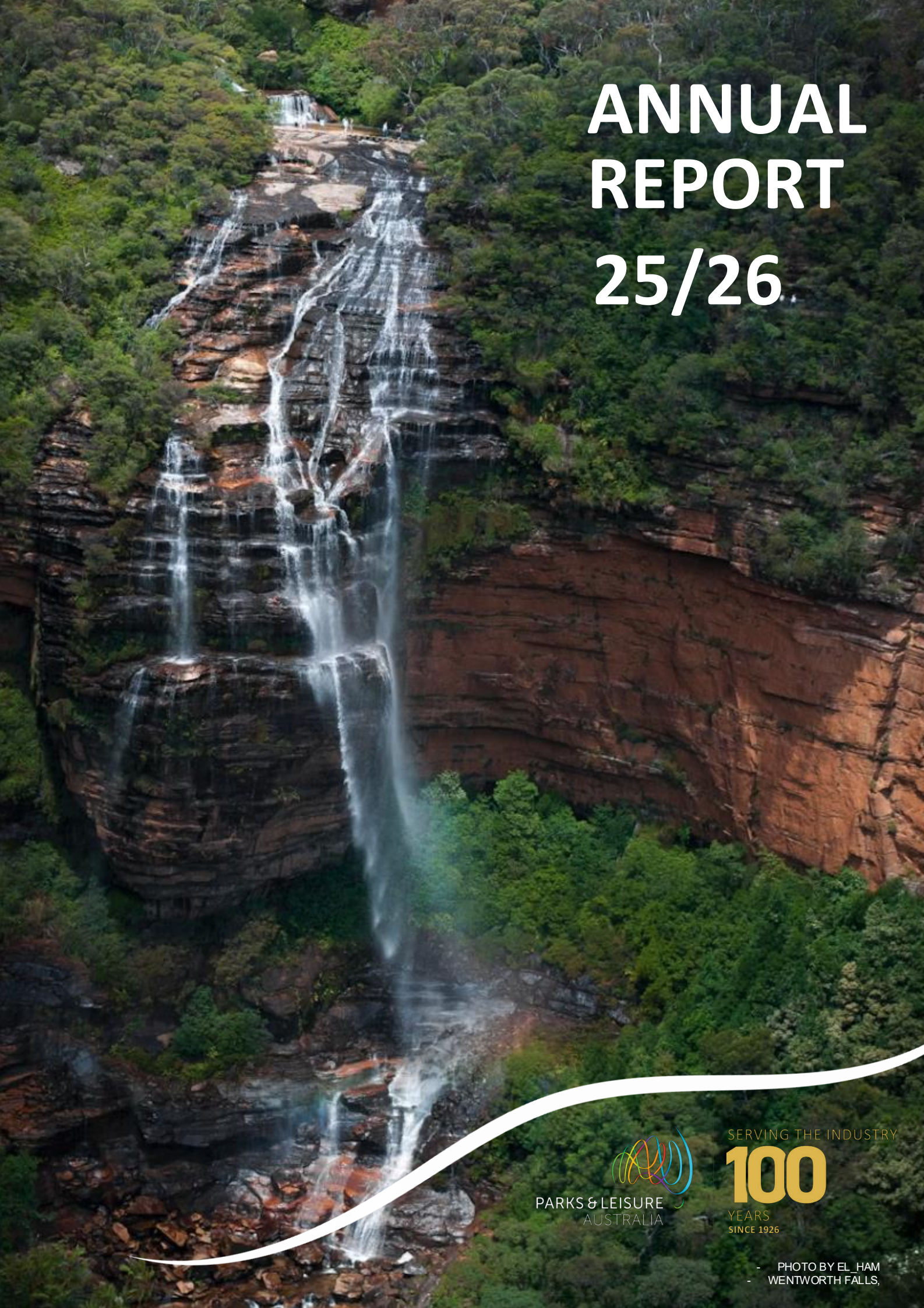


ANNUAL REPORT 25/26

PARKS & LEISURE AUSTRALIA

SERVING THE INDUSTRY 100 YEARS SINCE 1926

- PHOTO BY EL_HAM
- WENTWORTH FALLS,

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Kristin Davies

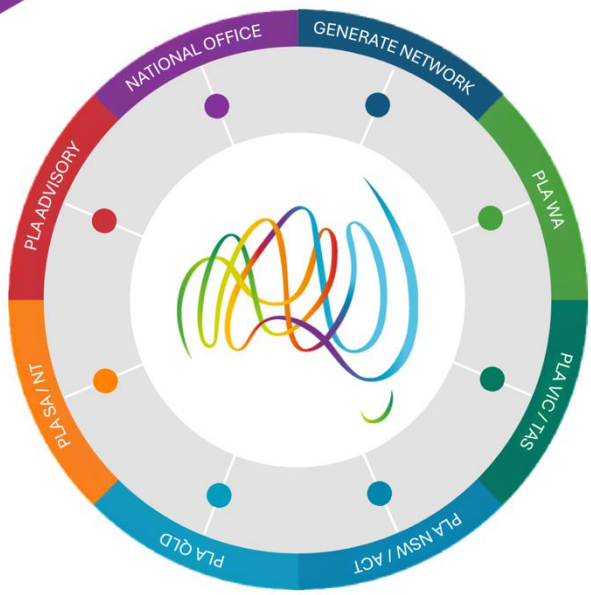
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NATIONAL PARTNERS

We sincerely thank our national partners for their support.



“This year marked a turning point for Parks and Leisure Australia, a transformation that strengthened our organisation, united our members, and set us on course for the next 100 years.”

- COBBLESTONE GREEN RESERVE, VIC

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

“In the spirit of reconciliation, Parks and Leisure Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community.

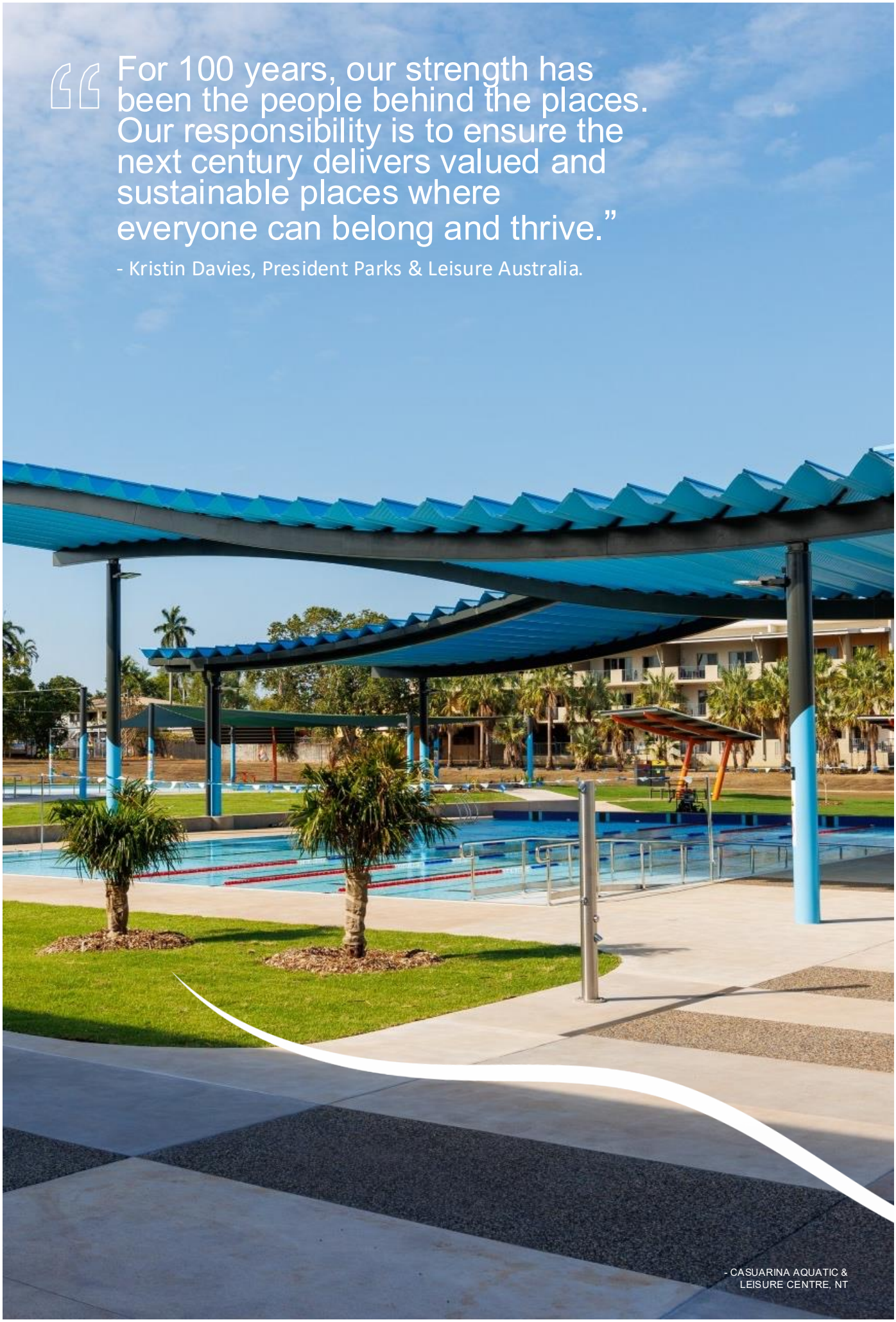
We pay our respect to their elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.”



- PHOTO BY CONNOR MEAKINS

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“For 100 years, our strength has been the people behind the places. Our responsibility is to ensure the next century delivers valued and sustainable places where everyone can belong and thrive.”
- Kristin Davies, President Parks & Leisure Australia.
- CASUARINA AQUATIC & LEISURE CENTRE, NT



Kristin Davies
National President

NATIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

The 2025-2026 year marked a significant milestone for Parks and Leisure Australia as we celebrated 100 years of service to our profession and communities. It has been a year to honour those who built our foundations, recognise the people carrying our purpose forward, and strengthen our organisation for the century ahead.

Throughout a period of organisational change and global uncertainty, one thing has remained clear: parks, sport, recreation and leisure are essential to liveability. They support our health, strengthen community connections and create opportunities for people to participate and belong. As communities face increasing pressures, the work of our sector becomes more important.

Our centenary reminds us that this purpose endures. From our origins in 1926, our profession has evolved alongside the communities we serve. Today, our people care for places that support everyday wellbeing, respond to a changing climate and bring communities together. We have inherited a remarkable legacy and share responsibility for what comes next.

This year, PLA continued to grow its capability, connections and influence. Building on reforms to our constitution and operating model, we maintained our focus on an organisation equipped to support members and represent our sector. Change asks much of people. I am grateful for the commitment, patience and resolve shown as we worked through that change together.

Partnerships have been central to this progress. We re-signed our international Memorandum of Understanding with Recreation Aotearoa for a further three years and signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Australian and New Zealand Association for Leisure Studies (ANZALS) in November 2025, strengthening connections between industry, research and practice. By 30 June, the Board had also approved agreements with National Ageing Research Institute (NARI) and the Outdoors Council of Australia, with formal signing to follow in 2026. These relationships create opportunities to share knowledge, broaden collaboration and strengthen our collective voice.

Our involvement in the Australian Sports Commission's Places to Play Industry Expert Group contributed sector expertise to the plan's development throughout the year. Our work with the Commission's affiliates group also supported collaboration across organisations with a shared interest in advocacy, participation and active communities. These connections help bring the experience of our profession into national conversations.

Supporting our people remained fundamental. Conferences, regional events, webinars, technical tours and Awards of Excellence provided opportunities to learn, connect and recognise achievement. Leisure planning courses delivered in Adelaide and Brisbane supported practical capability and professional development. This year we have focussed on building the foundation on the next generation of professional development opportunities, diverse and practical courses, accreditation and micro-credentials.

Our member survey reinforced the value of these connections and identified where we must improve. Among the 152 respondents, 95 per cent wanted PLA to be a strong industry advocate. Feedback also called for accessible learning, clearer professional development pathways and greater visibility of our advocacy. These insights provide direction as we strengthen member value and respond to different needs across our wonderful regions.

We must continue making the case for investment with evidence and conviction. Housing and infrastructure delivery must be accompanied by the parks, recreation opportunities and public spaces that make communities liveable. Our role is to demonstrate their enduring value and advocate for quality, access and equity in the decisions shaping our communities.

Above all, this centenary belongs to our people. To our National Board, Region Councils and volunteers, thank you for the time, judgement and energy you give so generously. To our CEO, Anand Pillay and our staff, thank you for your dedication through a demanding period of change. To our supporters, sponsors and partners, thank you for investing in our profession and making our work possible.

To our valued members, thank you for your trust, your contribution and the work you do every day. Much of that work happens beyond public recognition, yet its impact is felt wherever people gather, play, move and connect.

It is a privilege to serve as your National President. Together, we will carry a century of purpose forward with confidence, generosity and a clear commitment to the communities we serve.



Stefan Ratnasingham
Finance Director

FINANCE DIRECTOR REPORT

The 2026 financial year has continued to be a period of significant transition and challenge for our organisation, and our financial statements certainly reflect that. Building on the hard decisions we made last year to reconsider how we operate, 2026 is the year we actively turned those plans into action—taking bold steps to restructure our service delivery model and transition functions in-house to secure our long-term future.

Looking at the statement of profit or loss, total revenue for the year came in at **$1,311,170**. This is down compared to the prior year, driven by a changeover in executive officers impacting our regional professional development calendar. While lower revenue is never easy to navigate, it has reinforced the importance of our ongoing work to review how we deliver events and build stable, diversified revenue streams across the nation.

Total operating expenses for the year were **$1,718,288**, coming down considerably from last year as we tightly managed our costs in response to revenue shifts. A key feature of this year's accounts is the direct result of our operational pivot: we significantly slashed outsourced management fees down from $290,082 to **$105,248** as we brought capabilities in-house. These fees will not continue in FY 27. While this shift naturally increased our permanent wages and superannuation investment (with wages moving from $295,740 to **$568,347**), this structural reset replaces unpredictable external contractor costs with stable, internal operational control over the long term. This also removes the profit share mechanisms which was previously paid to external contractors.

The overall net loss position for the organisation stands at **$407,118**. We understand that back-to-back deficit years are concerning for our members. However, 2026 has been another abnormal, foundational year of heavy restructuring. The structural work and deliberate shifts we have executed will pave the way for a much leaner, more sustainable operational model.

Turning our focus to the balance sheet, the natural impact of this year's result has reduced our total equity to **$525,342**. Total assets have naturally decreased alongside our cash reserves (maintaining **$571,778** in liquid bank accounts and term deposits), but the organisation has continued to maintain disciplined oversight, streamlining our trade debtors and reducing total liabilities down to **$346,182**. Even with these pressures, our current asset pool comfortably covers our immediate obligations, and our reserves provide the runway needed to complete this transition without compromising core member services or forcing sudden fee hikes.

Looking ahead, we are actively focused on revitalising our regional professional development and events calendar to ensure revenue streams bounce back strongly from this cyclical low.

To summarise, 2026 has been another demanding year financially, but it has further cleared the path forward. By continuing to build a stronger, more connected organisation. With our delivery model now in house, we are well-positioned to manage cost-versus-benefit decisions and return our financials to a stronger and sustainable position.



> To summarise, 2026 has been another demanding year financially, but it has further cleared the path forward."
>
> - Stefan Ratnasingham, Finance Director.

- PHOTO BY GEORGIA WILSON, WA



Josh Geraghty
President QLD

QLD REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

The Queensland Region has had another busy and rewarding year, made possible by the commitment, energy and generosity of our members and volunteers.

Firstly, I would like to recognise and thank the volunteers of the Regional Council who continue to step up throughout the year. Their contribution ensures our members have access to meaningful professional development, networking opportunities and experiences that connect our sector and strengthen our collective capability. Their commitment is at the heart of everything we deliver.

Learning from our places
This year, we had the opportunity to explore how Brisbane City Council is responding to the challenge of protecting and restoring biodiversity while accommodating continued urban growth. The Brisbane City Biodiversity Strategy, an important component of Council's *Living in Brisbane 2010* vision for a clean and green city, provided valuable insights into the ways biodiversity can be considered alongside the needs of a growing city. It was a great opportunity for members to hear directly about the challenges, approaches and opportunities involved in creating greener, more resilient urban environments.

Strengthening partnerships
For the fourth consecutive year, the Queensland Region joined forces with AILA for our annual Parks Week Forum.

This year, members ventured to the impressive Archerfield Wetlands, where we explored the development of the site and heard about its future plans. The site tour provided an excellent opportunity to learn from a significant local project while connecting with colleagues across the parks, leisure and related sectors.

The event also demonstrated the value of our ongoing partnership with AILA. By bringing our networks together, we create opportunities to share knowledge, build relationships and strengthen the collective voice of our industry.

Building professional capability
We were also delighted to bring the inaugural QLD Leisure Planners Course to Brisbane. The four-day, industry-focused program provided participants with an opportunity to learn, collaborate and engage with experienced practitioners from across the sector. With the knowledge and expertise of presenters Julie Carney Nicholls, Tabitha Goodreid, Kerri Heilbronn, David Mason, Jason Leslie and Marty Lambert, participants were treated to a high-quality program designed to build practical skills and deepen their understanding of leisure planning.

The success of the inaugural course reflects the appetite across our sector for relevant, practical professional development, and we look forward to continuing to create opportunities that support practitioners at every stage of their careers.

Celebrating excellence
Our Queensland Awards of Excellence provided a fitting opportunity to celebrate the year and recognise the incredible work being delivered by our members in communities across the state. The awards event followed the *Planning for Your Olympic and Paralympic Legacy* workshop, hosted by Phil Wishart, General Manager Government Relations and Stakeholder Engagement at Paralympics Australia. The workshop provided an important opportunity to consider the legacy opportunities ahead and the role our sector can play in shaping positive outcomes for Queensland communities.

The Awards of Excellence then gave us the chance to celebrate the people and projects behind that work. Every day, our members are contributing to healthier, more connected and more vibrant communities, and it was wonderful to pause and acknowledge that contribution.

Recognising our volunteers
This year, we also farewell Regional Councilor Amy Ahchay, who has decided to step away from the Regional Council.

Amy's contribution to the Queensland Region cannot be understated. We sincerely thank her for the time, energy and expertise she has shared with the Council and our members. We will certainly miss what she brought to the team and wish Amy every success in the next chapter.

Looking ahead
Finally, I would like to thank our members, those who attended our events, shared their knowledge, connected with colleagues, contributed to our activities or simply reached out to us throughout the year.

Our members are what make the Queensland Region what it is, and your participation, ideas and enthusiasm continue to shape our program and our priorities.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to creating opportunities to connect, learn, celebrate and advocate for our profession and the communities we serve.

Thank you for being part of the Queensland Region. We look forward to another year of working together to strengthen our sector and champion the important role of parks and leisure across Queensland.



Simon James
President NSW / ACT

NSW/ACT REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Over the past year, the NSW/ACT Region has continued to grow and thrive through collaboration, advocacy and professional development. It has been a year shaped by imagination, innovation and connection, bringing together members from metropolitan and regional communities to share knowledge, celebrate achievements and strengthen our collective impact.

At the heart of everything we do are the people behind the places. Our sector plays a vital role in creating healthy, connected and resilient communities, and the Region remains committed to championing the importance of parks, leisure and open space in the way our towns and cities are planned, designed and experienced.

A major highlight of the year was the 2026 NSW/ACT Regional Conference, held in Orange in partnership with Orange City Council and themed *Sustainability Shaping Tomorrow*.
The conference provided a rich mix of masterclasses, workshops and technical tours, creating opportunities for practitioners to learn, exchange ideas and see innovation in action. The technical tours showcased local excellence across Orange and demonstrated how sustainability, thoughtful planning and community priorities can come together to shape places for the future.

Taking the conference to Orange was also about more than choosing a new venue. It was an important step in strengthening regional participation and ensuring professional development opportunities are accessible to members beyond Sydney.

Celebrating excellence across our sector
The 2026 NSW/ACT Awards of Excellence provided another opportunity to celebrate the people, projects and ideas making a difference across our communities.

The awards showcased outstanding achievements in design, planning, recreation and community development. Finalists and winners demonstrated the creativity, dedication and innovation that continue to define our sector, reminding us that behind every successful project are people committed to creating better places and better experiences for their communities.

Building capability and connection
Throughout the year, PLA NSW/ACT has continued to deliver a professional development program designed to keep members connected, informed and inspired.
Our events bring together industry leaders, experienced practitioners and emerging professionals to share knowledge, challenge thinking and build capability across the sector. Just as importantly, they create spaces for people to meet, exchange experiences and build connections that strengthen our industry.

We have also continued to strengthen our relationships with other professional associations across the sector. Through joint events, collaboration and shared advocacy, we are building stronger networks and amplifying PLA's voice as the peak body representing the parks and leisure sector across NSW and the ACT.

Advocacy remains a central focus for the Region. We continue to champion the value of parks, open space and recreation within urban and regional planning frameworks, ensuring this essential infrastructure remains part of the conversation as our communities evolve.

With Alexa Springall supporting the Region as Executive Officer until December 2025 and Ursula Gleeson taking on the role from January 2026, the Regional Council has maintained a strong focus on industry advocacy, member support and regional engagement.

Our Executive Officer plays an important role behind the scenes, coordinating events, facilitating communication and helping turn regional priorities into action. Their contribution has been instrumental in keeping our program moving and ensuring members remain connected to the Region and to each other.

Building this momentum will remain a key priority in the years ahead.
At the end of 2025 we farewelled long-serving Regional Council members Heather Nesbitt, Fiona Tucker, Ian McAlister, Tony Duffy and Abinaya Rajavelu, who stood down at the end of their terms.

This year, we farewelled long-serving Regional Council member Debbie Sibbick, who resigned following a change in her work location and focus.
We sincerely thank Heather, Fiona, Ian, Tony, Abinaya and Deb for their many years of dedication, leadership and commitment to the growth and success of the Region. Their contribution has been greatly valued, and we wish them all every success in the next chapter.
Our continuing Regional Council comprises:
Simon James - President
Mark Taylor - Vice President
Fiona MacColl - National Board Director
John Siemon - Treasurer
Stephen Prince, Mark Bruhn, Sam Eriksson, Megan Taylor, Les Mun, Simon Hair, Bryce Collins
Marilyn Oliver – Generate representative

I extend my sincere thanks to each Council member for their commitment, energy and leadership throughout the year. The strength of our Region is built on the willingness of members to contribute, collaborate and share their expertise.

Creating equitable opportunities across NSW and the ACT remains an ongoing challenge. Our Region spans diverse metropolitan, regional and rural communities, and ensuring members can participate meaningfully requires us to continually rethink how, where and when we connect.

The decision to hold the 2026 Regional Conference in Orange was one tangible step towards addressing this challenge. We will continue looking for ways to bring professional development, networking and industry engagement to members across the breadth of the Region.

Emerging professionals remain a key priority for NSW/ACT.
Our sector is evolving and ensuring that those who have recently joined the industry feel welcomed, connected and empowered is essential to building its future. We are continuing to explore mentorship pathways and expand Generate Network activities that help emerging professionals develop skills, build confidence and create valuable industry connections.

Supporting the next generation is not simply about preparing for future leaders, it is about ensuring fresh ideas, new perspectives and different experiences continue to shape our profession today.

As we look at the year ahead, our focus remains clear: connect people, build capability, champion our sector and create opportunities for members across the entire NSW/ACT Region.

There is enormous creativity and expertise within our industry. By bringing people together, celebrating what is working, sharing what we are learning and advocating for the places and spaces that matter, we can continue to strengthen our collective impact.

The future of parks and leisure is being shaped now, by the people behind the places, and by the connections we build along the way.



Hayley Ashworth
President SA/NT

SA/NT REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

The 2025/26 year has been one of growth, renewal and strengthening connections across the Parks and Leisure Australia SA/NT Region. As our industry continues to navigate increasing community expectations, changing participation trends and growing demands on public spaces and recreation infrastructure, the Region has remained focused on delivering value to members through professional development, networking opportunities and industry collaboration.

A key achievement this year has been the delivery of a diverse and relevant events program that reflects the broad scope of our profession. From our *Supporting Communities to Live and Age Well* seminar, which explored the important role community services play in improving health and wellbeing outcomes, to the *Adelaide Park Lands Tour and End of Year Celebration*, which provided members with an opportunity to explore one of Australia's most significant open space networks while strengthening professional connections, and our partnership with SANFL to deliver the successful *Gather Round Forum* focused on collaboration, shared use and innovative partnerships, our events have continued to bring together professionals from across local government, sport, recreation, planning and the private sector. These events provide valuable opportunities for members to share ideas, build networks and respond collectively to emerging industry challenges.

Another significant milestone this year was the successful delivery of South Australia's inaugural *Leisure Planners Course*. Developed to support emerging and current practitioners, the course responds to the growing need to build capability within our industry and provide practical, industry-led learning opportunities. The strong interest shown in the course highlights both the demand for professional development and the commitment of our members to continuous improvement.





Our Awards of Excellence was also a standout success. This year we received one of the highest numbers of nominations the Region has seen, showcasing the breadth and quality of projects, initiatives and people making a positive impact across South Australia and the Northern Territory. The Awards evening itself was one of our best attended yet, providing an opportunity to celebrate innovation, leadership and excellence while recognising the outstanding work being undertaken across the parks, leisure and recreation sector. The strength of the nominations demonstrates the passion and commitment that exists throughout our industry and reinforces the importance of recognising and sharing success.

The Region also welcomed several new members to the Regional Council. Judy Parkes, James Catterall, Jake Culkin, Matthew Sexton and Monina Gilbey joined the Council during the year, bringing a wealth of experience and diverse perspectives from across local government, open space and horticulture, aquatics, consulting and industry services. Their willingness to contribute their time and expertise strengthens the Region and helps ensure we continue to represent the interests of our members.

A further highlight was the appointment of our new Executive Officer, Camille Redfern. Camille has quickly become an integral part of the Region, supporting the delivery of events, communications, administration and member engagement activities. Her enthusiasm, professionalism and commitment have provided valuable support to the Regional Council and strengthened our capacity to deliver for members.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, our focus will be on increasing our reach and engagement within the Northern Territory, strengthening partnerships across the parks, leisure, recreation and sport sectors, increasing our membership and continuing to deliver a diverse range of high-quality events that support the professional growth of our members. By working collaboratively with industry partners and building stronger connections across our Region, we are well positioned to continue delivering value and supporting the professionals who help create healthier, more active and connected communities.





Andrea Szymanski
President VIC/TAS

VIC/TAS REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

As I reflect on the year, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved together across the Victorian and Tasmanian parks and leisure community. It has been a year defined by connection, collaboration and shared leadership, demonstrating that our greatest strength lies in bringing people together to create healthier, more inclusive, resilient and sustainable communities.

"The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking."
Albert Einstein

This quote resonates strongly with our profession and the journey Parks and Leisure Australia has undertaken over the past year. The challenges facing our communities, landscapes and organisations continue to evolve, requiring us to be bold enough to challenge established thinking, embrace change and adapt our approaches to create better outcomes for future generations.

Victoria's parks network covers more than 4 million hectares with 18% of the state's land and waterways set within national parks, state parks and other conservation reserves. Tasmania has one of the most significant reserve systems in the world, with more than half of the state's land area protected through parks and reserves. These places provide vital environmental, social, cultural and economic value, supporting biodiversity, climate resilience, active recreation, community wellbeing and connection to Country.

Throughout the year, the VIC/TAS Region continued to create opportunities for learning, knowledge sharing and meaningful industry connection. The Landscape Subdivision Seminars, our Council and Community Participation Forums, Sustainable Mountain Bike Trails Summits and a growing range of professional development opportunities demonstrated the strong appetite across our sector to come together, share experiences and collectively tackle increasingly complex challenges.

A significant milestone this year was the launch of the Public Open Space Handbook (POSH), delivered through a partnership between Parks and Leisure Australia VIC/TAS, VicHealth and Xyst. More than two years in the making, this contemporary resource provides practical guidance for the planning, design and management of public open space and reflects the power of collaboration across our profession. The successful launch and accompanying masterclass program have already highlighted the strong appetite for practical, evidence-based resources that support better community outcomes.

The VIC/TAS Awards of Excellence once again showcased the innovation, passion and leadership that exists throughout our region. With record participation, the awards celebrated the extraordinary work being undertaken to enhance the places and spaces that support community wellbeing. We look forward to recognising our regional winners at the 2026 PLA National Conference in Melbourne as part of PLA's centenary celebrations.

This year also represented an important period of organisational evolution for Parks and Leisure Australia. The introduction of a new Executive Officer model and broader organisational changes brought to fruition reforms that had been discussed for some time.

While change can initially feel unfamiliar and at times uncomfortable, it is essential for organisations that aspire to remain relevant, responsive and sustainable. Einstein's observation that meaningful change requires us to change our thinking is particularly relevant.

We cannot continue to do things simply because they have always been done that way. Progress requires courage, innovation and a willingness to learn, adapt and continually improve. The changes implemented provide an important foundation for the future growth of our VIC/TAS Region and will continue to evolve over time for the benefit of our members, partners and the broader profession.

We are strengthening relationships with partners across public health, climate resilience, biodiversity, urban planning, supporting infrastructure, education and community development. The complex challenges facing our communities require integrated thinking and collective action, and the VIC/TAS Region is increasingly playing a role in connecting people, ideas and industries to achieve broader social, environmental and community outcomes.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our VIC/TAS Region Council members. They are the heart of our region, generously volunteering their time, expertise and passion to shape our direction, foster partnerships and deliver the events, initiatives and opportunities that create value for our members. They embody the spirit of Parks and Leisure Australia in Victoria and Tasmania and represent an exceptional group of leaders committed to advancing our profession and improving outcomes for our communities. I am incredibly proud to serve alongside them.
I would also like to acknowledge our partners across Victoria and Tasmania, whose collaboration continues to broaden our reach and impact, and the PLA National Board and staff, whose support and commitment underpin the success of our regions. Together, we are demonstrating the value of working across disciplines, sectors and jurisdictions to address the increasingly complex challenges facing our communities.

Finally, thank you to our members, partners, presenters, sponsors and volunteers whose commitment and enthusiasm continue to strengthen our region. Together, we are building more than professional networks. We are building a connected community of leaders, practitioners and advocates who are shaping the future of parks, leisure and open space across Victoria, Tasmania and beyond.

The opportunities before us are significant, and the future will require us to continue embracing change, challenging conventional thinking and working together to create lasting impact. If this year has demonstrated anything, it is that when passionate people unite behind a shared purpose, our capacity to influence positive change is extraordinary.

“As we move into the next year, I am excited about the opportunities ahead. With a strong foundation and a vibrant community, VIC/TAS is well-positioned to continue leading the way in parks and leisure.”









Janine Ahola
President WA

WA REGIONAL PRESIDENT REPORT

Looking back, I feel the best description for the WA region over the last financial year is an adventure, or rollercoaster, depending on your frame of mind. We started with complete uncertainty, but a clear goal, had ups and downs, twists and turns over the year but finished at our planned destination. WA Regional Council was re-ratified and returned to the National Board in the early part of 2026.

Since then, with the assistance of the National Executive team, we started the long road of reconnecting with our members and industry as a whole. We pushed hard and managed to hold three events from March to June. An expert panel Breakfast in March, was followed by a Playspace Bus Tour and this year's events culminated in a 1-day symposium and WA Award of Excellence in June. At each well attended event, old connections were reformed and new connections made, resulting in an ever-growing list of proposed activities and events 2026/27.

Along the road, Callum Aston was appointed as part-time Executive Officer for WA. He bought fresh energy, to the Regional Council, and has undertaken a lot in just this short period of time. I'm looking forward to what he can achieve in a whole year!

From the journey so far, I'd like to personally thank the WA Regional Councillors for their support and strength during all the uncertainty. For the passion and resilience, you have shown for the Parks and Leisure Industry and in staying true to the vision of PLA. It meant a lot when everyone dug in to get events organised, even presenting, posting socials, spreading the word that PLAWA is back and generally keeping our journey moving in the right direction.

My second thanks go to the National Executive Team, and National Board for being on call when we needed them – organising events from far, or sending templates, banners and printing through in record time.

But my highlight of the year and the biggest thanks go to the Parks and Leisure Industry in WA, especially current PLAWA members. Every time we reached out, you were there, guiding or pushing for more. You are our steadfast support team, and you never wavered during this journey. Like me you believe in what we do, the value our industry brings to our communities and your support through thought word or deed has definitely been felt.

Looking forward our focus has not changed – reconnecting with you all and expanding our events/ activities further throughout WA.









DR. John Tower
Chair, PLA Advisory

PLA ADVISORY REPORT

The 2024/2025 year has been a period of focused effort from the PLA Advisory team. Advisory has a stable membership with a combination of recent appointments and the stalwarts from Advisory's inception. Advisory's dedicated volunteers are Neal Ames, Cathy Kiss, Wendy Holland, Anand Pillay, John Senior, Steph McCallum-Keily, Lucilla Marshall, Laura Shaw and John Tower (Chair). It is pleasing to report that PLA Advisory is maintaining gender equity with our membership. The Advisory team meet every month and participate in full day review and planning sessions twice a year.

Advisory has consolidated its efforts to focus on key projects to contribute to PLA members and the wider industry's capacity to respond to issues that impact on the efficient and effective delivery of park and leisure experiences. Advisory was pleased to welcome Fiona McColl as the National Board's representative on Advisory.

Our Achievements
PLA Advisory's contributions include preparing position papers on critical issues, initiating research and advocating for the benefit of the PLA members and our overall industry. The following list itemises Advisory's activities.

Advocacy
- Advisory prepared the Brisbane Conference Statement which was adopted at the 2024 National Conference. The 2023 Adelaide Statement and Pledge Commentaries were used to guide the Brisbane Statement – https://parksleisure.com.au/wp-admin/upload.php?item=41325
- Advisory continued to collaborate with The National Urban Green Infrastructure Round Table.
- Advisory continued to monitor the progress of the Australian Sport Commission Act Review.
- Advisory liaised with PLA National Board regarding the implementation of the PLA's Gender Equity Charter and PLA Commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.
- Advisory engaged with National Office and PaRC Inc. to support the Park and Recreation Collection (PaRC) and further develop this valuable resource.
- Advisory contributed to the Australian Sport Commission National Sport Research Advisory Group activities.

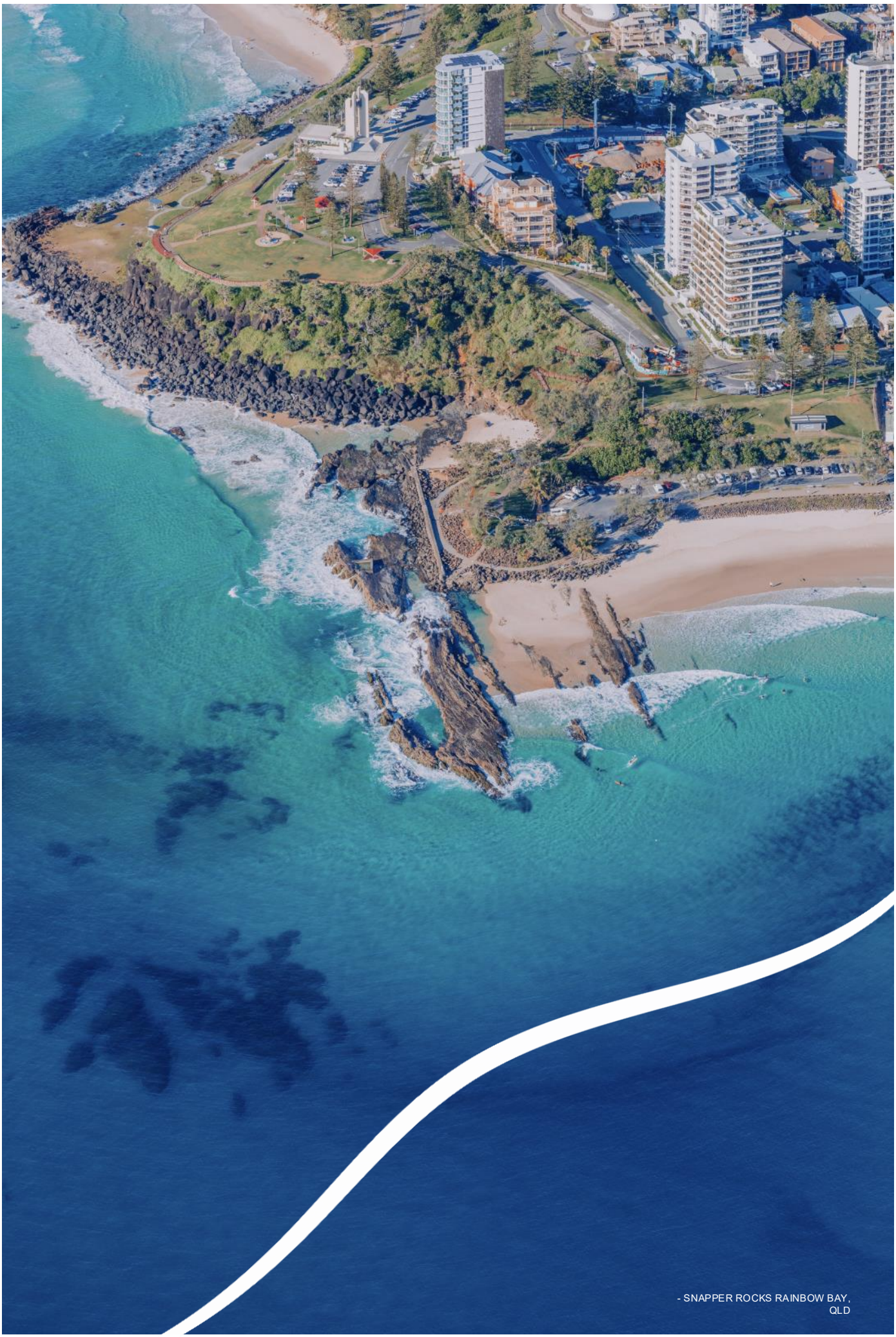
Projects
- Managing Park and Leisure Construction Costs Increases. Advisory produced a report from the 2024 PLA National Conference Workshop and delivered workshops on this topic at the 2025 NSW/QLD and Vic/Tas Regional Conferences. Advisory's Guide to support the management of construction costs will be available at the 2025 National Conference.
- Park & Leisure and University Collaboration Project – Advisory and an industry based working group (including representatives from ANZALS) continued to develop this resource to guide better collaboration between the park & leisure industry and universities. Workshops were conducted at the 2025 NSW/QLD and Vic/Tas Regional Conferences. The website providing the resources to guide better collaboration is scheduled to be released by November 2025.
- Park and Leisure Industry Profile. The aim of the Park and Leisure Industry Profile (PaLIP) project is to establish an industry profile that will inform PLA members; park and leisure stakeholders; local, state and national politicians; kindred organisations and non-government organisations to explain the nature of our industry and the impact it has on the social, economic and environmental aspects of Australia. This project remains a priority and will be further developed in the 2025 / 2026 financial year.
- PLA Advisory website – The Advisory website has been updated to include a profile of Advisory members and will eventually provide information and documents about Advisory's projects - https://parksleisure.com.au/about-us/pla-advisory-committee/

Research and Knowledge Initiatives
- Preparation of the Research Connections section of PLA's Journal.
- Provision of a quarterly Advisory article for PLA's Journal.
- Regular contributions to the monthly PLA News.
- Contributions to the delivery of the 2025 National Conference, including a session about *Managing Park and Leisure Construction Costs Increases*, and *Future of Park and Leisure Industry Workshop*.

Priorities for next year
PLA Advisory remain dedicated to contributing as PLA's critical analysis and discussion forum. Our intentions for the next year are to deliver outputs for both the Construction Costs and Collaboration projects. These projects have been developed over the last few years. Advisory looks forward to delivering resources to assist PLA members and the wider park and leisure industry to improve the delivery of park and leisure experiences.

Our new initiative for 2025 / 2026 is to produce a Park and Leisure Industry Profile document. The project will draw on data from established organisations such as Australian Bureau of Statistics, Institute of Health and Welfare, Jobs and Skills Australia, Clearinghouse for Sport, and kindred associations such as Planning Institute of Australia, Australian Institute of Landscape Architects, Royal Life Saving Australia, as well as a range of university research centres to document the breadth and depth of the park and leisure industry.

Advisory will continue to collaborate with PLA Regions, Generate Network, National Office and PLA Board to make sure we are aware of issues and contributing our expertise when possible. Advisory members will also continue to remain engaged with the Regional Conferences to contribute our insights and listen to members' needs and issues. We will use this collaboration to guide Advisory's activities and contribute to the park and leisure industry's development.



- SNAPPER ROCKS RAINBOW BAY, QLD



Kristin Davies
National President

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Parks & Leisure Australia (PLA) remains committed to representing, advocating for and empowering our diverse community across parks, leisure, recreation, sport, open space and the environment. Through opportunities to **grow, connect and learn**, PLA continues to provide members with the development, resources and connections needed to strengthen our profession and industry.

Membership Snapshot

PLA's membership growth over recent years reflects the strength and reach of our industry association. Since January 2021, membership has increased from **2,042 to 3,119 members as at 30 June 2026 — a 66% increase**.

Following a peak of 3,549 members in 2024/25, membership declined by 430 members during 2025/26. While this represents a decrease from the previous financial year, PLA's overall membership base remains significantly larger than five years ago.

Engaging Members Nationwide

PLA continues to maintain a strong presence across Australia, with members represented across all regions:

NSW/ACT: 590
SA/NT: 704
Queensland: 303
Victoria/Tasmania: 1,017
Western Australia: 501
Overseas: 4

During 2025/26, PLA delivered **46 national and regional events**, attracting around **2,300 attendees**. Members represented 77% of total attendance, with non-members accounting for the remaining 23%. These events continue to provide valuable opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing and connection across the sector.

Gender Balance

PLA is continuing its focus on building a more representative and inclusive membership. In 2025/26, **1,497 members (48%) identified as male and 1,129 (36%) as female**, while 493 members (16%) had no gender recorded.

Improving the completeness and accuracy of our membership data will remain a priority, enabling PLA to better understand and support the diversity of our membership.

Looking Forward

Feedback from the 2025 Annual Membership Survey has helped identify opportunities to strengthen the member experience. In 2026/27 and beyond, PLA will focus on expanding professional development and engagement opportunities through increased national and regional events, targeted webinars, courses and in-person learning.

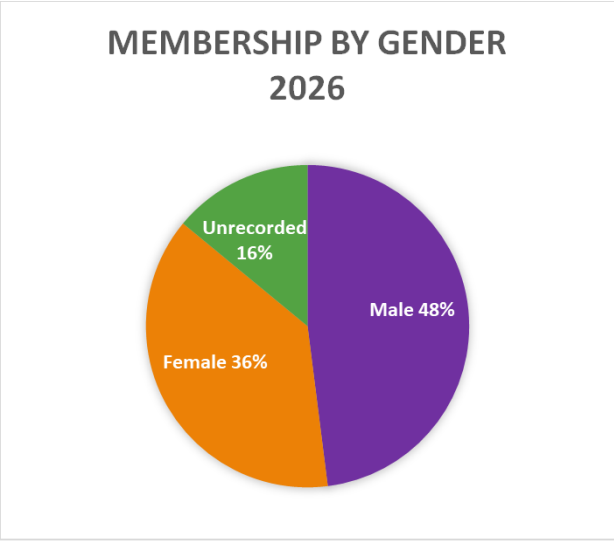
Planned initiatives include professional development in areas such as **leisure planning and artificial intelligence**, alongside greater opportunities for members to connect, share knowledge and build their professional networks.

PLA is also working towards a more unified national approach, aligning content, programs and member opportunities so that **more members can access high-quality resources and experiences regardless of their location**.

Through listening to our members and continually improving our programs and services, PLA will continue to support a connected, capable and thriving parks and leisure profession.

> "We would like to thank our members for their continued support and for the role our members and volunteers play in supporting and promoting the values of PLA throughout the industry."





Improve Membership Services:

While satisfaction with PLA events is generally positive, there are notable areas needing improvement. Members have highlighted a demand for more rural events and expressed low satisfaction with features like the jobs board, PaRC library, and AP&L Journal. To enhance perceived membership value, PLA should address these weaknesses and introduce new, relevant services.

2. Increase Event Accessibility:

Time, location, and budget constraints are significant barriers to member participation in PLA activities. To overcome these obstacles, PLA should increase rural events and invest in recording and streaming activities for broader access. This approach would allow members to engage with resources at their convenience. Additionally, reviewing event pricing and offering discounts could enhance membership attractiveness and attendance.

3. Target Local Governments and Businesses:

Statistical analysis indicates that corporate accounts contribute significantly to membership numbers. PLA should focus on attracting local councils and businesses not currently enrolled, maximizing potential membership growth and enhancing the organisation's reach.

4. Prioritise Membership Engagement:

The survey shows that members are mostly active and engage with PLA monthly. To maintain this engagement, PLA should enhance its services and utilise targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness about membership features. Encouraging corporate members to access their accounts will also increase resource utilisation.

5. Create More Member Connections:

Members desire greater opportunities to connect with the industry at a national level. Implementing an online forum could facilitate discussions and strengthen community ties, encouraging further member engagement and collaboration.

6. Focus on Communication Channels:

Members prefer emails and E-Newsletters for updates over social media and other platforms. PLA should tailor content to include industry news, event information, and improved membership features. While social media isn't favoured, maintaining a presence can enhance brand awareness.

7. Continue Event Variety:

Members appreciate the diversity of PLA activities. Maintaining and expanding this variety is essential, with a focus on improving workshops and training sessions. Developing a long-term event schedule that includes both national and regional activities will ensure relevant content and increased member satisfaction.

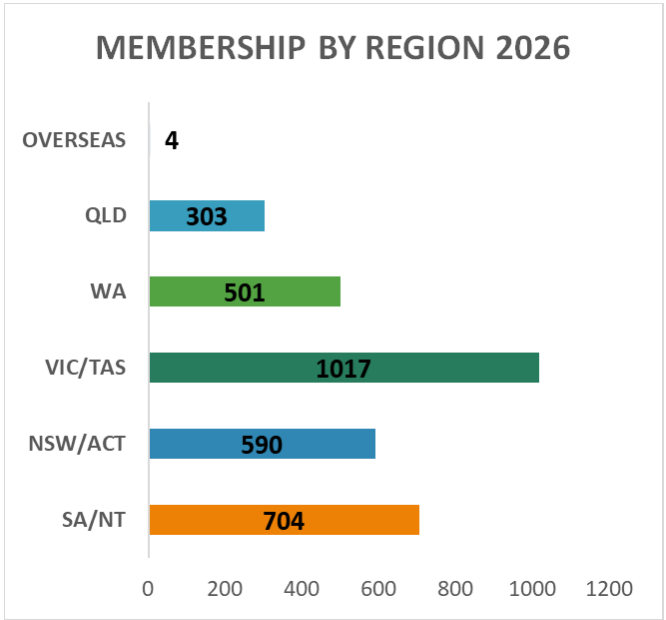
8. Provide Professional Development Opportunities:

Skill shortages pose a significant challenge in the industry. PLA can address this by enhancing the CPLP program and raising awareness of professional certification opportunities. Identifying skill gaps through industry research will enable PLA to offer targeted training sessions, benefiting both members and the organisation.

9. Enhance Advocacy and Strategic Vision:

Increased advocacy and stakeholder engagement are crucial for addressing industry challenges. PLA should conduct more industry research to educate members and actively engage with State and Federal Governments to address pressing issues. Demonstrating a strategic vision aligned with member needs will reinforce PLA's role as the peak body in the industry.

By focusing on these key areas, Parks and Leisure Australia will continue to enhance member satisfaction and engagement, ultimately strengthening its position within the industry.





SNOWY MOUNTAINS, KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK, AUSTRALIA
- PHOTO BY HEIKO OTTO

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