

## **LGN Report 2024 in review**

**Prepared by Melanie Suitor, LGN Chair**



There are 615 local governments across Australia and New Zealand - 537 in Australia and 78 in New Zealand.

Collectively local government manages approximately 75% of the Australian road network and 88% of the New Zealand road network.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of fatalities and serious injuries that have occurred on local roads, especially in regional and remote areas.

The road safety work being undertaken by local governments is vast - covering not just road maintenance and infrastructure upgrades, but also education and engagement activities, fleet safety, land use planning and much more.

The formation of the Australasian College of Road Safety's Local Government Network - or the LGN, provides a fertile opportunity for knowledge sharing across jurisdictions and connects practitioners with people and ideas they may not have otherwise encountered.

We have an active committee comprised of local government practitioners from across Australia and New Zealand, who help to shape our various monthly events – webinars, information sessions, break-out meetings, pre-conference workshops and ask the brains-trust open mic events.

Since our inception in late 2022, the LGN has continued to grow, attract members and deliver high quality online monthly events. At the beginning of 2024 we had over 100 members, as of March 2025 we had over 300 members. We have delivered almost 30 events and had close to 2,000 people attend and engage in these events.

Our early webinars involved up to four speakers who are invited to present on projects and research related to local government road safety and focusing on a particular topic. In 2023 the LGN webinars focused on road safety strategic plans, award winning local government road safety projects, speed management for safety and Australia's National Road Safety Action Plan. The webinars were followed the next month by deep dive meetings where the topics covered during the webinar were discussed

in further detail, and where participants could select a discipline themed break-out room to have discussions with like-minded practitioners.

Following feedback from members, our focus for webinars during 2024 and 2025 has been to share case studies from local governments across Australia and New Zealand about their various road safety work. There are three speakers, and we have heard about: development planning, school safety programs, National Driver Fatigue Week, road safety policy and more.

We've also hosted some information session meetings - how to write an abstract for the Australasian Road Safety Conference, focus on Austroads and most recently we heard updates from ACRS, ALGA (Australian Local Government Association) and the Little Blue Dinosaur Foundation.

Open mic sessions provide an opportunity for members to pose questions to the group of participants about how to solve problems and address road safety challenges.

The LGN hosted a pre-conference workshop at the 2023 Australasian Road Safety Conference where invited participants included ALGA, the Australian Government's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Community and the Arts (DITRDCA) and Waka Kothai New Zealand Transport Agency. We also hosted an interactive pre-conference workshop at the 2024 conference that focused on land-use planning, behaviour change, strategic planning, what grids your gears, and attendees gave feedback about the future direction of the network.

Last year, the LGN Committee successfully submitted a poster abstract for the Australasian Road Safety Conference in Hobart, focusing on the success of the LGN. We delivered a three-minute oral presentation, and the poster was on display in the exhibition area. The poster was awarded both the people's choice and judge's award.

Last year, the LGN oversaw the Risk Assessment Framework Project. The framework will provide local governments with advice on how to develop network safety plans. The report is awaiting final sign off.

The diversity of local governments across New Zealand and Australia's states and territories provides a fertile opportunity for knowledge sharing across jurisdictions. The LGN offers members the opportunity to establish and build relationships with other road safety practitioners and hear ideas

from guest speakers that they may not have otherwise met, engaged with or heard about. However, a lack of coordination and awareness of the success being achieved elsewhere can be a significant barrier, resulting in efforts and discovery needlessly being duplicated in isolation.

As we continue to grow and offer practitioners a place where they can learn and find solutions, we encourage more local government staff to join and share their knowledge. This would then build upon the richness and robustness of the conversation about local road safety problems and how to achieve the 2030 and 2050 targets.

The LGN has already demonstrated in our short history that it is capable of informing and influencing practitioners across the broad spectrum of local governments, as well as higher levels of authority.

A big thank-you to the wonderful volunteer committee, especially those who have stepped down in the past two years:

- Lex Stokes
- Annie Peoples
- Phil Taylor
- Jacquie Haupt and
- Kate McDougall

Thanks to the outgoing committee:

- Adam Mularczyk
- David McTiernan
- Andrea Hamilton-Vaughan
- Katherine Celenza
- David Fulton
- Brett Williams
- Jeanine Foster
- Bruce Conaghan
- Alex Metric and

- Melanie Sutor

And thank-you to the members; whether you have presented a case study, asked a question, shared some advice or just dialed in and listened. It's been a very productive few years and I'm looking forward to seeing what's next for the LGN.

## NEW COMMITTEE

- Krishna Gautam
- David McTiernan
- Bruce Conaghan
- Andrea Hamilton-Vaughan
- Alex Metric
- Brett Williams
- David Fulton
- Katherine Celenza
- Adam Mularczyk
- and myself