







Includes Certificate of Completion for the Place Engagement micro-credential

2026

PLACE LEADERS ASIA PACIFIC URBAN LEADERS' SUMMIT

25 - 28 MARCH 2026

PORT MACQUARIE, AUSTRALIA

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL

Place Leaders Asia Pacific

HOSTED BY

PLACE LEADERS ASIA PACIFIC

This is more than a conference - it's Port Macquarie turning itself into a university for placemakers



HERE'S WHAT YOUR PEERS SAID ABOUT PLACE LEADERS ASIA PACIFIC 2025 URBAN LEADERS' SUMMIT

"... such an inspiring and exceptional 225 summit. It was undoubtedly the most rewarding and thought-provoking conference I have attended, and I am already looking forward to the 2026 gathering." Lisa Howard, Director, T.C.L

"Absolutely awesome to be at the 2025 Place Leaders Asia Pacific Summit!" Andrew Coward, Reactivate Consulting

"Fabulous event! Thank you." Christine Lane, Gold Coast City Council

"Such a great group of place leaders! Well done for pulling together such a great event." Alice Percy, City of Darwin

"Amazing conference. Thanks to the team at Place Leaders Asia Pacific!" Julie Ryland, Hornsby Shire Council

"Attending the Place Leaders Asia Pacific summit was an incredible experience." Erin Marchant, Ipswich City Council

"What a Summit! Thank you, Place Leaders Asia Pacific, for such an inclusive, immersive experience." Joyce Louey, City of Marion







2025 Awards Partner

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL



Place Leaders Asia Pacific respectfully acknowledges the Birpai people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters of the Port Macquarie–Hastings region, where the 2026 Urban Leaders' Summit is held.We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all First Nations peoples joining us at this year's Summit. We recognise the enduring connection of the Birpai people to Country, culture, community, and storytelling, and we honour their leadership in shaping a future where place-based practice reflects deep care for people and the environment. Place Leaders Asia Pacific is committed to working in partnership with First Nations communities to foster genuine relationships, embed cultural knowledge in placemaking, and support meaningful engagement that strengthens connection to place.

Welcome to the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Urban Leaders' Summit 2026

Message from the Mayor of Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



It is an honour for Port Macquarie Hastings Council to host the 10th Place Leaders Asia Pacific Urban Leaders' Summit 2026, where like-minded industry professionals can explore the power of community-led placemaking while experiencing our stunning coastal and hinterland landscapes.

This year's Summit theme, Place Engagement, speaks directly to this direction. It reflects how we, as a Council, work together with our community to shape places that inspire connection, creativity, and belonging. Our approach begins with listening to local voices, understanding the diverse experiences of our people, and celebrating the unique character of our region.

From a whole-of-Council perspective, it is important that we clearly articulate our strategic direction in engagement and place-making and demonstrate how our focus and dedication are already shaping the future of our region.

This commitment is reflected in the major strategic work completed in 2025, including our new Community Engagement Strategy, Cultural Plan, and Community Inclusion Plan.

Together, these documents set the foundation for how we listen to, partner with, and deliver meaningful outcomes for our community. Our plans reinforce our belief that inclusion, expression, and connection are not just aspirations, they are essential foundations of a thriving, liveable, and future-focused region.

We want to create places that invite storytelling and make everyone feel welcome, where culture and heritage are expressed in ways that matter to our people. From vibrant town centres to tranquil waterfronts, we aim to enhance the natural beauty of our region with spaces that feel inclusive, safe, and alive with possibility.

Community engagement is at the heart of this journey. Our residents are deeply invested in shaping the future of an area that spans pristine beaches, rainforests, rivers, bustling towns, and historic villages. Their feedback informs plans for expanded tree canopies, continuous foreshore pathways, waterfront activations, active transport options, and improvements that support a thriving night-time economy.

Together, we are planning for a future that is connected, liveable, sustainable, and innovative, a future that reflects who we are and who we aspire to be.

I look forward to conversation and trading ideas with delegates during the Summit. As you explore our region, I invite you to immerse yourself in the diversity of our places and open spaces, from the breathtaking Tacking Point Lighthouse and the Beach to Beach Shared Pathway, to the Port Macquarie Coastal Walk, our beaches, town centres, and villages.

Cr Adam Roberts
Mayor, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council



Welcome to the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Urban Leaders' Summit 2026

Message from Clare Ferres-Miles, Chair - Place Leaders Asia Pacific



It is a pleasure to welcome you to Port Macquarie for the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Urban Leaders' Summit 2026, hosted in partnership with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council.

Each year, this Summit brings together place-makers, designers, civic leaders, cultural practitioners, and community builders from across the Asia Pacific. What sets this gathering apart is our shared belief that placemaking is not simply about the design of spaces, it is about the relationships, conversations, and collaborations that shape them. This year's theme, Place Engagement, brings that belief to the forefront.

Engagement is more than consultation. It is the art of listening deeply, valuing local knowledge, and empowering communities to influence outcomes in meaningful ways. It is about creating the conditions for people to be active participants in the future of their places, whether through co-design, cultural expression, maintenance and stewardship, creative industries, or local activation. At its best, engagement strengthens trust, builds capability, and creates places that feel genuinely loved and cared for.

Port Macquarie is a fitting host for this conversation. You will see a commitment to agile, people-centred placemaking, embracing lighter, faster, practical activation, strengthening local creativity, engaging young people, designing for all ages, and supporting community-led ideas that bring our places to life. The case studies you will explore like Phillips Lane, Mrs York's Garden, the City Heart revitalisation, Town Beach Reserve, and Tacking Point Lighthouse are powerful examples of what can be achieved when councils and communities work together with imagination and purpose.

We'll step out of the auditorium and into these places, to learn directly from the practitioners who created them and the people who bring them to life. You will also have the opportunity to connect with peers across government, industry, academia, and community sectors, and to gain practical tools through the Place Engagement micro-credential, included as part of your Summit registration.

This year also marks a milestone: the 10th Anniversary of the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards. We look forward to celebrating the remarkable placemaking projects and leaders who continue to inspire our region and elevate the practice of place.

Thank you to our Summit Partner, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, for their leadership, generosity, and support of this event. And thank you to each of you for the work you do every day to build stronger, more inclusive, and more resilient communities.

We hope this Summit leaves you energised, connected, and equipped with new ideas to take back to your own places.

Claire Ferres-Miles
Chair - Place Leaders Asia Pacific

Flight and Port Macquarie travel information:
www.placeleaders.com/2026summit



Summit highlights

Immersive field tours through Port Macquarie's most influential placemaking projects

Experience the places that locals love - **from the Tacking Point Lighthouse precinct** and **Beach-to-Beach Shared Pathway**, to the **evolving City Heart**, **Town Green**, **Town Beach Reserve**, **Phillips Lane**. Guided by the PMHC placemaking team, these tours reveal how engagement, codesign, and tactical trials shape lasting outcomes.

The Place Engagement micro-credential included for all delegates

All participants complete the Place Engagement micro-credential, gaining practical tools for meaningful engagement, community-led design, and place-based collaboration. This professional recognition is provided at no additional cost.

Learn directly from world-leading practitioners including:

- **Henriette Vamberg**, Gehl Architects (Copenhagen)
- **Lucilla Marshall**, PMHC
- **Chris Patfield**, City of Parramatta
- **Lisa Howard**, TCL
- **Annie Tennant**, Placemaking NSW
- **Courtney Strow**, Ipswich Central
- and more

Engagement-focused masterclasses and hands-on learning

Deep-dive into practical methods for co-design, creative economies, cultural engagement, governance alignment, and low-cost place transformation, with templates and tools you can take home.

Phillips Lane Long Table Dinner

A magical outdoor dining experience under lights in one of Port Macquarie's most successful urban laneway transformations. Local produce, live music, and great conversation - a Summit favourite.

10th Anniversary Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards Presentation & Dinner

Celebrate at **Rydges Port Macquarie** as we honour the 2026 Award Winners, Highly Commended projects, and the prestigious **Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award**. A night that brings together the region's leading placemakers, councils, designers, and innovators.

Sunrise Yoga & Post-Awards Recovery BBQ Breakfast at Town Beach

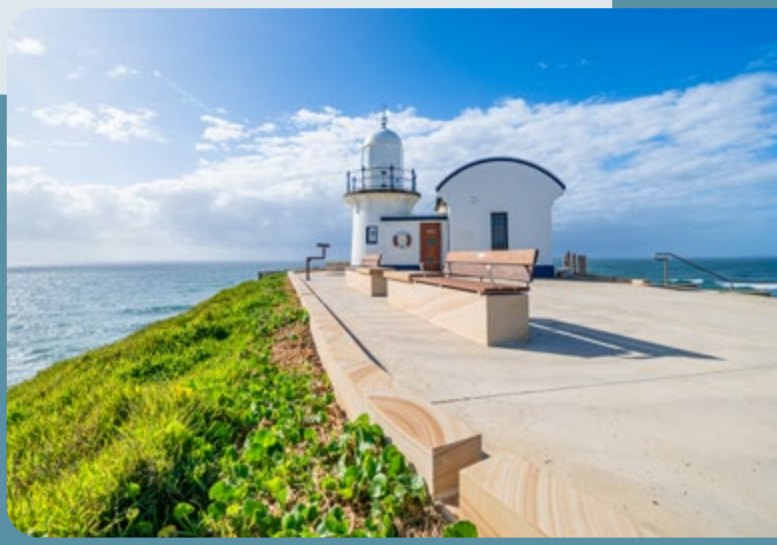
Start the day with optional sunrise yoga overlooking the ocean (or just a quick dip), followed by an inclusive community-style recovery breakfast hosted by local champions at Town Beach.

Networking by the Hastings River

Enjoy sunset drinks and conversations with peers from across the Asia Pacific practitioners, civic leaders, industry specialists, academics, community builders, and award-winning placemakers.

Optional regional tours

Extend your experience with curated optional tours showcasing coastal culture, nature, design, regeneration projects, and place-based storytelling across the Mid North Coast.



2026 Summit partner

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL

Join us in Port Macquarie, a coastal city shaped by People and Place, proudly supported by Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Nestled on the stunning **Mid North Coast of New South Wales**, Port Macquarie is a place where waterways, headlands, rainforest, and urban life intersect. With over **18 pristine beaches**, a thriving creative community, a celebrated coastal walk, and a rapidly evolving city centre, Port Macquarie offers a rich landscape for exploring place-led design, engagement, and innovation.

What makes Port Macquarie truly unique is the way community identity shapes everyday decisions. Here, **people are at the heart of the city's transformation** – from lighter, quicker, cheaper experiments to major urban upgrades led by deep engagement and local collaboration.

One of Australia's most active engagement-led councils

Port Macquarie–Hastings Council is known nationally for its practical, community-first approach to placemaking. Across the region, the Council's work champions:

- **Co-design with community and youth**
- **Cultural expression and First Nations storytelling**
- **Tactical activation and low-cost prototyping**
- **Creative industries development**
- **Engagement governance**
- **Collaborative problem-solving with businesses and residents**

Delegates will see many of these examples first-hand — not as abstract case studies, but as **living places** shaped by local people.

Glasshouse Port Macquarie - The Summit's main venue

Located in the heart of the CBD, **The Glasshouse** is one of regional Australia's leading cultural and conference venues.

Featuring:

- Light-filled foyers and river views
- A renowned theatre and creative precinct
- Integrated gallery and community spaces
- Direct access to cafés, laneways, City Heart, and the coastal walk

Delegates will step directly from presentations into vibrant public spaces that illustrate Port Macquarie's placemaking journey.

Rydges Port Macquarie - Awards Dinner

Overlooking the Hastings River, **Rydges Port Macquarie** serves as:

- The accommodation partner
- The host venue for the 10th Anniversary Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards

A short three-minute walk from the Glasshouse and Town Green





Join us for a living classroom of coastal placemaking

During the Summit, delegates will explore:

● Town Green & Town Beach Reserve

An evolving oceanfront precinct with family-friendly design, accessibility, activation, and community input.

● City Heart Renewal

A multi-stage transformation of Port Macquarie's urban centre driven by engagement, trials, and clear streetscape priorities. Located just minutes from the Summit venue and accommodation, the city centre reveals Port Macquarie's engagement-led approach with local art, tactical activations, and youth-led projects.

● Phillips Lane

A beloved laneway success story featuring art, lighting, micro-activation, and partnership with local businesses.

● Tacking Point Lighthouse

Sitting atop a rocky headland, this is one of Australia's most photographed coastal icons and now a place of cultural storytelling, environmental interpretation, and universal access. Enjoy stunning panoramic views - a sunrise essential.

● Beach-to-Beach Shared Pathway

A spectacular trail connecting beaches, headlands, and cultural landscapes, offering a world-class experience in accessible coastal design and showcasing coastal placemaking at its best. More than 8 kilometres of the 11.2 kilometres pathway is complete providing a safe, accessible, and scenic route for walkers, runners and cyclists.



Join a national leader in engagement-led placemaking

Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC) has earned a reputation for its community-first, and highly practical approach to placemaking. Engagement is embedded not as a step in the process, but as a mindset. Across the region, PMHC and its partners champion:

1. Co-Design & Collaboration

Port Macquarie consistently delivers projects shaped by direct collaboration with:

- Youth and families
- Local creatives
- Businesses
- First Nations partners
- Village and town centre communities

From the City Heart renewal to Town Beach Reserve, co-design has become an essential pathway to outcomes that feel genuinely owned.

2. People-Centred Activation Creating a Shared Sense of Place

Small experiments, and real-time testing have helped PMHC:

- Fast-track community feedback
- Build confidence and momentum
- Mobilise locals, business, creative

Phillips Lane and the emerging coastal nodes are standout examples of this method.

3. Engagement that Builds Identity & Belonging

Port Macquarie's engagement efforts draw out local stories, creativity, culture, and intergenerational knowledge. Whether revitalising laneways, activating parks, supporting youth arts, or shaping coastal experiences, the focus is on celebrating what makes each place distinct.

4. Partnerships that Expand Possibility

PMHC collaborates widely with community organisations, local businesses, tourism operators, cultural groups, and regional neighbours, to activate places that are welcoming and resilient. These partnerships extend the impact of traditional engagement and support long-term stewardship.

What Delegates Will Learn

Throughout the Summit, sessions and field tours will explore:

- Engagement techniques for complex or contested spaces
- Tools to increase community participation
- How to build trust and safe environments for collaboration
- First Nations partnership models
- Digital and creative engagement tools
- Embedding engagement into governance
- Measuring engagement and demonstrating impact
- Engagement that strengthens local economies and night-time vitality





Certificate of Completion for the ‘Place Engagement’ Micro-credential for delegates

The 2026 program has been designed so delegates don’t just hear about engagement they **experience it** in live environments, led by the practitioners and communities who shaped them. You’ll step into precincts that illustrate how engagement influences design, operations, culture, identity, and resilience.

At its core, Place Engagement is about the relationships that make places work. It is the practice of listening deeply, empowering community voice, building trust, and creating the conditions for people to participate meaningfully in shaping their environment. When done well, engagement strengthens identity, improves design outcomes, and builds lasting stewardship.

The Place Leaders Place Engagement micro-credential, included with every Summit registration, provides the skills and methods to embed this practice across policy, planning, design, delivery, and operations. Its principles underpin this year’s Summit program.





Optional pre-summit tours & masterclasses

Tuesday 24 March 2026

- **Arrive at Airport - flights arrive from 8:40am.**
- We invite delegates to arrive early, immerse themselves in the region's places and stories, and begin connecting with peers in an informal, coastal setting.
- You're arriving in one of Australia's most loved coastal towns, a place where rainforest meets the river, and headlands meet the ocean. With 18 pristine beaches, a thriving creative scene, remarkable Birpai cultural landscapes, and a bustling city centre Port Macquarie offers a stunning backdrop for the Summit.
- If you're flying in, Port Macquarie Airport offers domestic links to Sydney and Brisbane with 40 flights weekly. Flights from Sydney (just over an hour gate to gate) arrive throughout the day, starting from around 8:40am. Direct flights from Brisbane are available as well. Port Macquarie Airport is only 7 minutes from the Summit venue and accommodation.
- Swim in warm, Mediterranean-like water with average **March temperatures of 25-26°C**. Port Macquarie's beaches are perfect for ocean dips, sunrise swims, and post-summit session 'resets'! Optional paid tours and masterclasses offer a deeper look at Port Macquarie–Hastings' most significant place-led initiatives before the Summit formally begins Wednesday evening.

Wednesday 25 March 2026

- **Arrive at Airport - flights arrive from 8:40am.**
- Delegates arriving early can book a range of regional experiences through our tourism partners. Details and booking links will be provided on our website.

Optional Pre-Summit Experiences

Half-day Local Showcase Tour

Time: 9:00am - 12:30pm
Location: Port Macquarie CBD and surrounds
Cost: $129 (includes refreshments)

Curated in partnership with Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC), this bespoke discovery tour introduces delegates to iconic local places where environment, culture, landscape and community shape identity.

Each stop includes hosted insights and plenty of time for questions with PMHC team members.

Tour Stops

Guulabaa Place of Koala

Welcoming visitors is The Big Koala, a 2.5 metre sculpture painted by local artist Pauline Roods, part of the Hello Koalas Sculpture Trail. Koala Conservation Australia operates the world's first wild Koala breeding facility on site, where visitors can learn about the ongoing rejuvenation of the koala species following the impact of the 2019-2020 Mid-North Coast fires on surrounding habitats.





Sights from the optional half-day local showcase tour, curated by Port Macquarie - Hastings Council

Bago Winery
At the foot of the dramatic Bago Bluff escarpment. Includes insights into:

- Local food culture & agritourism
- The famous Bago Maze
- Chocolate factory micro-enterprise

North Brother/Durrigan Lookout
A breathtaking cultural and landscape vantage point exploring:

- Birpai Country
- Lookout design
- Tourism, safety & access
- Sense of place through elevation and vista

Bonny Hills Water Tower Mural

- Example of CPTED in practice
- Funded through NSW Government Graffiti Management Grant
- 'Paradise Found' by Amanda Newman

Early Arrival Optional Networking Lunch

Time: 12:30pm - 2:00pm
Location: Little Shack Bar + Café, Port Macquarie waterfront
Cost: Own cost - simply meet us there

A relaxed, drop-in style welcome lunch for early arrivers. Little Shack's waterfront setting offers a light menu, great coffee, and plenty of informal standing and seated spaces that make it perfect for casual networking before the Summit program begins. You'll find:

- Light lunch options available for purchase
- Coffee, tea & cold drinks, and cocktails available at the bar
- Informal seating and standing tables



Early arrival? Join us drop-in style for a networking lunch at Little Shack

Optional Masterclasses

Time: 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Location: The Glasshouse
Costs: $59 (includes refreshments)

Choose from two skill-building, practice-focused masterclasses linked to the Summit theme

1. Place Engagement Case Study and Deep Dive

Facilitators: PMHC Placemaking Team (Kat & Alex). Hands-on training with real examples and method use, step-by-step methods, and engagement tools used locally. Delegates leave with practical resources they can apply immediately.

2. Lighting Up Places: How Creativity Builds Community Life & Night-Time Vibrancy

Facilitators: Vivien Mitchell (with PMHC 'special guest stars' Jackie and Lucilla). Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's learnings from a decade of creative placemaking, demonstrating how art, murals, music, performance and lighting can strengthen community identity, activate public spaces, and support the night-time economy.This masterclass will equip attendees with inspirational examples for transforming public spaces into places people love.



The Glasshouse, Port Macquarie - your Summit Venue



While you're at The Glasshouse, experience Northern Exposure 9 - a stunning showcase of regional artists running in March 2026

Summit program commences

Summit Registration and Opening Event - 25 March 2026

Time: 3:30pm - 5:00pm
Location: Glasshouse Port Macquarie

Collect your name badge, delegate pack, and micro-credential access code, and connect with fellow participants before the official Summit Opening in the evening.

Optional: enjoy a wander through Town Green and the riverfront precinct, steps from the Glasshouse and Rydges.

Opening Event - Phillips Lane Long-Table Dinner

Time: 6:30pm – 9:30pm
Location: Phillips Lane

A signature Summit moment included for all delegates. Come together under twinkling lights for a long-table outdoor dining experience celebrating local vibes and creative culture. Phillips Lane in the CBD will be dressed for a unique place experience including soft live music and a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere. Informal post-dinner gathering at The Beach House.



Phillips Lane photo 'Summit opens with the Phillip Lane Long-Table Dinner

Summit Day 1 - People, Programs & Place - 26 March 2026

Core Sessions + Field Tours + 10th Anniversary Awards

The first full day of the Summit brings together international and local leaders to explore Place Engagement in policy, design, culture, activation, governance and operations. After a high-impact morning at the Glasshouse, delegates step straight into Port Macquarie's most distinctive places for immersive field tours, followed by the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards Presentation & Dinner at Rydges.

Morning Program - Glasshouse Port Macquarie

8:15am – 8:45am

Arrival Tea & Coffee + Networking

The Glasshouse opens at 7:45am with coffee stations, foyer displays and the Summit exhibition. If you've not already, collect your lanyard, name badge, city map and digital QR access.

9:00am - 9:20am

Welcome to Country & Opening Addresses Presented by:

- Birpai Elders
- Cr Adam Roberts, Mayor, Port Macquarie–Hastings Council
- Claire Ferres-Miles, Chair, Place Leaders Asia Pacific

A Welcome to Country opens the Summit with the stories, culture and identity of Birpai Country.

9:20am – 9:50am

KEYNOTE 1



Opening Keynote: International Perspectives on Engagement & People-Centred Cities

Speaker: Henriette Vamberg, Managing Director, Gehl (Copenhagen)

A powerful exploration of how engagement becomes a strategic asset for cities, drawing on Gehl's global work in Scandinavia, the Gulf, Europe, and Asia. Henriette shares how cities can build trust, influence policy, and create shared ownership through meaningful participation.

9:50am - 10:20am

KEYNOTE 2



Enabling Place at Scale – Systems, Delivery & Partnerships

Speaker: Annie Tennant, Placemaking NSW

A deep dive into what it takes to deliver place-led transformation at scale across complex precincts and governance environments.

10:20am - 10:45am



The Magicians of Placemaking: From Imagination to Activation

Speaker: Lucilla Marshall, Group Manager - Liveable Communities, PMHC

How Port Macquarie-Hastings delivers outsized results with limited budgets. Lucilla shares lessons from:

- Artwalk and transforming place
- Phillips Lane
- City Heart renewal
- Engaging with purpose
- Intentional actions in place

10:45am – 11:15am

Morning Tea + Exhibition

11:15am – 11:45am

PLENARY 1



Session Title: To be Announced

Speaker: To be Announced - stay tuned!

We're putting the finishing touches on an exciting session that will be revealed in the next Summit Guide update.

11:45am – 12:15pm

PLENARY 2



Designing Places Where Ecology, Identity & Community Grow Together

Speaker: Lisa Howard, Director, T.C.L

Drawing on award-winning work across Australia, Lisa explores how designers can engage communities to create places where ecological systems, local identity and social life support one another. Lisa draws on award-winning approaches to blending landscape, culture and community needs in complex public environments.



Chris Patfield (City of Parramatta) and Yanting Zhan (Place Score) receive the 2024 Place Governance Award for Parramatta Square, presented by Rob Stokes. Chris shares his practical insights running Parramatta Square (larger than Sydney's Martin Place)

12:15pm - 12:40pm

PLENARY 3



Operating Global Parramatta's Gathering Place

Speaker: Chris Patfield, Place Manager, Parramatta Square

How place metrics, operations, design and community feedback combine to make Parramatta Square - larger than Sydney's Martin Place! come alive every single day. Chris shares how he uses How design, activation, and operations work together to build public confidence and support vibrant civic life.

12:20pm – 1:20pm

Networking Lunch

Connect with peers, meet local hosts and explore displays featuring youth, arts and community initiatives from across the region.

1:20pm - 5:00pm

Placemaking in Port Macquarie Showcase

Delegates break into two waves (A & B) for fully guided place-based learning tours

Delegates complete both the Bus Tour and the Walking Tour.

Tours begin with a muster at the Glasshouse for a short safety and accessibility briefing.

Wave A - Coastal Places Tour

Board the coach (Glasshouse). Stops include:

- **Tacking Point Lighthouse** - Delegates see how community voices, from Birpai custodians to disability advocates, drove the redesign of the site into an inclusive, culturally rich, universally accessible destination that reimagined one of Australia's most iconic headlands. Learn how public art, climate-resilient materials, and universal design can turn a heritage landmark into a place that celebrates identity, supports tourism, and builds long-term stewardship.
- **Sea Acres Rainforest Centre** - Delegates step onto the elevated rainforest boardwalk for an immersive transition from city into Country. Discover how genuine collaboration with Birpai custodians guided design decisions that protect fragile ecology while building cultural connection. See how co-designed interpretation and careful threshold design enable thousands of visitors to experience a sensitive place without damaging it.

Return to Glasshouse for the Walking Tour, finishing 5:00pm.

Wave B - Town Centre, Laneways & Riverfront Activation Tour

Stops include:

- **Phillips Lane** - Explore how a former service lane was reimagined through creative engagement into a vibrant cultural corridor. Delegates will see how murals and light-touch activation build community identity and draw people in.
- **Mrs Yorks Garden** - A community-led initiative showcasing local stewardship in action. Meet volunteers from 'Friends of Mrs Yorks Garden' and learn how grassroots care strengthens connection and place identity.
- **Town Beach Reserve** - Experience coastal placemaking that balances recreation with environmental care. Delegates learn how flexible, shared spaces support both major events and everyday community life.
- **City Heart Renewal**
- **Town Green & Riverfront**

Return to Glasshouse for Bus Tour, finishing at 5:00pm.

5:00pm - 6:30pm

Break

Delegates return to accommodation to prepare for the 10th Anniversary Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards Dinner.

PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL





6:30pm – 10:00pm

Venue: Rydges Port Macquarie

Dress: Smart Cocktail

Celebrate the best in placemaking with an unforgettable evening of fine dining and networking opportunities, all set against the backdrop of the Hastings River with unrivalled water views. Only minutes from the Summit venue, be part of the awarding of the Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award for excellence in place-making (again featuring a special video appearance from renowned urban designer Jan Gehl, who will personally introduce the Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award)!

The evening includes:

- Pre-function from 6:30pm
- Seated dinner at 7:00pm
- Awards program begins 7:30pm
- Special address from Jan Gehl (video link)
- Awards conclude by 9:30pm
- Event closes 10:00pm









Summit Day 2 - Tools, Trust & Transformation - 27 March 2026

Day 3 includes a gentle recovery breakfast with a deep dive into Port Macquarie's local projects, tools and leadership. The morning begins outdoors reconnecting with Country and coast before returning to the Glasshouse for workshops, panels and closing reflections.

Early Morning - Wellbeing & Reflection

Town Beach Reserve

7:30am – 8:30am

Morning Yoga (Optional, Included)

Start the day with a calming sunrise guided yoga session by the ocean at **Town Beach Reserve**.

8:30am – 10:00am

Beach Recovery BBQ Breakfast (Included)

Town Beach

A relaxed, social morning to reset after the Awards Dinner.

Includes:

- scenic coastal walk
- inclusive BBQ breakfast prepared with local hosts
- coffee cart
- vegetarian/vegan/GF options
- storytelling about Town Beach's evolution and community activation

During breakfast, delegates enjoy an interactive and dynamic series of practical spotlights showcasing Port Macquarie-Hastings Council's engagement-led placemaking approach:

1. **Duncan Coulton** - Executive Manager Strategy - Masterplanning Big Picture
2. **Jack Devenish** - Project Manager - Beach-to-Beach Universal Access
3. **Alex Gray** - Community Engagement Officer - The Engagement Engine
4. **Kat Boulet** - Recreation and Community Strategy Coordinator - Planning for Future Recreation
5. **Vivien Mitchell** - Senior Cultural Officer - Culture & Identity in Practice
6. **Alex Henley** - Economic Development Manager - Economic Development & Place

Morning Program — Glasshouse Port Macquarie

10:30am – 10:50am

Morning Tea - Glasshouse Foyer

Recharge for the day with coffee and light refreshments.

10:50am – 11:05am

Plenary - The Place Engagement Micro-Credential: A Preview

Place Leaders Asia Pacific provides an overview of the micro-credential Certificate of Completion included for all delegates and outlines other place learning options.

11:05am – 11:45am

Panel - Governance & Engagement in Action

Moderator: Claire Ferres-Miles

Claire Ferres-Miles moderates a panel of place leaders sharing how organisations can embed engagement into governance, delivery, and everyday decision-making.













Late Morning - Spotlight Series (Round 1)

Delegates enjoy lightning-round brilliance from the frontlines of placemaking with no fluff. These are the insights you'll steal for Monday.

11:45am - 12:05pm

Spotlight 1 - The Long Game: Growing Creative Ecosystems, Not Just Events



Speaker: *Courtney Strow, Creative Industries Lead, Ipswich City Council*

A practical session on building local creative ecosystems through participation, capability building, community empowerment, partnerships and trust for long-term cultural growth.

12:05pm - 12:25pm

Spotlight 2 - The Subtle Art of Creative Placemaking with Communities & Government



Speaker: *Michael Cohen, City People*

From tokenistic activations to real placemaking with creatives, culturemakers, communities and government. Here's your guide - with international and local examples across the Asia-Pacific.

12:25pm -12:45pm

Spotlight 3 - Keeping Places Alive: Beyond the First Activation



Speaker: *Brooke Williams, Director, Fourfold Studio*

It's easy to launch a place with buzz, the challenge is keeping it alive. Brooke shares practical lessons on how stakeholder-led models outperform top-down approaches, and how culture, stories and everyday life give places staying power.

12:45pm - 1:45

Networking Lunch - Glasshouse Foyer



Early Afternoon - Spotlight Series (Round 2)

1:45pm - 2:05pm

Spotlight 4 - Engagement as the Engine: Turning Community Voice into Mandated & Funded Local Government Outcomes



Speaker: *Stephanie Cascun, Strategic Portfolio Manager, Canada Bay Council*

How engagement and placemaking can shift from 'nice to do' to structurally embedded inside strategies, funding frameworks, CAPEX pipelines, and delivery systems - ensuring community voices become real, funded local government projects.

2:05pm - 2:25pm

Spotlight 5 - Honeysuckle, Newcastle - Connecting Our City Through Placemaking

Speaker: *Hunter and Coastal Development Corporation*

How one of NSW's most significant renewal precincts is using placemaking to weave city, water, and community together.

2:25pm - 2:45pm

Afternoon Tea - Glasshouse Foyer

2:45pm – 3:25pm

Closing Plenary - What We'll Do on Monday

Moderator: Claire Ferres-Miles

Claire Ferres-Miles moderates a panel of place leaders for a forward-looking conversation on the practical actions delegates can take back to their cities.

Delegate takeaway: *'10 Actions for Monday'*, compiled live and distributed to all.

3:15pm - 3:45pm

Summit Wrap-Up & Farewell

Final reflections and thanks from:

- Claire Ferres-Miles, Chair, Place Leaders Asia Pacific
- Group Manager, Liveable Communities, Port Macquarie- Hastings Council

Summit Day 3 - 27 March 2025

Wauchope Farmers' Market Tour & Local Producer Insights - Coffee Presentation (included)

Time: 9:00am - 11:00pm
Location: Wauchope Showgrounds

A relaxed finale to the Summit, enjoy a guided visit to the Wauchope Farmers' Market, a monthly gathering of growers, makers and artisans that has become one of the region's strongest examples of community-led place activation. Held at the Wauchope Showgrounds on the fourth Saturday of each month, the market showcases how local producers, small businesses and volunteer organisers co-create a vibrant, inclusive, and economically resilient place. Delegates will meet stallholders and organisers who share how grassroots collaboration underpin the market's success. An authentic, low-key experience offering a great selection of local products and a genuine connection to the community and worth the 20-minute charter bus ride from Port Macquarie for the unique local finds and intimate community atmosphere.



Post Summit Program - Optional Post-Summit Experiences

Taster 1 - Hastings River Sunset Dolphin Cruise

Time: 4:30pm – 7:00pm

Drift along the Hastings River at golden hour on this unforgettable eco-cruise operated by Port AdVenture Cruises. Watch dolphins play in the wake, glide past secluded mangroves and riverfront homes, and enjoy commentary that brings the river's cultural and ecological stories to life. A perfect, relaxed wind-down after a big day of learning.

Taster 2 - Bago Bluff Wine, Maze & Hinterland Experience

Time: 9:00am – 2:30pm

Venture into the rolling hinterland with Indulgence Tours for a sensory escape through Bago Bluff. Wander the region's most iconic hedge maze, taste local wines and handmade chocolates, and soak up sweeping mountain-to-coast views. A delicious blend of landscape, culture and indulgence.

Exclusive delegate registration links coming in January 2025.

Who should attend?

This summit is a must for professionals dedicated to urban planning, climate resilience, community development, policy making, and placemaking. Don't miss this unique chance to stay ahead in your field.

- Local Government (Mayors, Councillors, Directors, Managers and other decision makers), State and Federal Government
- Private firms
- Main Street Businesses and Consultants
- Business Associations
- Academics
- Industry Groups

With interests in:

- Planning, Urban Design, Development, Property
- Main Streets, Retail, Shopping and Town Centres
- Economic Development, Demography
- Place making, Project Management, Marketing
- Architecture, Landscape, Environment
- Infrastructure, Resources, Energy, Transport
- Engineering, Surveying, Public Works



Registrations Now Open!

Register online via the secure registration page at www.placeleaders.com/2026summit

Registration Fees

Full Registration Member*	$745
Full Registration Non-Member*	$990
Awards Event Guest Ticket	$225
Half-Day Local Showcase Tour (morning 25 March 2026 - optional)	$245
Optional Masterclasses (afternoon 25 March 2026 - optional)	$69

- Place Engagement Case Study and Deep Dive
- Lighting Up Places: How Creativity Builds Community Life & Night-Time Vibrancy

All prices include GST and are in Australian Dollars.

* Member discounts are available to members of Place Leaders Asia Pacific.

Registration Inclusions

- Attendance at all conference sessions and tours from the Wednesday evening long-table dinner in Phillip Lane to the Saturday morning visit to Wauchope Farmers' Markets (bus travel included)
- Attendance and dinner/drinks at the Place Leaders Asia Pacific Awards on Thursday evening
- Daily catering including morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea - Thursday and Friday
- Certificate of Completion for the 'Place Engagement' Place Leaders microcredential provided to each Summit participant by Place Leaders Asia Pacific
- Delegate list**
- Speakers' papers and presentations post conference.

How do I pay?

Payment can be made online at Register on-line now at: www.placeleaders.com/2026summit by credit card (Visa or MasterCard), Cheque or EFT transfer. Please note 1.5% credit card surcharge will apply to transactions using your credit card.

How do I get a Tax Invoice?

A Tax Invoice will be generated upon completing your registration and attached to your confirmation. Should you need another copy please email hello@placeleaders.com

What about travel and accommodation?

Discount delegate accommodation is available. Learn more here**:** www.placeleaders.com/2026summit-accomodation

Flight and Darwin travel information is available here: www.placeleaders.com/2026summit-travel

How do I change my registration?

Changes to registrations can be made up until 2 weeks prior to the Summit.

How do I cancel my registration?

Cancellations will only be accepted in writing to hello@placeleaders.com. Cancellations made prior to 13 March 2026 will be refunded less $200.00 to cover administration costs. No refunds will be made after this date. As an alternative to cancellation, your registration may be transferred to another person without incurring any penalty. NB: All refunds will be processed two weeks after the completion of the conference. Credit card fees cannot be refunded.



What if I have a food allergy/intolerance?

Please email hello@placeleaders.com with any allergy and/or intolerance information in the dietary requirements section when you complete your registration, so that we can notify catering about meal needs. We will not be able to cater for your request if they are not communicated.

Do I need to pre-register for individual sessions?

The only sessions we require you to pre-register for are prompted on your registration. It is usually only field trips, specialist workshops, masterclasses, special interest groups. There is no need to pre-register for other plenary and concurrent educational sessions.

Do I need a badge?

Yes, a conference badge is required for entry into the conference and offsite events, and should be worn at all times. Please pick up your badge at the registration desk during open registration hours. If you lose your badge, you may need to show photo identification and have it reprinted at a registration desk.

What do I wear?

The dress code is smart casual throughout the conference.

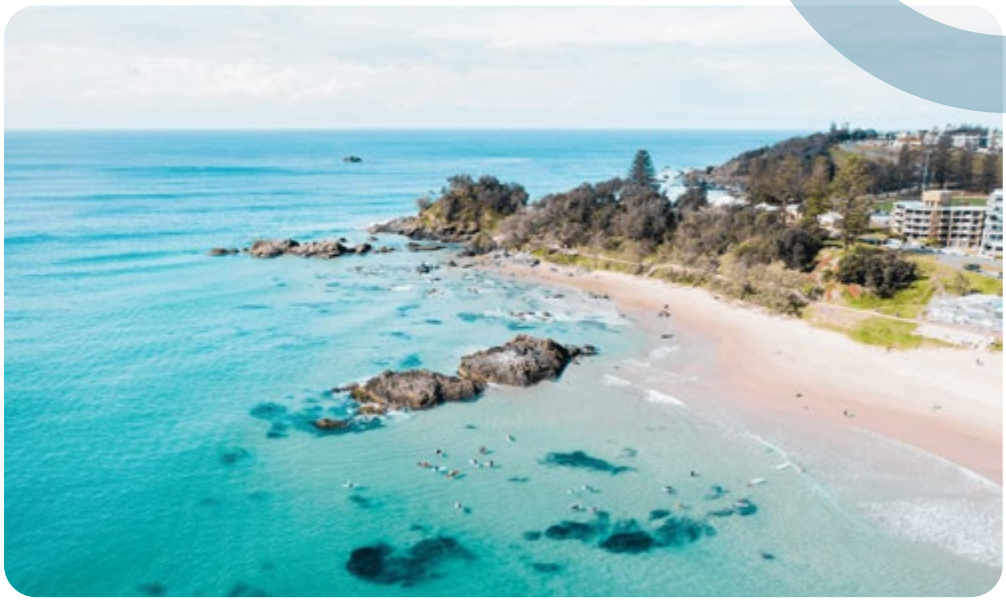
Travel Insurance

We recommend you take out travel insurance to cover you for cancellation of travel plans due to unforeseen circumstances preventing you from traveling.

I have a question that isn't listed here, who can I ask?

For any other queries, please email hello@placeleaders.com.

**Due to privacy laws, delegate lists include only name and organisation. If you do not wish to be included in this list, please email hello@placeleaders.com



Enjoy a post-Awards BBQ 'recovery breakfast' on the sands of Town Beach.

Accommodation

Discounted Delegate Accommodation

For your stay during the 2026 Urban Leaders' Summit, we have secured discounted delegate accommodate rates the following hotels in Port Macquarie, all within comfortable reach of the Summit venue and local facilities. Delegates may book directly using the included links.

Rydges Port Macquarie

A contemporary and stylish hotel positioned on the waterfront in the heart of Port Macquarie, overlooking the Hastings River. The hotel offers a wide range of accommodation from standard hotel rooms to serviced apartments, giving flexibility for individuals, couples, and small groups. This is the venue for the Place Leaders Asia-Pacific Awards Presentation and Dinner. **Book through the website** and use '2603LEADER' for a 20% discount.

- River-view rooms and apartments with private balconies.
- Outdoor heated pool, spa, fitness centre, and full-service spa treatments.
- On-site dining and bar options (ideal for both business and leisure stays).
- Free Wi-Fi, and good connectivity to local attractions, beaches, cafés, shops and The Glasshouse.




Sails Port Macquarie by Rydges (Resort-style Accommodation)

A waterfront resort set on the marina and bayside precinct, just a few minutes drive / cab ride from the CBD. Sails Port Macquarie offers a resort-style experience, with accommodation and amenities. **Book through the website** and use '2603LEADER' for a 20% discount.

- Lake/river-view rooms and suites, styled in a modern Hampton-inspired aesthetic.
- Heated outdoor pool with private cabanas, spa, waterfront dining, private jetty, and access to kayaks/paddle-boards.
- Resort-style ambience with relaxed gardens, waterfront views, and onsite restaurant/bar.
- Free Wi-Fi and 24-hour reception.




Mercure Centro Port Macquarie

Located in the heart of Port Macquarie's CBD, Mercure Centro offers modern, comfortable accommodation just minutes walk from the Glasshouse, the waterfront, cafés, dining and retail. Its central location and contemporary rooms make it an excellent option for delegates seeking convenience and quality at a competitive rate. **Discount booking link**.

- Stylish, well-appointed rooms designed for both work and relaxation
- Rooftop pool and sundeck with city views
- On-site restaurant and bar, plus easy access to surrounding dining precincts
- Free Wi-Fi and business-friendly amenities throughout




JAN GEHL CENTREPIECE AWARD

The prestigious Place Leaders Asia Pacific Centrepiece Award is now named the Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award – with Jan Gehl's enthusiastic support. This Award celebrates Jan's transformative impact on placemaking and firmly establishes the Place Leaders Asia-Pacific Awards as one of the region's premier accolades for excellence in creating vibrant, people-focused spaces.

Jan is a global icon of people-centred urban design and Jan delivered an exclusive 'flaming inauguration speech' (Jan's words!) via video link for the Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award 2024 winner, bringing his inspiring vision directly to the Awards and Presentation Dinner at the Darwin Waterfront on 3 April 2025.

As always, the Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award represents the pinnacle of excellence in placemaking, chosen by our esteemed 2025 Awards Jury.



2025 AWARDS JURY

Our 2025 Awards Jury brings together Place Leaders who embody the vision, resilience, and creativity that defines place leadership.











1. Henriette Vamberg

Partner & Managing Director (Europe, Gulf & Asia), Gehl People

Henriette is a global authority on people-centred urban design. A founding member of Gehl, she has led city-shaping projects from Sydney's George Street to London's Thrive Zones and New York's City Strategy. Trained under Jan Gehl, her work has influenced urban transformations across Europe, the US, India, Australia and New Zealand. Henriette brings incredibly valuable expertise in embedding human-centred design into complex urban projects, ensuring that thriving, inclusive cities are built for people first.

2. Sam Redston

President, Open House Melbourne

Sam is a cultural leader and creative producer with over 30 years shaping bold public projects. As former CEO of the Naomi Milgrom Foundation and Executive Director of MPavilion, he delivered internationally acclaimed commissions and the Living Cities Forum (Highly Commended -Design Excellence Award 2024). Now President of Open House Melbourne, Sam continues to champion architecture and design as catalysts for inclusion, sustainability and city liveability. Sam's bring expertise in connecting ambitious ideas with practical delivery, and influencing the role of culture in the urban fabric.

3. Emma Appleton

Director, Planning and Development, City of Whittlesea

Emma is a highly experienced urban strategist with international experience in regeneration, housing and city renewal. As Director of Planning and Development at the City of Whittlesea, and formerly Director of City Strategy at the City of Melbourne, Emma has delivered transformative programs that balance growth, design quality and community outcomes. Emma is known for her integrity and collaborative leadership and brings an established record of shaping complex urban projects into great places for people.

4. Erin Marchant

Place Manager, Ipswich City Council

Erin is a nationally recognised young leader in placemaking whose work in Ipswich Central was awarded the inaugural Jan Gehl Centrepiece Award for Excellence in Placemaking in 2024. With experience across Australia and abroad, Erin's expertise is in combining strong community engagement with evidence-based design. Erin's leadership delivers places that respect heritage, support creativity and build community wellbeing, embodying the people-first ethos at the heart of placemaking.

5. Lucilla Marshall

Group Manager, Liveable Communities, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council

Lucilla is an award-winning placemaking leader with more than two decades of experience across councils and private practice. As Group Manager, Liveable Communities at Port Macquarie-Hastings Council, Lucilla oversees placemaking, social planning, culture, and inclusion, with her leadership recognised through a Highly Commended in the 2024 Place Governance Award. A landscape architect by training, Lucilla is a powerful advocate for co-design and inclusive play, creating lasting places that support community life.



mmerse yourself in a one-of-a-kind learning experience at the Place Leaders Urban Leaders' Summit, set against the stunning backdrop of beautiful Port Macquarie'

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PORT MACQUARIE HASTINGS COUNCIL

2026 Summit Partner

Place Leaders Asia Pacific