



AUSTRALIAN
smart communities
association

Annual Report 2025

Australian Smart Communities Association

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Australian Smart Communities Association

December, 2025

Broadband Alliance Inc.

Trading as Australian Smart Communities Association
ABN: 32 1701 960 56

29/97 Creek Street,
Brisbane, QLD, 4000

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Smart Communities Association acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea, and community. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

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Contents

Our Reach & Impact	4
President's Report	5
Summary of Key Achievements	6
Our Communication Ecosystem	7
Member Engagement Overview	8
2025 Events & Initiatives	9 - 11
Digital Footprint	12
Memberships	13 - 14
ASCA 2030 Strategy On a Page	15
The ASCA Journey	16 - 17



Our Reach & Impact

1

Extensive landmass coverage across Australian states.

3,254 Km²

2

Significant economic contributions from communities our members serve.

AU\$ 228 Billion

3

Population reach demonstrating extensive community impact.

3.5 Million

What We're About

Local-First & Practitioner-Led: Empowering the on-the-ground changemakers.

Cross-Sector Connector: Bridging councils, academia, industry & standards bodies.

Global Insight, Local Application: Translating world-class standards into local delivery.

Inclusive by Design: Equity & ethics at every stage of transformation.

Action-Oriented: Turning strategy into measurable, real-world impact.



ASCA joining forces for the IEC Smart Cities workshops in Sydney



The Smart City Expo World Congress 2025 constituent in Barcelona, Spain

President's Report

2025 has been a year of **renewed purpose and delivery**. Building on the Melbourne Summit in 2024, ASCA focused on strengthening our member community engagement, deepening our policy voice, commenced hands-on tech trials and laid the foundation for our 2030 Strategy. I am pleased to report a net profit of \$8,744 for the 2024-25 FY.

Highlights included:

- Expanding **member engagement** through 1-to-1s, gold/silver sessions, and bronze town halls.
- Delivering new **thought leadership papers and webinars** on data literacy, placemaking, storytelling with data, and responsible AI.
- Launching the **InsightWise AI pilot** with local governments and gold/silver members.
- Progressing planning for **Summit 2026**, including EOIs for a regional host.
- Improving our **member portal, CRM, and communications systems** to deliver a better digital experience.
- Strengthening **alliance opportunities**.

This year marks a shift from **consolidation to acceleration**. Our new 2030 Strategy, shaped through member engagement, sets ASCA's course as the national voice for smart communities.

None of this is possible without our members. I thank the Board, the Reference Working Group and our members for supporting us this year. I wish to also take this opportunity to thank our outgoing Board members, Simon Berryman (NBN) and Bronwen Clark (NGAA), for their contributions to the Board over several years and wish them well.

I look forward to 2026, our National Summit year, a chance to meet up as one and progress our new 2030 Strategic Plan. Until then, I do hope you have time to relax and enjoy the holidays.



James Sankar
President, ASCA



Summary of Key Achievements

Throughout 2025, ASCA made significant progress across our four strategic priorities, delivering tangible outcomes that strengthened our community and advanced smart technology adoption across Australia. The following table summarises our key accomplishments aligned with each strategic priority:

Strategic Priority 1 - Enhancing ASCA's value for members
• Dedicated Membership Manager assisting with member consultations and events.
• New Digital Engagement Consultant and delivery of a new Engagement Plan.
• New organisations and individuals joined through expos, meetups, and referrals.
• Gold & Silver engagement sessions and bronze town halls provided member insights, now embedded in the new 2030 ASCA Strategic Plan.
• Member support was prioritised to more effectively influence and showcase their impact, opportunities to collaborate together, policy advocacy and smarter digital platforms.
Strategic Priority 2 - Strengthening ASCA's governance and capabilities
• Established board paper format to AICD standards and held formal board meeting processes
• Updated conflict/risk registers and reaffirmed the code of conduct.
• Established a subcommittee on ASCA's future to explore new operating models.
• Streamlined internal admin systems through newsletters, website & Member Portal improvements.
Strategic Priority 3 - Increasing ASCA's influence
• Supported AURIN national funding bids.
• GHD upgraded membership tier, reflecting ASCA's increasing value.
• Engaged with new member prospects across Vic, WA, and Qld leading to new members
Strategic Priority 4 - Advancing smart tech knowledge and policy
• Supported the development and release of the Accelerated Smart Development report.
• InsightWise AI pilot kicked off with local government members.
• Released thought leadership papers on data literacy, data storytelling, and placemaking.
• Represented members in national consultations and standards development, including Productivity Commission submissions and Standards Australia nominations.

Our Communication Ecosystem

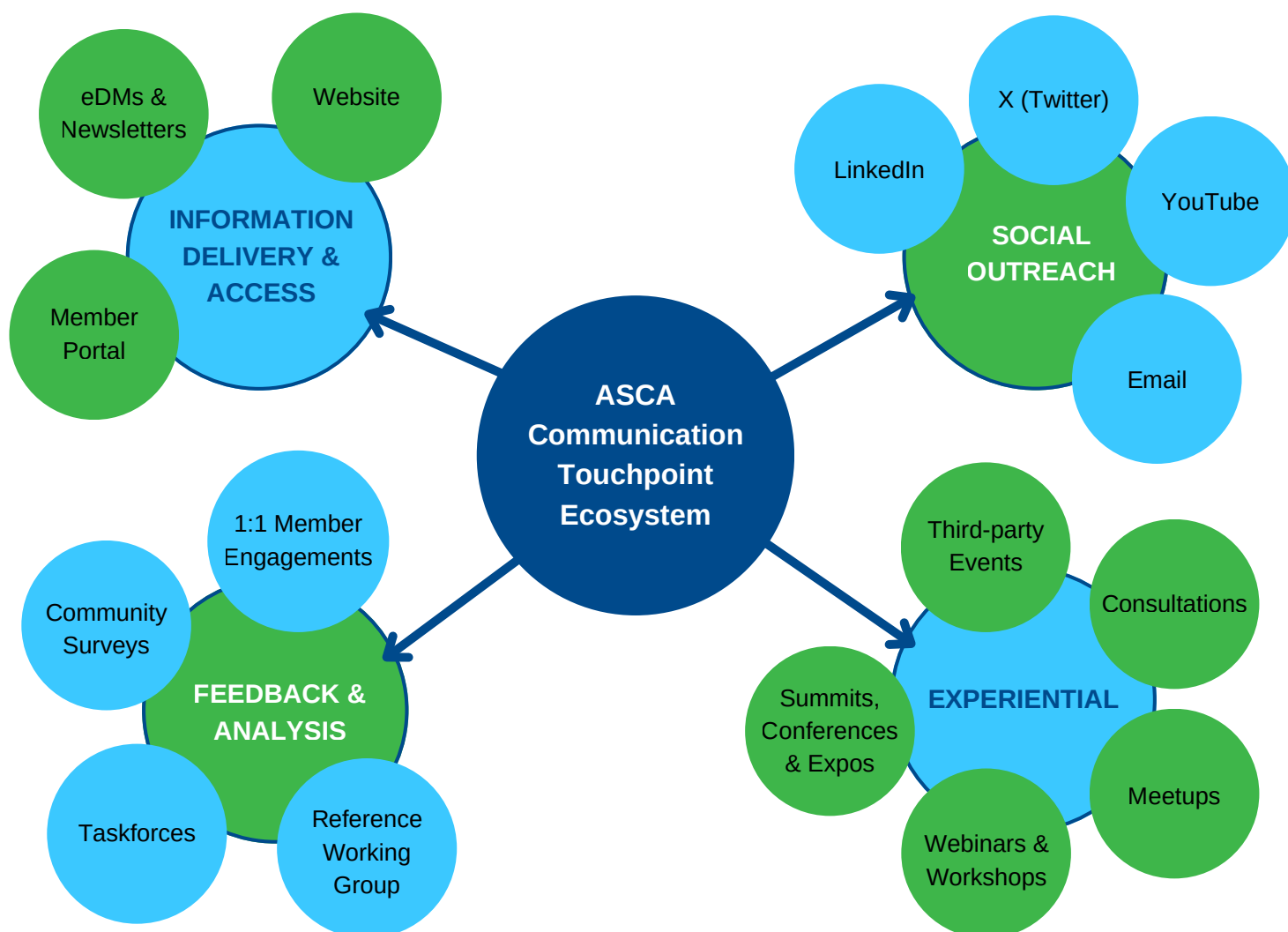
In 2025, ASCA invested strategically in strengthening the foundations of our community engagement and public presence. Recognising the need for dedicated expertise, we brought on two external service partners to focus on critical aspects of our organisational growth:

Raise The Crowd (Marketing & Communications) focused on elevating ASCA's digital presence, public brand, and communications reach, connecting with broader audiences beyond our immediate membership.

Kate & Adrienne (Member Engagement) worked to deepen relationships with existing members and create more meaningful opportunities for connection, consultation, and collaboration.

Together, these partnerships enabled us to build a more cohesive engagement ecosystem—one where traditional interactions, digital communications, and member feedback loops work together to strengthen both member retention and audience growth.

The ASCA Communication Touchpoint Ecosystem (below) illustrates how these efforts created a connected network of engagement channels, ensuring members experience consistent, professional, and valuable connections with ASCA across all touchpoints.



Member Engagement Overview

This year, ASCA placed a strong focus on strengthening how we engage with our members and how we understand the value we deliver. Alongside the introduction of our **new Member Meetups**—designed to create more informal, accessible opportunities for connection—we invested significant effort into improving our internal processes and communication.

This included **cleaning and consolidating contact information, refining our communication formats, and introducing clearer, more consistent membership engagement practices**. We also undertook a comprehensive series of **Member Engagement Sessions** to better understand the needs, expectations, and priorities of councils, industry partners, and research organisations.

Shaping ASCA's Future Direction

The insights gathered through these conversations have directly shaped our work on **improving the onboarding and off-boarding experience for members, clarifying the ASCA value proposition, and informing the development of the ASCA 2030 Strategy**. This collaborative consultation has strengthened our understanding of what matters most to members and continues to guide how we evolve our programs, events, and strategic direction into the future.

Key Insights Summary:

ASCA's Core Strengths: Across the 2025 Member Engagement Sessions, participants consistently described ASCA as **a trusted, neutral platform that brings councils, industry, and academia together**. Members value ASCA's ability to connect the sector, provide visibility for partners, and act as a collective voice for smart places.

Shared Challenges & Opportunities: A number of shared themes emerged throughout the discussions. **Councils continue to face challenges moving from pilots to scaled outcomes**, with procurement, internal capability, business case development, and governance identified as ongoing barriers. Members are seeking **more practical, applied tools** that help convert innovation into operational success.

The Data Opportunity: Data was highlighted as **both the biggest opportunity and the most complex issue**. Councils want to leverage sensors, AI, CCTV, and operational information but often lack the maturity, resources, or frameworks to do so confidently. Many members believe **ASCA is well-placed to help create common standards, templates, and guidance** to support consistent, safe, and effective data use.

Capability & Differentiation: Several participants also noted the need for **clearer differentiation between ASCA and other peak bodies**, encouraging ASCA to sharpen its niche and avoid duplication. **Talent and capability constraints** were another concern, with councils expressing interest in shared training, mentorship, and communities of practice.

What Members Value Most: Despite these challenges, **ASCA's events—particularly the Summit, Meetups, and workshops—were viewed as highly valuable and practical**. Members praised the quality of curation, networking opportunities, and the sense of genuine collaboration.

Looking ahead, members see strong opportunities for ASCA to **clarify its value proposition, expand structured convening, offer more applied insights, and continue strengthening connections between councils and industry**. Overall sentiment was positive and forward-looking, captured well in one member's comment: *"ASCA's strength is its people and its network. The next step is turning that into consistent value for all members."*

2025 Events & Initiatives

Throughout 2025, ASCA delivered these insights and outcomes through a comprehensive program of member engagements, events, and strategic initiatives:

Month	Key Activities & Milestones
Jan	Annual Board Kick-off; Governance reset; Strategy focus.
Feb	Sponsored & led IEC Smart Cities workshops; Canadian study tour announced.
Apr	Strategy workshops aligned with UN SDGs; Advocacy submissions.
May	Sydney Build Expo; Data literacy webinar; Reference WG reconvened.
Jun	Melbourne Meetup; President recognised in standards leadership; Member consultation series.
Jul	Bronze member town halls with insights shaping 2026 Operating Plan.
Aug	InsightWise AI trial launch; "Accelerating Smarter Development" report release (NBN/Urbis).
Sep	Melbourne Build Expo; Summit 2026 EOIs; President received IEC 1906 Standards Australia Award; ASCA assisted in judging MAVLab entries.
Oct	Refined 2030 strategic Plan; Designed taskforces; GeoAI & data storytelling webinars; Brisbane Meetup; ASCA Board Members recognised in MAVLab Innovation Awards.
Nov	Hosted ANZPAN constituent at Smart City Expo World Congress 2025; Melbourne Meetup.
Dec	Shared 2030 Strategy progress & Summit planning at year-end update; ASCA AGM.

ASCA'S EVENT PARTICIPATION IN 2025



15

Total ASCA-led events + third-party events
ASCA participated in over the year

DELIVERY OF WEBINARS & MEETUPS



101

Total Webinar
Attendees



39

Total Meetup
Attendees

SMART CITY EXPO WORLD CONGRESS IN BARCELONA



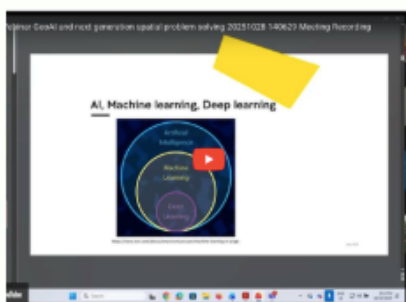
30

ASCA Members supported to attend
as part of the ANZPAN constituent
(our largest SCEWC delegation to date)

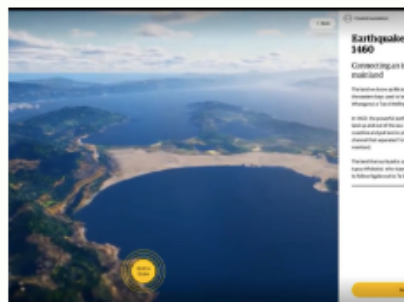
Webinar & Workshop Program

Throughout 2025, ASCA's webinar and workshop program responded directly to the priorities identified through our Member Engagement Sessions. With members seeking more practical, applied tools and expressing strong interest in data use, AI adoption, and emerging technologies, our sessions focused on building capability and sharing real-world implementation insights. All sessions were recorded and made available on the Member Portal for on-demand access, ensuring members could engage with content at their convenience.

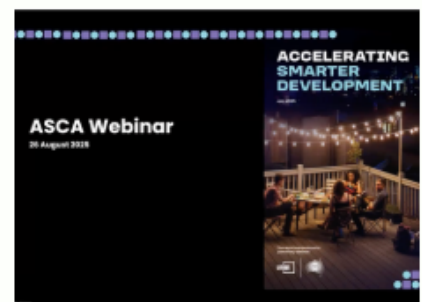
Date	Topic
14 Feb	IEC Smart Cities Workshops
2-5 Jun	ASCA Member Consultation Series: Workforce Skills, Digital Tech & Clean Energy
29 Jul	Connecting Smart Vehicle Data to Better Transport Outcomes
13 Aug	AI Unveiled: Empowering Local Councils to Grasp the AI Opportunity
26 Aug	Unpacking the Accelerating Smarter Development Report
14 Oct	Digital Experiences & Data Storytelling - Insights from Wellington
28 Oct	GeoAI & Next Generation Spatial Problem Solving



GeoAI and next generation spatial problem solving



Digital Experiences & Data Storytelling - Insights from Wellington



Accelerating Smarter Development



AI Unveiled: Empowering Local Councils to Grasp the AI Opportunity



Connecting smart vehicle data to better transport outcomes



Smart Cities Perspectives From India's Technical Standards Expert



James Sankar reading the newly released Accelerating Smarter Development report



Katherine Tobias (InsightWise Founder) & James Sankar (ASCA President)



Sydney Build Expo Sustainability Stage (sponsored by ASCA)



ASCA Melbourne Meetup in Jun



Meeting with Simplycast at an Australian-Canadian networking event



Board Members Harman Singh & Mandy O'Toole on the panel at Melbourne Build Expo



IEC Smart Cities Workshops - International perspectives



ASCA Melbourne Meetup in Nov



James Sankar receiving the IEC 1906 Standards Australia Award



Smart City Expo World Congress '25 in Barcelona



ASCA Brisbane Meetup in Oct



Harman Singh speaking at Melbourne Build Expo



James Sankar receiving the Standards Australia Meritorious Contribution International Award



Board Members Pearl Ng & Mandy O'Toole receiving a MAVLab Innovation Award for Casey City Council & City of Melbourne



Digital Footprint

In 2025, ASCA's digital channels served as critical touchpoints for member communication and thought leadership. Our performance revealed a clear picture: while our curated email content achieved exceptional engagement, our website requires significant improvement to better serve our community's needs.

ASCA's email communications delivered exceptional results in 2025. With an average open rate of 48.3%—105% better than industry benchmarks—and an 84.6% drop in unsubscribe rates, our newsletters proved highly valuable to subscribers. This strong engagement demonstrates that our content resonates with the community and that members want to hear from us.

LinkedIn continued steady growth with 300 new followers over the year, reaching 3,415 total followers. Our 83 posts generated 32.5K impressions, maintaining consistent visibility for ASCA's thought leadership and events.

Website performance declined significantly in 2025, with visits and page views dropping to almost half of 2024 levels. This indicates our website is not meeting user expectations for design, navigation, or accessibility.

Key Takeaway: Our audience strongly engages with curated content delivered directly to them (via email), but they're not finding value in self-directed website exploration. This insight is driving our 2026 focus on website redevelopment and Member Portal improvements to better serve both existing members and prospective audiences.

EMAIL MARKETING PERFORMANCE



802

Email subscribers
(+ 53 new subscribers
over the last year)



11.8K

Total emails sent
(31 campaigns +
96.5% delivery rate)



48.3%

Average open rate
(105% better than
audience averages)



84.6%

Drop in email
unsubscribe rate

SOCIAL MEDIA & WEBSITE PERFORMANCE



83

Total LinkedIn posts



32.5K

LinkedIn impressions
(2% increase)



3,415

LinkedIn followers
(+ 300 new followers
over the last year)



5.1K

Total website visits



9.5K

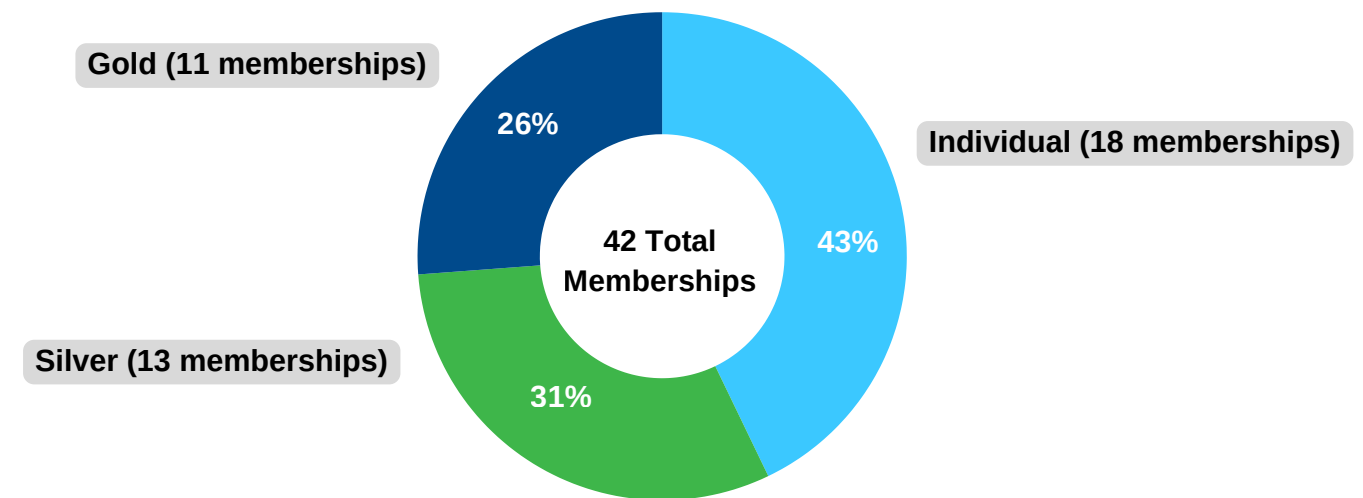
Total website
page views

Memberships

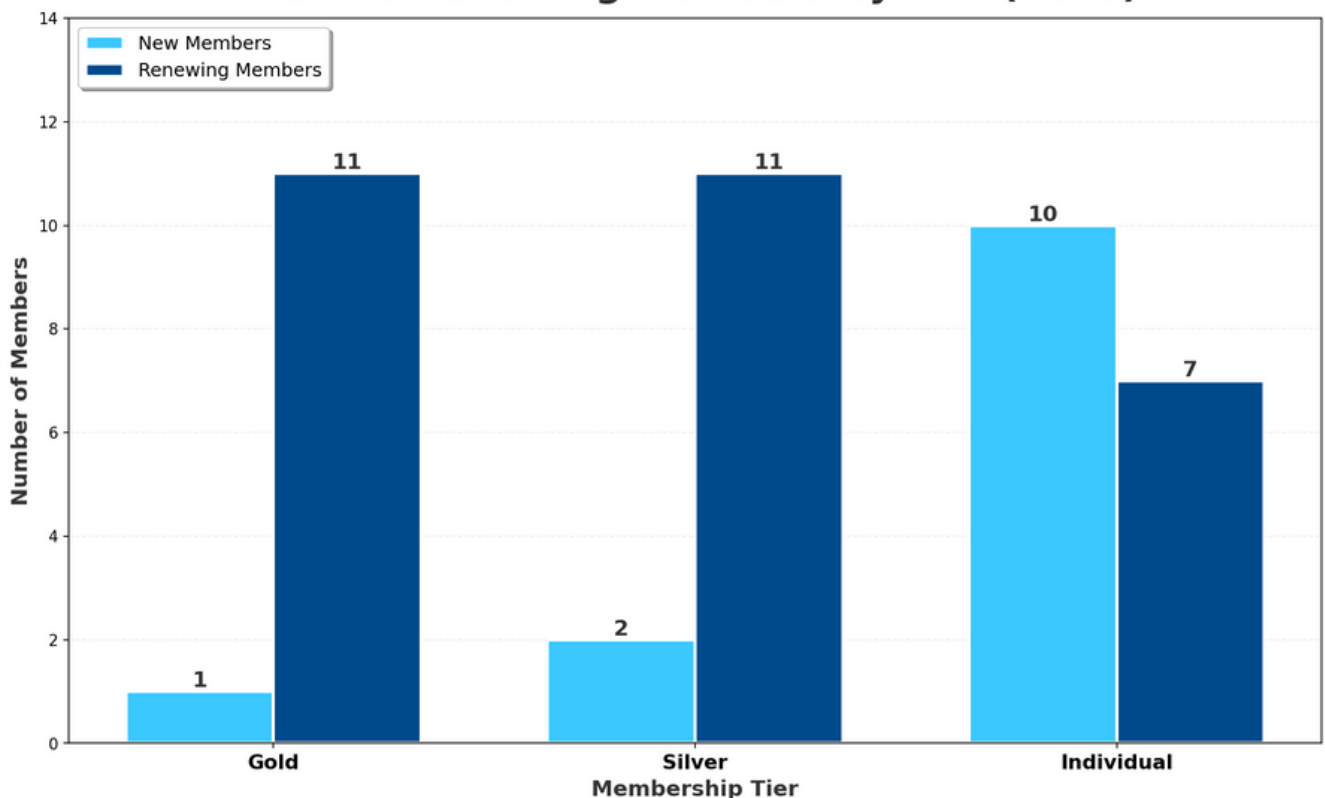
ASCA welcomed 13 new members in 2025, including 2 Silver, 1 Gold, and 10 Individual memberships, while 29 existing members chose to renew. We currently have 42 total memberships across our three tiers. Our 106 active member contacts represent strong engagement, with potential to reach 261 contacts when all membership allocations are utilised.

Membership Growth in 2025

- 13 new members joined (2 Silver, 1 Gold, 10 Individual)
- 29 members renewed (11 Silver, 11 Gold, 7 Individual)



New vs Renewing Members by Tier (2025)



Total: 13 New Members | 29 Renewing Members

Current ASCA Members

GOLD MEMBERS



SILVER MEMBERS



ASCA 2030 Strategy

Leaving No One Behind

ASCA's 2030 Strategy aligns directly with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Australia's national commitments. The strategy focuses on building smarter, stronger, and more inclusive communities through four interconnected strategic pillars, with advocacy spanning the entirety of the ecosystem.

Vision: Digitally empowered, inclusive and climate-positive communities where technology improves quality of life, strengthens local economies and regenerates natural systems—ensuring no one is left behind.

Mission: Equip ASCA's member councils and partners with the tools, skills and alliances they need to deliver smart, sustainable and socially just outcomes between 2026 and 2030.

ASCA 2030

Strong governance, fiscal responsibility and member value as overarching priorities

Advocate on Local & National Issues

Championing collective member interests through executive advocacy tools and peer dialogue

Build Thriving Communities

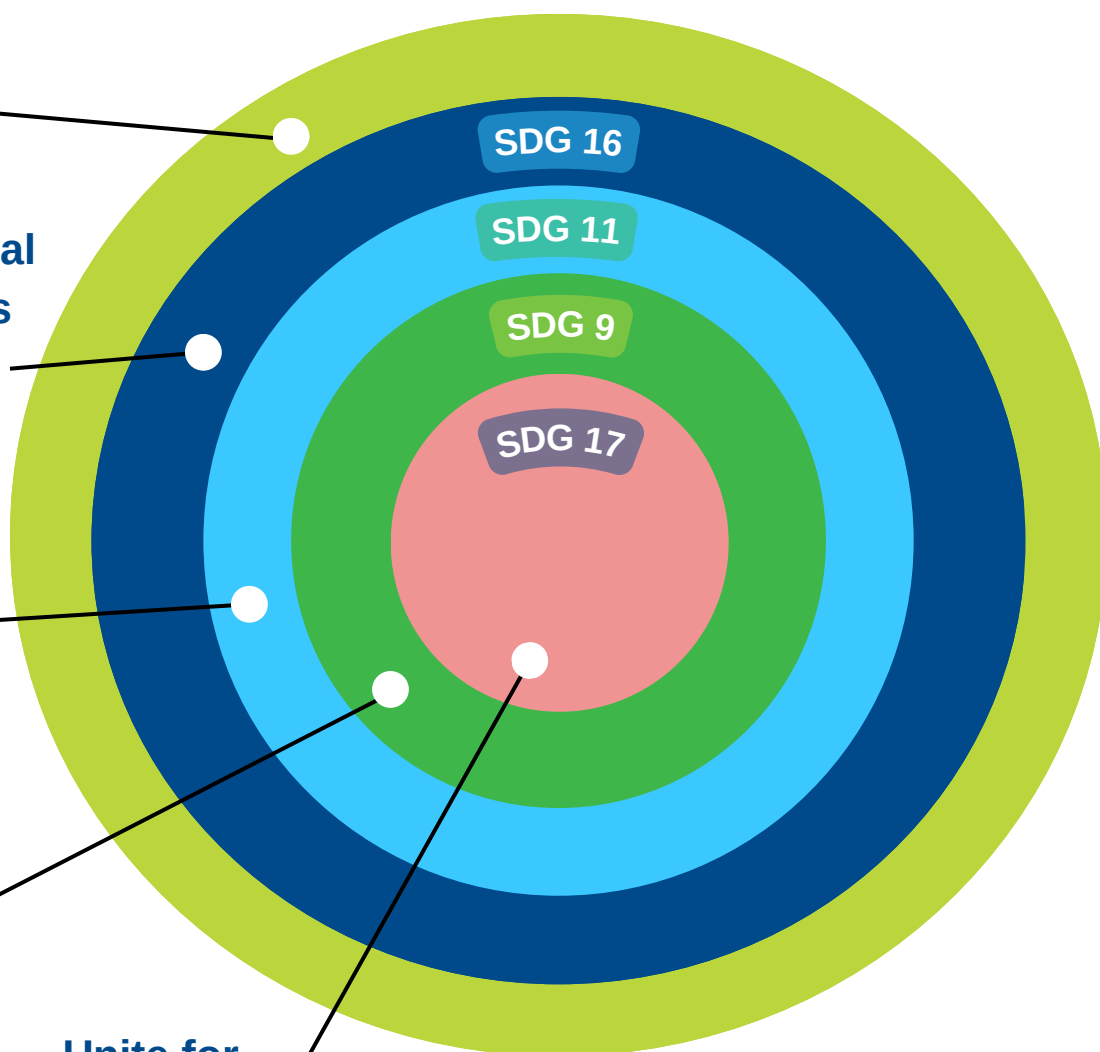
Strengthening networking, knowledge exchange, responsible AI use, and data governance

Bridge the Digital Divide

Ensuring equitable access to digital infrastructure, services, and workforce capacity

Unite for Impact

Fostering collaboration across diverse communities to tackle socio-economic and environmental challenges



The ASCA Journey

2013

Founded as Broadband Alliance, advocated for NBN rollout.

2018

Transitioned to enabling & supporting smart city initiatives, leveraging government grants.

2026+

Partnering with government, research, and industry to deliver digital services that empower resilient, sustainable, inclusive communities.

2013-2017

ADVOCATING FOR BETTER BROADBAND



KEY FOCUSES

- Industry & Local Government advocate for enhanced broadband infrastructure.
- Establishment as Broadband Alliance, instrumental in driving policy change and industry awareness.

OUTCOMES

- Successful advocacy influencing the rollout of Australia's National Broadband Network (NBN).

2018-2025

FROM CONNECTIVITY TO SMART CITIES



KEY FOCUSES

- Grass-root practitioners & industry partners.
- Leveraging NBN & smart city initiatives.
- Supporting grants to pilot and accelerate impact.
- Creating alliances (NZ Local Gov), IPWEA.
- Leading global smart city standards development.
- Facilitating international visits to Smart City Expo Barcelona.
- Online webinars, study tours, Summits.

OUTCOMES

- Supported funded smart city projects.
- Strengthened practitioner capacity and support for local government pilots to production.
- Advocated for data-driven planning, developer regulation and infrastructure deployment.

Where We're Headed

2026-2030

**BUILDING
SUSTAINABLE,
CONNECTED &
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES**



**EMERGING 2030
STRATEGY
VIA MEMBER
CONSULTATION**

WHERE

- **Local community** and citizen outcomes at our heart.
- **Digital equity** - leave no one behind.
- **Regenerating place** for future generations to enjoy.
- Support government with **Innovative digital solutions**.
- Partner with **education institutions, research, and associations** for national good practices.

HOW

- **Associate** knowledge networks, expertise, and best practices.
- Support practitioners to **accelerate** beyond pilots.
- Support institutions to greater levels of digital **maturity**.
- Create a shared **digital data sharing ecosystem**.
- Develop **skills competencies & training** to address tech skills shortages
- **Critical & emerging tech thought leadership** (e.g. Cyber, Quantum, Photonics, AI engagement and urban planning).
- **International standards engagement** to support tech investment.
- **Webinars, Member Meetups, AI pilots, Smart City Expo and more...**



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