

# 2026 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE FORUM



**Virtual Event**  
**10.00am – 2.05pm (ADST)**  
**Monday 19 & Tuesday 20 October 2026**

# Program Overview

The Institute of Internal Auditors-Australia is pleased to invite you and your colleagues to the 2026 Local Government Assurance Forum. This forum is a dedicated event for professionals working across internal audit, risk, governance, compliance and assurance, as well as Audit, Risk and Improvement Committee members, councillors and council executives. The forum will be delivered virtually across two interactive half-day sessions on 19-20 October 2026.

As local governments continue to navigate increasing complexity, from financial sustainability and service delivery pressures to climate resilience, digital transformation, AI adoption and evolving community expectations - the forum will bring together experienced practitioners and sector leaders to share practical insights, lessons learned and innovative approaches to strengthening governance, managing risk and delivering effective assurance.

Across the two days, delegates will explore real-world local government case studies, emerging risks, governance challenges and opportunities for improvement, while connecting with peers from councils across Australia. The virtual platform enables real-time engagement between delegates and speakers and attendees will also be able to revisit session content on-demand post-event.

Whether you are responsible for assurance, risk oversight, governance, compliance or strategic decision-making, this forum offers valuable perspectives to help build organisational resilience, enhance accountability and support better outcomes for the communities we serve.

We look forward to welcoming you online in October.

## Thank you to our Sponsors

### Principal Sponsor



### Major Sponsors



## Conference Program Day 1 - Monday, 19 October 2026

**10.00am – 10.10am**      **Welcome address and opening remarks**

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**10.10am – 10.55am**      **Keynote 1**

**Lessons in governance and assurance - Strengthening outcomes in complex capital projects**

- The governance and decision-making considerations that emerge across the lifecycle of complex capital projects, including balancing community expectations, financial stewardship and delivery realities
- The role of transparency, oversight and assurance in supporting informed decision-making and maintaining stakeholder confidence throughout delivery
- Observations on navigating challenges as they arise and the importance of organisational agility and leadership in responding constructively to evolving circumstances
- Key reflections and lessons learned that can inform stronger project governance, risk management and delivery outcomes in future initiatives

**Therese Cole, General Manager, North Sydney Council**

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**10.55am -11.05am**      **Session transition break**

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**11.05am – 11.50am**      **Concurrent sessions 1**

**1A Addressing climate risk through scenario planning in local government**

- Applying scenario planning to climate risk - How councils can model and test different climate scenarios to understand potential impacts on operations and service delivery
- Using scenario analysis to assess infrastructure vulnerability, asset lifecycle impacts and investment priorities
- Translating scenario insights into actionable response strategies, business continuity planning and disaster readiness
- Assurance over climate preparedness - Practicalities in validating scenario approaches and providing assurance over climate resilience and decision-making

**Pete Mercouriou, Senior Sustainability Officer, City of Greater Geelong**

**Carole Hammond, Executive Officer, Goulburn Murray Climate Alliance**

**Dr. Malcolm Johnson, Manager Environmental Sustainability, Huon Valley Council**

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**1B ARIC Effectiveness Reviews – Practical tips for assessing committee performance**

- What “Good” looks Like for ARICs - Key characteristics of an effective committee, including independence, oversight and alignment to governance expectations
- Conducting effective ARIC reviews - Practical approaches, methodologies and frameworks for assessing committee performance and value
- Common gaps and improvement opportunities - Typical issues identified in ARIC reviews, including role clarity, engagement and reporting effectiveness
- Practical tips and lessons learned - Insights and “what works” from real ARIC effectiveness reviews, including how to drive meaningful outcomes and improvement actions

**Tony Harb AMIIA, Director, InConsult**

## Conference Program Day 1 - Monday, 19 October 2026

**11.50am – 12.20pm** Lunch / Screen break and speed networking session

**12.20pm – 1.05pm** Concurrent sessions 2

**2A Operational audit case study – Community centres and halls**

- Governance and accountability – Assessing roles, responsibilities and oversight for the management and operation of community facilities
- Bookings, fees and access – Reviewing booking processes, fee structures, concessions, cash handling and equitable community access
- Safety, compliance and asset management – Providing assurance over WHS, accessibility, maintenance, inspections and regulatory obligations
- Lessons from the audit – Common control gaps, practical improvements and opportunities to strengthen efficiency, accountability and service delivery

**Alex Hardy PMIIA CIA GradCertIA, Director, Corporate Assurance, Prosperity Advisers**

**2B If a contractor was to fail: could Council still deliver?**

**Auditing third-party risk, service resilience and community outcomes**

- Examine the risk associated with overreliance on contractors, suppliers and shared service providers to deliver essential council services
- Identify hidden dependencies and resilience risks that can leave councils exposed when a provider fails (or has potential to)
- Explore practical lessons from real-world case studies where service disruptions affected community outcomes
- Learn how to apply audit frameworks and other guidance material for assessing resilience and the key questions ARICs should be asking to assess third-party risk, service continuity and organisational resilience

**Rhyan Stephens, Partner, McGrathNicol**

**Sean Wiles, Partner, McGrathNicol**

**David King, Director, McGrathNicol**

**1.05pm – 1.15pm** Session transition break

**1.15pm – 2.00pm** Concurrent sessions 3

**3A Business continuity and service prioritisation – Being ready for disruption**

- Reframing Business Continuity for real-world disruption - Moving beyond static BCPs to dynamic approaches that reflect evolving risks and operational realities
- Identifying and prioritising critical services - Practical approaches to determining which services must be maintained during disruption and the trade-offs required under resource constraints
- Learning from disruptions (case study) preparedness in managing shortages (e.g. people, product, services), including maintaining operations, reallocating resources and sustaining service delivery
- From response to long-term resilience - Embedding service prioritisation into planning, governance and decision-making to strengthen preparedness for future disruptions

**Lisa Hucker AMIIA, Acting Enterprise and Strategic Risk Team Leader, City of Melbourne**

**3B Measuring Shared Services performance – KPIs that drive accountability**

- Defining the KPIs that matter – Identifying meaningful performance measures that demonstrate service quality, efficiency, cost effectiveness and stakeholder value across shared service arrangements
- Aligning expectations across entities – Establishing common performance frameworks, service standards and accountability measures between Boards, CEOs, governing bodies and service providers
- Providing assurance over KPI reporting – Assessing the quality, consistency and integrity of performance data, including whether KPIs are accurately measured, reported and aligned to intended outcomes
- Using KPIs to drive accountability and improvement – Moving beyond reporting to ensure performance information drives better decisions and improvement across shared services functions

**Cr Brooke Patterson, Chair- Governance, Administration & Finance, Gold Coast City**

**2.00pm – 2.05pm** Closing remarks day 1



## Conference Program Day 2 – Tuesday, 20 October 2026

10.00am – 10.10am Opening remarks day 2

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10.10am – 10.55am Keynote 2

**AI Adoption in local government – From policy and controls to practical implementation**

- Essential ingredients of effective AI adoption - What councils need to incorporate into AI policies and governance models to provide clear direction, accountability and oversight
- Designing practical governance controls - Establishing clear guardrails around data security, human oversight, acceptable use and risk ownership
- From framework to implementation - Lessons learned from councils developing and embedding AI adoption, including common challenges and how to overcome them

**John Crawford, Chief Information Officer, Central Coast Council**

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10.55am -11.05am Session transition break

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11.05am – 11.50am Concurrent sessions 4

**4A Community engagement – Evaluating effectiveness and impact**

- Defining effective community engagement - What “good” looks like, including alignment to community needs, transparency and influence on decision-making
- Measuring engagement outcomes - Practical approaches to evaluating participation, reach and impact beyond attendance and consultation metrics
- Common challenges - Issues with consultation fatigue, limited feedback loops and difficulty demonstrating value and outcomes
- How internal audit can assess engagement frameworks, test effectiveness and provide assurance over governance and reporting

**Karen Litchfield PMIIA GradCertIA, Internal Auditor, Tamworth Regional Council**

**4B Assurance in digital transformation – Governing risk across the lifecycle**

- Understanding transformation risk and data complexity - Key risks in large-scale programs (e.g. TechOne), including legacy data challenges, data migration risks and compliance with privacy and GIPA requirements
- Governing data through transformation - Ensuring strong data governance frameworks, clear ownership and appropriate controls over information as systems evolve
- Practical approaches to identifying high-risk areas, including data integrity, system implementation, and end-to-end process impacts
- Strengthening oversight and outcomes - How internal audit can provide assurance over governance, monitor delivery risks and help ensure successful implementation and long-term value realisation

**Michael Turner, Chief Information Officer, Northern Beaches Council**

**Kelly Loveridge, Chief Operations Officer, Northern Beaches Council**

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## Conference Program Day 2 – Tuesday, 20 October 2026

11.50am – 12.20pm Lunch / Screen break and speed networking session

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12.20pm – 1.05pm Concurrent sessions 5

### 5A Fleet management – From operational insights to excellence

- Understanding fleet management risks - Key governance challenges in fleet environments, including inconsistent controls, limited visibility and unclear accountability
- Identifying gaps through operational reviews - Assessing fleet operations to uncover inefficiencies and highlight weaknesses across utilisation, maintenance and compliance
- From insights to action - Practical approaches to translating review findings into operational improvements, including strengthening policies, systems and performance monitoring
- Lessons from a fleet transformation case study - Real-world insights how operational findings were used to drive measurable improvements

**Mihnea Stanciuc, Coordinator Fleet, Hume City Council**

### 5B Privacy and information protection

- Understanding privacy and information protection obligations – Navigating legislative requirements and community expectations for safeguarding information
- Strengthening governance and accountability – Establishing clear ownership, oversight and frameworks to manage privacy and information protection risks
- Providing assurance over compliance and controls – Assessing privacy practices, information security controls, breach management and compliance across council projects and operations
- Lessons from the City of Sydney – Practical insights on building a privacy-aware culture, protecting information assets and managing evolving privacy risks

**Michael Smith, Manager Information Services, City of Sydney**

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1.05pm – 1.15pm Session transition break

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1.15pm – 2.00pm Keynote 3

### Financial recovery and turnaround in local government – Lessons from Cessnock Council

- Facing financial reality - Understanding the drivers of financial distress and the critical decisions required to stabilise financial position and regain control
- Leadership and governance through recovery - The role of strong leadership, governance frameworks and oversight in navigating financial turnaround and rebuilding organisational discipline
- Balancing recovery with service delivery - Maintaining essential services and community outcomes while implementing financial reforms and cost controls
- Rebuilding trust and long-term sustainability - Lessons learned in strengthening financial governance, improving transparency, as well as restoring confidence with stakeholders, regulators and the community

**Natalia Cowley, General Manager, Cessnock Council**

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2.00pm – 2.05pm Closing remarks

# How to register

## Online Registration

Register online at [www.iaa.org.au](http://www.iaa.org.au) and follow the prompts. Each delegate must complete a separate online registration form. Please note this is a secure website.

## Registration forms

If you require an invoice, registration forms can be scanned and emailed to [conferences@iaa.org.au](mailto:conferences@iaa.org.au). Please complete and return the registration form along with full payment. Each delegate must complete a separate registration form.

## Registration closing date and log-in details

IMPORTANT: Registrations will close at COB Tuesday, 13 October 2026.

For this event, IIA-Australia will be utilising a third-party virtual conference platform. Upon registering you will receive a confirmation email from IIA-Australia. On **Wednesday, 14 October 2026** you will receive an email with your log-in details to the event. All attendees registered will also have access to review sessions after the event.

## Conference fees

All fees are quoted in Australian Dollars and are inclusive of the 10% compulsory goods and services tax (GST). Group discount – 3 or more people from the same organization booking at the same time receive a 10%. Members of Lgian and CPN are eligible for a 10% discount. (only one discount applies)

## CPE

Attendance will provide 8 CPE hours.

## DEFINITIONS

The word ‘event’ refers to all our conferences, workshops, webinars, members meetings, professional development training courses, dinners and other networking occasions.

## INVOICING, PAYMENT & REGISTRATION

If an invoice is requested for an event, payment must be received within 14 days of the invoice date. The registration for events will not be processed until full payment is received. The registration fees includes certificate of attendance, lunch and morning and afternoon tea.

## CANCELLATION FEES

All cancellations must be notified in writing to IIA-Australia. No refunds will be given for non-attendance. The following cancellation fees apply:

- 14 days prior. A full refund is available
- 13 days to 7 days prior. A refund less an administration fee
- Less than 7 days prior – No refunds. Unless in the case of illness or an emergency (an administration fee will apply) or you can send a substitute delegate
- Administration fee conferences \$200
- Administration fee training courses \$100

## CANCELLATION BY IIA-AUSTRALIA

We reserve the right to alter published programs, speakers and venues without prior notice. However, events are intended to be provided as advertised. Professional development training courses are subject to sufficient participant numbers. If the event has to be cancelled, you will be notified at least one week in advance of the event. Our liability is limited to a full refund of the event fee only.

No compensation will be paid for any other costs incurred by the delegate, such as travel or accommodation. For online courses, all course work / attendance must be complete by the advertised completion date of the course – No refunds or extensions will be granted.

The IIA-Australia accepts no liability if an event is cancelled or postponed for reasons beyond our reasonable control.

## PRIVACY STATEMENT

I acknowledge that my or a later substitute details will be used to confirm membership status at IIA-Australia. IIA-Australia may use a third party conference service providers to process your registration. My/their name, position and organisation will be included in the Conference Delegate list and forwarded sponsors and exhibitors.

For virtual attendees, when visiting virtual exhibition booths your contact details will be made available to exhibitors. Photographs and videos may be taken at the event to be used for IIA-Australia promotional purposes. IIA-Australia will handle any personal information collected on this form in accordance with its Privacy Policy.

## TRANSFERRING YOUR PLACE TO SOMEONE ELSE

If you are unable to attend an event, you can send someone else in your place provided that person meets the entry requirements of the event. Please notify us in advance so that we can update our delegate list. If the replacement delegate is not entitled to attend at the same price (for example if an IIA-Australia member sends a non-IIA-Australia member in his or her place) then the difference in fees must be paid before the event is held.

## TRANSFERRING FEE TO ANOTHER EVENT

Transferring your registration to another event 15 or more days prior to the event incurs a fee of 10% of registration fees. Transferring registration to another event within 14 days prior to the event is not permitted.

## LIABILITY

The IIA-Australia does not accept responsibility for anyone acting as a result of information or views expressed by speakers. Delegates should take specific advice when dealing with specific situations. Opinions expressed are those of individual speakers and not necessarily those of the IIA-Australia.

## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Intellectual Property Rights in the events are owned by, and shall remain vested in, the IIAAustralia and/or its appointed training providers.

## Local Government Assurance Forum 2026 – Registration Fees

|            |                                   |
|------------|-----------------------------------|
| Early Bird | Register before<br>2 October 2026 |
| Member     | \$580                             |
| Non-member | \$700                             |
| Standard   | Register after<br>2 October 2026  |
| Member     | \$695                             |
| Non-member | \$815                             |

# Registration form & tax invoice

## Local Government Assurance Forum

Monday 19 & Tuesday 20 October 2026 - Virtual

### 1. PROVIDE PERSONAL DETAILS – please use block letters

Title ☐ Prof ☐ Dr ☐ Mr ☐ Mrs ☐ Ms ☐ Miss ☐ Other

Family name

Given name

Postnominal ☐ CIA® ☐ CCSA™ ☐ CGAP™ ☐ CFSA™

☐ CRMA™ ☐ GradCertIA ☐ QIAL™ ☐ Other

Position

Organisation

Address for correspondence

City/State Country Postcode

Telephone ( )

Facsimile ( )

Mobile

Email

Name as you wish it to appear on name badge

Please indicate your membership number

☐ IIA Member

### 2. CONFIRM REGISTRATION TYPE AND FEES

#### Early Bird - register before or on 2 October 2026

Member \$580 ☐

Non-Member \$700 ☐

#### Standard - register after 2 October 2026

Member \$695 ☐

Non-Member \$815 ☐

#### TOTAL REGISTRATION FEES \$

Groups - 3 or more people from the same organisation receive a 10% discount.

Members of LGIAN and CPN are eligible for a 10% discount.

(only one discount applies)

### 3. PAYMENT DETAILS

#### Method of payment (please choose an option)

1. ☐ Credit card via secure payment link on invoice

2. ☐ Bank transfer to the account details

**Account Name:** The Institute of Internal Auditors – Australia

**Bank:** Westpac Banking Corporation

**Address:** 84 King Street, Sydney NSW 2000

**Branch (BSB):** 032003

**Account Number:** 478233

**Swift code:** WPACAU2S

Overseas telegraphic transfer will incur AUD\$25.00 bank administration fees. The delegate is responsible for all fees associated with the transaction. To enable us to identify your payment, please ensure that your name and **Local Government Assurance Forum 2026** appear on the transfer. Please email a record to [accounts@iia.org.au](mailto:accounts@iia.org.au)

Alternatively, if you are paying by credit card and don't require to be pre-invoiced, you can skip filling in the form and register and pay online by visiting the conferences page at [www.iia.org.au](http://www.iia.org.au)

### 4. RETURNING FORM

#### Please return form and payment to

Institute of Internal Auditors – Australia

email: [conferences@iia.org.au](mailto:conferences@iia.org.au)

**Each delegate must complete a separate registration form**

#### General enquiries

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