more than technical and legislative considerations. Complaints, political escalation, competing stakeholder expectations and time pressures can all add complexity to already difficult judgement calls.

This session will explore the legal lens behind those decisions, with a focus on managing liability, record-keeping, natural justice and sound decision-making processes. Practical examples will highlight how clear reasoning, good documentation and fair process can help ensure decisions remain lawful, defensible and capable of standing up to scrutiny.

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Meet the Speakers

Panel Discussion and Q&A



Brett Turner

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 was awarded the title of Fellow.

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, before becoming the MBS at Bayside City Council, where he is currently employed.



Panel Discussion and Q&A

When Disaster Strikes: The Building Surveyor's Role in Emergency Response

Major emergencies can place enormous pressure on affected councils and quickly push building surveying teams well beyond business as usual. This panel will draw on firsthand experience from major Victorian bushfire events to explore how resources are mobilised, how councils and other agencies work together, and the practical challenges faced on the ground.

The discussion will also consider how emergency response has evolved over time, comparing experiences from earlier events such as Ash Wednesday and Black Saturday with more recent bushfires, and sharing practical lessons that can help Municipal Building Surveyors and councils prepare for the next major emergency.

The panel will be facilitated by Brett Turner, who will guide the discussion and invite panellists to share their experiences and perspectives.

Meet the Speakers

Panel Discussion and Q&A

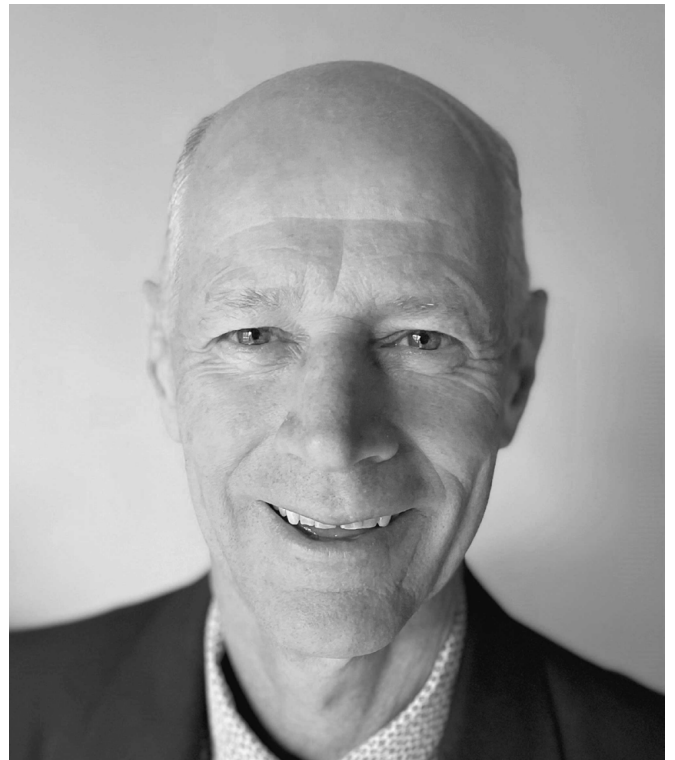
Chris Watson

Chris Watson is a retired Municipal Building Surveyor (MBS) with more than 32 years of experience in local government, having served with both Latrobe City Council and East Gippsland Shire Council.

Chris was initially appointed as a Municipal Building Surveyor in April 1993 and subsequently led teams of building surveyors, interns, enforcement officers and administrative staff. Throughout his career, he was responsible for delivering proactive, responsive and effective statutory building surveying services across major regional and remote municipalities.

Chris holds tertiary qualifications in Building Surveying and Fire Engineering, in addition to completing a trade apprenticeship. His extensive professional experience combines technical expertise, regulatory knowledge and practical understanding of building construction and compliance.

He remains passionate about rural and regional building control, mentoring the next generation of building professionals and contributing to the development of robust and effective building control systems, despite having retired from local government.



Chris has also played an active role in disaster recovery and response following bushfires, earthquakes, storms, floods, land slips and mine collapses. He represented the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) as an expert witness before the Royal Commission into the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires and has contributed to a number of professional subcommittees throughout his career.

Meet the Speakers

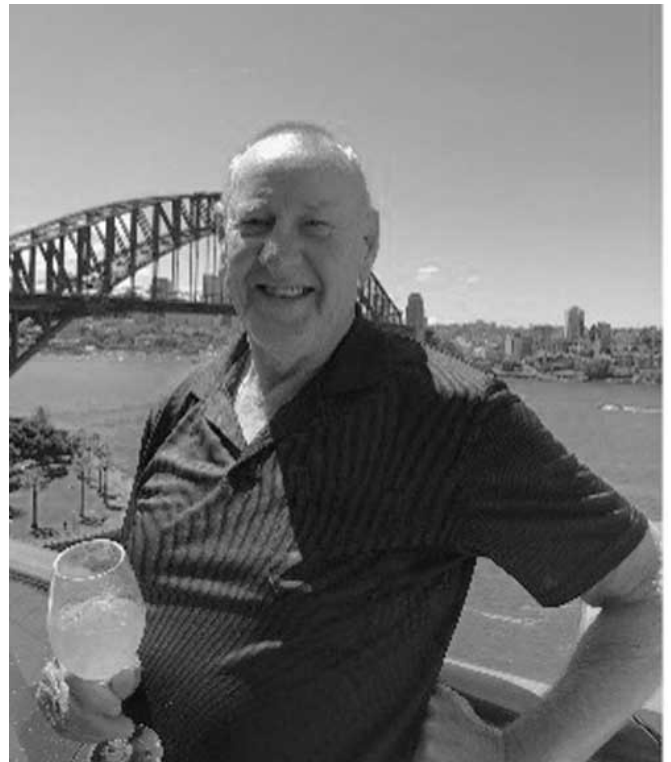
Panel Discussion and Q&A

Barry Nicholl

Barry Nicholl commenced his career in the building industry in 1966 as an apprentice carpenter. By the age of 22, he had purchased the building company he had been working with and continued building his experience within the industry.

In 1987, Barry moved into local government, taking on a position as an unqualified Building Inspector. The following year, he was granted Ministerial approval as a Building Inspector and continued his studies at Monash University, graduating with an Engineering degree in 1992 and obtaining his qualifications as a Building Surveyor that same year.

Barry was subsequently appointed Municipal Building Surveyor with the newly formed Wellington Shire. His career also included six years with Monash Council as Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor and four years with Mitchell Shire as Municipal Building Surveyor.



He later returned to Wellington Shire, where he was again appointed Municipal Building Surveyor and remained in the role until his retirement on 17 September 2026.

Barry's career spans six decades across building, engineering, building surveying and local government, with extensive experience in municipal building regulation and enforcement.

Meet the Speakers

Panel Discussion and Q&A

Leanne Platt

Leanne brings extensive experience in supporting councils and building practitioners across Victoria and will provide an important sector-wide perspective on current issues and future directions.

She has spent her career in the building industry, with more than two decades in Local Government, 11 years as a private Building Surveyor and three years as a Project Manager in residential construction.

Leanne has been involved in bushfire, earthquake, storm, flood, and land slip disaster recovery in both a private and council capacity. She worked with owners and communities after the 2009 Black Saturday fires and has undertaken secondary impact assessments for the 2019 Mornington Peninsula storms, 2019 Bunyip Fires and 2020 East Gippsland Fires.

Before joining the Office of the State Building Surveyor, she spent almost seven years as Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor at the City of Casey. Since November 2025, Leanne has been Manager Council Support, leading the team in supporting Municipal Building Surveyors and councils in the delivery of building control functions across Victoria.



Meet the Speakers

Panel Discussion and Q&A

Chris Dal Santo

Chris commenced his career in local government building surveying in 2011 as a Cadet Building Surveyor with Wyndham City Council. In 2018, he joined Nillumbik Shire Council as a Building Inspector, progressing through the roles of Senior Building Inspector and Deputy Municipal Building Surveyor. In 2024, Chris moved to the City of Whittlesea as a Senior Building Surveyor before commencing his current role as Coordinator Building Services at Murrindindi Shire Council in February 2026.

Prior to entering the building surveying profession, Chris worked as a carpenter, providing him with practical industry experience that complements his regulatory and compliance expertise.

Chris has also contributed to emergency management operations, serving within the Secondary Impact Assessment (SIA) team during the 2020 East Gippsland bushfire recovery effort and more recently at the Longwood Fire Complex in 2026.

This combination of practical construction knowledge, regulatory experience, and emergency management involvement has provided Chris with a broad understanding of the building industry and local government service delivery.



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Russell Kennedy

Russell Kennedy is a leader in the local government sector. Our reputation is for delivering practical, cost-effective legal outcomes and developing long-term partnerships with our council clients. In fact, in the last three years alone, we've worked with 74 of the 79 Victorian councils.

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.

With over 150 lawyers, we can bring together the various legal disciplines necessary to deal with the many and unique legal issues faced by councils – from small matters to major or complex projects. All sourced from within Russell Kennedy, efficiently and cost-effectively.

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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Damien Wadsworth & Associates

At the heart of Damien Wadsworth & Associates (DW&A) is a depth of building surveying experience and an understanding that navigating the building regulatory system often requires more than simply knowing the rules.

Director **Damien Wadsworth** has more than 25 years' experience as a building surveyor across both local government and private practice. A Swinburne University graduate, Damien spent a decade working within local government, including four years as a Municipal Building Surveyor, before establishing Damien Wadsworth & Associates in 2021. His experience spans residential, commercial and industrial projects and provides the practice with a strong understanding of both regulatory requirements and council processes.

Andrew Bennett, Building Surveyor, is also an integral part of the DW&A team, contributing to the firm's building approval, certification and compliance work.

From its Footscray base, DW&A provides building approvals and certification together with specialist assistance in the resolution of building notices and orders, with an emphasis on practical advice, responsive service and keeping clients informed throughout the process.

As a **VMBSG Gold Partner**, Damien Wadsworth & Associates is proud to support the professional development, connection and ongoing work of Victoria's municipal building surveying community.

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ASA Building Consultants

ASA Building Consultants is an established building surveying and consultancy practice providing advice, solutions and permits across a broad range of building projects. Founded in 2003 by directors Sam Loizou and Arthur Liacopoulos, ASA has built its reputation on practical problem-solving, clear regulatory advice and a strong commitment to achieving compliant outcomes without compromising safety.

The ASA team includes qualified building surveyors, registered building inspectors and professionals with experience across performance-based building surveying and civil engineering. Its services extend well beyond building permits and include building inspections, occupancy permits, preliminary building consultancy, regulatory advice, certification of works carried out without a permit, fire safety engineering reviews, expert witness reports and planning support.

ASA works with building owners, builders, developers, architects, designers and government bodies, and is registered and licensed to provide services in Victoria, Queensland and the ACT. The practice places a strong emphasis on risk mitigation, efficient service and finding practical solutions to complex building and compliance issues.

ASA Building Consultants is proud to support the **2026 VMBSG Annual State Conference as a Gold Sponsor** and to continue its contribution to Victoria's building surveying profession.

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Lovegrove & Cotton

Established in Melbourne in 1993, Lovegrove & Cotton is one of Australia's longest-standing construction and planning law firms, with more than three decades of experience across building regulation, law reform, practitioner advocacy and construction dispute resolution.

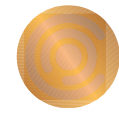
The firm has played a significant role in the development of building regulatory law in Australia. Founding principal Adjunct Professor Kim Lovegrove was the principal legal adviser to the Victorian Government on the development of the **Building Act 1993** and also directed the development of Australia's first National Model Building Act.

Today, under the leadership of Tsigereda Lovegrove and Justin Cotton, the firm continues to advise building surveyors, governments, statutory authorities, builders, engineers, architects and owners corporations across building regulation, planning law, practitioner advocacy, construction disputes and appellate matters.

Lovegrove & Cotton's expertise has also contributed to building regulatory reform internationally, including projects involving the World Bank and governments in New Zealand, Japan and Malawi.

Lovegrove & Cotton is honoured to support the Victorian Municipal Building Surveyors Conference and acknowledges the vital contribution municipal building surveyors make to public safety and Victoria's built environment.

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e-Vis / Greenlight

E-VIS is an Australian technology company specialising in digital transformation, regulatory workflow and compliance solutions for local government. Established in 2000, E-VIS develops cloud-based platforms that help councils modernise complex, high-volume regulatory services while improving efficiency, transparency and community outcomes.

Our flagship platform, Greenlight OPM, provides an integrated digital environment for Planning, Building, Infringements, Asset Protection, Environmental Health, Local Laws, Animal Registration and Council Registers. Greenlight combines configurable workflows, online self-service, integrations, mobile capability, reporting and automation to reduce manual administration and connect regulatory processes across council departments.

E-VIS's strategic objective is simple: use Greenlight to reduce administrative burden, protect scarce council workforce capacity and allow skilled employees to spend more time on statutory decision-making, compliance, development and community outcomes.

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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.

We focus on managing uncooperative or resistant property owners, including obtaining and executing search warrants. Our one-stop service includes drafting affidavits, securing the warrant in court, liaising with law enforcement, and collaborating with your team to execute warrants safely and effectively.

Our experienced team can also assist with complex enforcement cases and prepare robust evidence for prosecution or tribunal.

We also deliver highly regarded training for surveyors and inspectors on operational safety, conflict resolution, situational awareness, and evidence gathering.

"I came out of this training 100% more confident as a building inspector and regulator. Fantastic program—all of it."

—Training Participant, August 2026

Partner with Ryt Business Solutions to strengthen compliance, reduce risk, and ensure defensible, transparent enforcement.

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Smarterlite provides NCC-compliant photoluminescent exit signs, along with emergency wayfinding and safety signage for safer, more sustainable buildings. Australian-developed and backed by more than 17 years of research, our battery-free photoluminescent and hybrid LED solutions help building surveyors, certifiers and design professionals reduce energy consumption, carbon emissions, battery e-waste, maintenance requirements and lifecycle costs.

Meet the Smarterlite team at our stand to discuss solutions for projects where building safety, compliance and sustainability matter.



Weir Legal and Consulting

Weir Legal & Consulting is a nationally recognised boutique law firm specialising in regulatory, administrative, and government law. Based in Victoria, the firm acts for all three levels of government across Australia, with a strong reputation for expertise in building regulation and a growing portfolio across sectors such as health, education, water, and climate regulation.

Led by Managing Director Bronwyn Weir, alongside Special Counsels Krista Weymouth and Frances Hall, and supported by Administrative Assistant Victoria Whyte, the team is known for delivering pragmatic, clear, and thorough advice tailored to the unique needs of government clients.

Weir Legal & Consulting regularly develops and embeds risk-based decision-making frameworks, supports regulatory enforcement, and appears in courts and tribunals. The firm is a member of the Victorian State Government Legal Panel and the AHPRA Legal Panel, and is highly regarded for being reliable, easy to work with, and deeply aware of model litigant obligations and public sector context.

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United Building Consultants

United Building Consultants is an **independent Consultant Building Surveying** firm helping clients navigate complex regulatory environments, reduce risk and deliver better project outcomes.

We work as an extension of the design team, combining deep technical expertise with practical industry insight to provide clear, proactive and solutions-focused advice. From heritage redevelopments to major commercial, residential, education, health and public projects, our team has contributed to some of Victoria's most recognised developments and is trusted for its responsive, collaborative and detail-driven approach.

A key point of difference is our independence. We do not accept appointments as the Relevant Building Surveyor, allowing us to work exclusively as Consulting Building Surveyors and provide objective, conflict-free advice in accordance with the VBA Code of Conduct. **This means we can engage early, challenge assumptions, explore alternative compliance pathways and help resolve issues before they become costly problems.**

Our specialist services include Performance Solutions, Building Appeals Board applications, ESM Maintenance Schedules, resolution of Building Notices, existing building audits, subdivision reporting, expert witness services, and DDA access consulting.

At UBC, our focus is simple: add value, reduce risk, and help great design get built.



Maddocks Lawyers

Maddocks is a leading Australian law firm with a strong reputation for delivering high-quality legal services to government, corporate, and commercial clients. With offices in Melbourne, Sydney, and Canberra, the firm supports clients across a range of sectors including property, construction, government, health, education, and infrastructure.

Known for its deep industry knowledge and practical legal advice, Maddocks works closely with clients to help them navigate complex regulatory environments, manage risk, and achieve strategic outcomes. The firm has particular expertise in planning and environment law, procurement, governance, workplace relations, and major projects.

Maddocks is widely recognised for its work with all levels of government, providing trusted legal guidance on policy implementation, legislative interpretation, and compliance. Its commitment to building strong, long-term relationships and delivering tailored legal solutions has made Maddocks a trusted advisor to some of Australia's most significant public and private organisations.

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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.

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