

# SYD 25

SELF  
STORAGE  
WEEK



The week  
that was...

# **SYD25** SELF STORAGE WEEK

**SYD25 set a new benchmark for industry as more than 500 self storage owners, operators, investors and suppliers gathered in Sydney for four dynamic days of learning, inspiration and connection.**

Across keynotes, panel discussions and workshops, attendees explored the forces reshaping self storage, from digital experience and automation to design, development and record levels of investment in the sector.

Highlights included tours of Sydney's newest facilities, thought-provoking trend sessions, the buzzing trade show floor and vibrant networking events across Darling Harbour, capped off by the industry's night of nights, the SSAA Awards for Excellence presented by VISY Specialties.

The energy and optimism confirmed what many already sensed: the sector is maturing and stepping confidently into its next chapter.

The SSAA extends its gratitude to our partners, event sponsors, speakers, industry panellists, suppliers and exhibitors for their invaluable support.

Enjoy the SYD25 highlights that follow -  
**we look forward to welcoming you to Brisbane in 2026!**

## BY THE NUMBERS

# 100%

rated the social and  
networking highly  
(4 or 5 stars)

# 93%

rated the program  
and content highly  
(4 or 5 stars)

# 98%

would recommend  
attending the  
event to others

# 540

Attendees

# 46

Exhibitors

# 60

Speakers

# 320

set sail on  
The Jackson

# 210

enjoyed  
facility tours

# 335

hit the  
dance floor

## MONDAY:

### Operations, AI essentials and culture at scale

The week kicked off with the annual SSAA Golf Tournament, followed by a packed afternoon of masterclasses covering software, governance and the essentials of smooth daily operations.

#### Masterclasses & Practical Skills

Operators warmed up for the week with hands-on sessions from Storman, Sitelink and a detailed legal and compliance update on the 2025 self storage agreement changes led by Makala Ffrench Castelli. These early sessions were practical with a focus on operational excellence, a theme that continued throughout the week.

#### AI Essentials & Operator Tools

In the Single-Site stream, Pathfindr.ai delivered AI Essentials, giving operators the first taste of the role AI now plays in customer behaviour, decision-making and operational workflows. This built directly into the broader message of the week: automation isn't about going staffless - it's about driving efficiencies and offering customers choice.

Priscilla Lee's "Operator's Toolbox" session also reinforced this, highlighting the power of simple, repeatable habits that lift operational performance daily.

#### Culture Takes Centre Stage

In the Multi-Site Operator stream, Storage King Founder Michael Tate delivered "The Pursuit of Culture", reminding leaders that process alone doesn't build high-performing teams - people do.

"Culture is the daily habits and mindset that shape how things are done."

The afternoon session on leading at scale with AI connected culture with future-focused capability as the Pathfindr.ai team built out a self storage agent: adaptable teams are the ones that will thrive.

#### Day 1 Takeaway:

**Success in 2025 starts with consistent operations and strong culture. The fundamentals still matter - but how you power them is changing fast.**



# TUESDAY: Design, development and a look at Sydney's newest self storage facilities

The day began with the Women in Storage Breakfast, proudly supported by Storage King – a warm, energetic event that is a favourite on the self storage calendar.

The broader group then boarded buses to tour two of Sydney's newest facilities: Rent A Space Casula and Storage King Leppington.

This on-the-ground insight set the stage for the afternoon's deep dives.

## Design & Development Stream

Shared perspectives from design, operations and construction saw experts unpack how choices in layout, access, materials and customer flow shape not only customer experience but also lifetime asset value.

The Conversion Playbook panel was refreshingly candid, with construction experts sharing the realities of converting existing assets into self storage, including hidden costs, compliance hurdles and the creative wins that make it worthwhile.

One of the week's most impactful sessions came from Rent A Space's personal reflections of fire and disruption. Their real-world lessons on crisis response, insurance and rebuilding reinforced the importance of focusing on recovery and building resilience.

## Operations Stream

In one of the most actionable blocks of SYD25, the Operations Stream tied together the fundamentals of running a modern storage business.

Caroline Plowman reframed pricing as a genuine science – data-driven, measured and central to profitability.

Stephen Hughes showed how customers are now using AI-powered research to compare operators instantly, making digital experience a true trust signal: "Your digital flow is your brand."

And to bring it all home, Damien Gooden highlighted the people side – the structures, conversations and culture that keep teams aligned and performing under pressure.

## Day 2 Takeaway:

**Competitive advantage lies in combining thoughtful facility design with data-driven operations and a frictionless digital journey.**





## WEDNESDAY:

### Growth, investment and the global perspective

Wednesday's program shifted gears into the macroeconomic landscape, trends, and the investment forces powering the sector's evolution.

#### Driving Digilogue

Futurist Anders Sorman-Nilsson explored how digital and analogue worlds are converging and what's through the next door.

#### SSAA Industry Snapshot 2025

The highly anticipated SSAA Industry Snapshot revealed a sector that is maturing rapidly. With rising supply, sustainable operating performance and a record year with \$1.36B+ transacting, confidence is high: 73% of operators expect next year to be stronger.

#### Big Yellow: Global Lessons

Adrian Lee's engaging keynote delivered pragmatic insights from the UK's leading operator. His core focus: Brand, freehold ownership and process discipline have been key to their success.

#### Transaction Talks

A rare behind-the-scenes look at the deals shaping today's market, industry leaders discussed what's driving activity and where the next opportunities might lie. The discussion confirmed the sector is attracting deeper capital and increasing in sophistication.

#### Capital Flows Investment Lunch

Demographer Simon Kuestenmacher unpacked long-term drivers including population shifts, household structures and migration patterns shaping demand for storage. An engaging panel followed, signaling strong global appetite and increasingly sophisticated capital looking to enter the category.

#### Independent Operator Forum

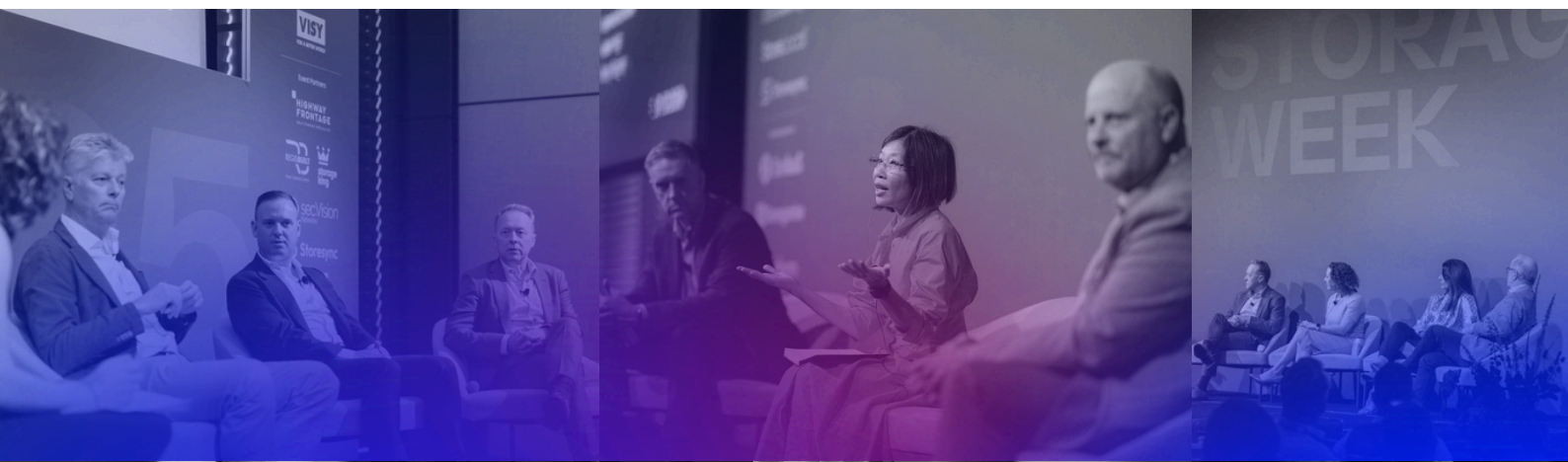
In one of the most energising sessions of the week, independent operators reminded the room of the power of local knowledge, community connection and deeply personal customer service.

#### Global Perspectives

Experts from around the world brought the day to close, highlighting trends in their respective markets and remarking on the comparative strength of the Australasian sector.

#### Day 3 Takeaway:

**Self storage is scaling up fast, fueled by strong capital flows, global perspectives and the growing strength of independent operators.**



## THURSDAY:

# Innovation, automation and the future of self storage

The final day delivered the week's biggest future-focused moments, from AI to CX, security to long-term industry outlook.

### Creating Wonderful

Luxury hotelier Peter Merrett brought emotion and humanity to the stage, reminding the room that customer experience mirrors employee experience. His message of "think big, act small" resonated across every table.

### Automation & AI: What's Next

Sessions with Michael Dogger, industry experts and Dawid Naude made it clear: AI is no longer optional. It shapes how customers find, compare and choose facilities, often before the operator even knows they're looking. "Operators who use AI will replace those who don't."

### Safeguarding Self Storage

A hard-hitting panel with Australian Border Force and industry leaders brought a sharp focus to criminal risks, illicit tobacco networks, red flags and the need for active, not passive, vigilance. Stay tuned for more in this space next year from SSAA and law enforcement agencies.

### Future Crunch

Future Crunch brought big energy and big optimism, showing how curiosity, creativity and technology can shape behavioural change.

### The Great Debate: the future of self storage

The Great Debate brought big opinions and even bigger laughs as our panellists tackled the industry's favourite hot topics.

From pricing provocations to AI-bot predictions and a few punchlines for good measure, it was the kind of spirited back-and-forth that only happens when you put passionate operators on a stage and give them microphones...

### Day 4 Takeaway :

**The future belongs to operators who blend technology, humanity, discipline and adaptability.**





**"AN AMAZING CONFERENCE!"**

**"WELL RUN AND VERY PROFESSIONAL AS ALWAYS,  
THANKS TO ALL INVOLVED."**

**"WE HAD A FABULOUS TIME!  
IT WAS A REAL EYE OPENER AS TO HOW BIG THIS INDUSTRY  
IS GROWING"**

**"FIRST TIME ATTENDING AND REALLY ENJOYED IT.  
THE CONFERENCE WAS VERY WELL RUN AND ORGANISED.  
THANKS TO THE SSAA FOR A GREAT EVENT!"**

**"GREAT CONTENT. GREAT MIX OF EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL  
AND FUN!"**

**"THE CONVENTION WAS EXCELLENT,  
WELL ORGANISED BY THE SSAA TEAM,  
GREAT LOCATION, GREAT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES"**

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