



COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG

SMART CITIES PLAN SUBMISSION

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1. Introduction

The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to lodge a submission to the *Smart Cities Plan*.

The CfG is an independent group of member organisations, working together to leverage the economic potential of the Geelong region. The CfG works to achieve the best long-term outcomes for the region, enabling Geelong to become a world-class city. The CfG makes connections and creates opportunities to help deliver positive social outcomes and develop a vital, inclusive, progressive, smart and sustainable Geelong region for the future. CfG members include business, education, health, local government, non-government and community organisations. Over the past fifteen years, the CfG has influenced significant economic and social outcomes in the region.

The CfG welcomes the opportunity to comment on the *Smart Cities Plan*, which encourages smarter investment in cities, such as Geelong.

2. Background

Geelong is Victoria's second largest city with a population of approximately 220,000 people. The regional economy is diverse – health, education and service sectors are now the key employers, however manufacturing is still important.

The CfG believes that Geelong should better position itself as Victoria's 'second city'. Its infrastructure (the Port of Geelong, Avalon Airport, road and rail connections), world class health and education services, employment and lifestyle opportunities are attracting many new residents and businesses to Geelong.

3. Smart Cities Response

The CfG is pleased that the Federal Government has identified the need to develop a Smart Cities policy and City Deals, which encourages a greater commitment between all levels of government to "*make our cities easier to invest in and do business*".

The CfG is pleased that the Federal Government will invest in cities and has a strong commitment to a cooperative approach to long term planning, targeted investment and reform.

3.1 National Second City Policy and Shared Vision for Geelong

The CfG agrees that regional cities, such as Geelong, provide a solution to help other Australian Cities reach their full potential. As Victoria's second city, Geelong offers unique potential and, in this context, the CfG has been advocating for the establishment of a national second city policy.

A strong national second city policy for Australia's largest city economies (outside of the major cities in each State) will be beneficial to Australia's overall economic and social performance. National and state policy agendas must be complimented by whole-of-government policies that formally acknowledge and support the development of Australia's second cities.

The Victorian State Government has now formally recognised Geelong as a ‘second city’ in the Plan Melbourne Refresh. The CfG has also made representations about second cities to the 2015 National Senate Inquiry on the Future Role and Contribution of Regional Capitals, together with the 2016 Senate Inquiry into the Role of Transport Connectivity on Stimulating Development and Economic Activity. The stage has now been set for a fundamental rethink on the importance of second cities throughout Australia. The CfG is advocating for a national second city policy which will define the strategic directions and implementation strategies to reinforce Geelong’s position as Victoria’s second city.

This project has recently become more prominent following the recent findings of the Victorian State Government’s Commission of Inquiry into the Greater Geelong City Council, which identified that:

‘...the development of an evidence-based, long-term vision and plan [for Geelong] should be a critical high priority.....’

The CfG believes that a second city policy will build on other strategic work, such as the Geelong Region Plan, G21 Regional Growth Plan and many other strategic work.

Second cities are defined as those situated outside capitals but are sufficiently important to affect the performance of the national economy (Parkinson et al. 2012). While alternative terminology suggestions to describe second cities are welcome, the CfG’s position is clear:

With the changes in our city, Geelong - and other second cities such as Newcastle and Wollongong – should be treated differently (in terms of funding and policies) to larger cities, and other smaller regional cities.

Markusen, Lee and DiGiovanna (1999) suggest four types of second cities:

- a) New Industrial Districts (NIDs) – based on original ideas by Marshall (1920) a group of small, innovative firms embedded in a regionally co-operative system of industrial governance, enabling them to adapt and flourish despite globalising tendencies.
- b) Hub and spoke district – where a regional structure revolves around one or several corporations in one or several industries.
- c) Satellite industrial platform – composed largely of branches of absent multinational companies.
- d) State-centred district – a major government tenant anchors the regional economy.

In addition, Regiopolis is a term referring to land use and urban planning which is composed of Regio (region) and polis (city). This term, developed by academics at the University of Kassel, describes smaller cities beyond metropolitan areas. Aring and Reuther (2008) describe criteria for Regiopolis as follows:

- a) Population either of the core city or of the urban network with over 100,000 residents.
- b) Location beyond a metropolitan region.

- c) Potential of knowledge and innovation (measured from the status as a location of a university or a large technical college).

According to Regional Capitals Australia, a regional capital provides a central point to access essential infrastructure, services, business, employment and education for local residents as well as those in surrounding towns and rural areas. These cities also perform a 'capital city' role within their regions and are significant social and economic contributors to Australia's economy. In terms of population, Regional Capitals range in size from approximately 15,000 to 200,000 people.

In England, the second cities have formed the 'Core Cities Group' to lobby central government for more resources and delegated powers. Core Cities is an alliance representing the councils of England's ten largest city economies outside London, including Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham, Sheffield and Cardiff. There is no similar group in Australia, outside of those defined by Regional Capitals Australia.

Parkinson et al. (2012) contend that local leadership is vital to drive change in second cities. In addition, Markusen, Lee and DiGiovanna (1999) conclude that both industrial and regional policies have been important to the growth and economic resilience of second cities.

Given the right circumstances – such as effective local leadership –second cities can lift national economic performance.

All of these aspects are important in the understanding of the Geelong context, especially as the city has been undergoing an economic transformation from a manufacturing to a service centred economy. Geelong has been largely dependent on several corporations, such as Ford and Alcoa, in specific manufacturing industries.

Ford and Alcoa have either closed or are in the process of closing manufacturing operations and new, mainly small, innovative firms are now establishing in Geelong. These companies are becoming embedded in Geelong's regionally co-operative system, enabling them to adapt and flourish despite global trends. In addition, government agencies are establishing in Geelong as *anchor* tenants for the region, ensuring broader State-centred economic diversity.

Applying a hybrid framework, Geelong can be described a second city. A group of other cities in Australia, such as Newcastle and Wollongong, could also fit this description and, together with cities such as Cairns and the Gold Coast, may qualify for entry into this group. The CfG believes that this is an area that warrants potential further policy development and research for Australia's second cities.

The success of a second city is based on key factors which include consistent entrepreneurial and visionary leadership, a clear model of public private partnership and citizen involvement, strategic planning conducted as a standard way of doing business, and constant self-assessment. Most importantly for Geelong, local leadership is vital to drive change in second cities. This leadership can come from public, private and the third sector but a combination of all three is essential (Parkinson et al. 2012).

Given that long term underinvestment in second cities presents risks of national economic underperformance, some countries are pro-actively developing explicit policies for their second cities. It is therefore important that Australia embraces a second city policy and leads the way - Geelong could be the first pilot.

3.2 Global Study Tour

In July 2016, the CfG will undertake a global study tour of strategically identified second cities:

- Dundee, Scotland
- Eindhoven, the Netherlands
- Cleveland, Pittsburgh and Richmond, USA

The purpose of the study tour is to undertake field work research and investigate the strategic vision, leadership, governance frameworks, infrastructure provision and investment program for other second cities. The CfG would be pleased to share its findings of this study tour later in 2016. The study tour concludes with the 'Cities for Tomorrow' conference in New York.

3.3 Infrastructure Investment

The CfG is pleased that the Australian Government has committed some funding to accelerate planning and development of key infrastructure in our region, but contend that this funding is insufficient.

Geelong is approximately 35km from the Wyndham growth corridor. The CfG understands that Wyndham is facing many challenges in managing its unprecedented growth. Wyndham's current strategy is to reduce the target growth rate to a more sustainable level. Subsequently, thousands of people will need to be accommodated elsewhere. The CfG suggests encouraging people to live and work in Geelong will stimulate housing growth in the Geelong region and, importantly, help manage growth in high growth locations, such as Wyndham. Infrastructure investment will be critical to the future growth of Geelong.

The CfG's 'Geelong on Track' initiative aims to improve rail services between Melbourne and Geelong, and within Geelong. At present, approximately 12,000 Geelong residents commute to Melbourne for work and this number is expected to rise. Improvements to the road network and the further development of rail services, including the Regional Rail Link, should be complemented with more incentives for investment and job creation in regional areas, including Geelong. As Geelong and south west Victoria continues to grow – including developments such as the Armstrong Creek growth area located to the south of our city, which is expected to add 60,000 people to our community – Geelong clearly needs appropriate public transport options. The duplication of the rail track – particularly between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds – is critical to support our urban growth in Victoria's second city.

Currently, the single track between Geelong and Waurin Ponds (15km approximately) is a choke point on the line as trains running in the opposite direction have limited opportunities to pass each other, which places many constraints on the services which can be offered to and from Geelong, Colac and south west Victoria. The duplication of the line between South Geelong and Waurin Ponds will improve the situation but will not

completely remedy it. Ultimately, it is essential for the free flow of bi-directional rail services to also duplicate the section of line between South Geelong and Geelong including the existing heritage listed rail tunnel. Given the amount of people currently using the Geelong line – V/Line’s busiest commuter line – the duplication of the Waurin Ponds line is worthy of urgent attention.

In addition, improvements to the bus network in Geelong are also strongly supported.

Improvements to road infrastructure connections are critical to Geelong’s future growth. Investment in the Western Distributor or West Gate Distributor will ease the traffic, but we also encourage both State and Federal Governments to identify long term solutions for connections from western Victoria to eastern Victoria.

Further investment in Avalon Airport will stimulate economic growth in our region. Positioned midway between the state capital and Victoria’s second largest city, which both boast world-class tourism attractions, there is a significant market for international visitors to access an extended airport at Avalon. The southwest Victoria region is also home to major agribusiness interests – dairy, grain and fruit and veg industry – supported by port, rail and road infrastructure. The missing link for these exports is an air freight option from Avalon.

Geelong is unquestionably Victoria’s second city and there is a need and a market for an international airport at Avalon. We welcome the Federal Government’s commitment to re-classifying Avalon as an international airport. An international Avalon Airport would provide the economic boost that Geelong needs in terms of:

- increased visitor traffic
- an improved export/import channel
- and the status and acknowledgement of the importance of our regional population and Victoria’s second city.

The Port of Geelong is Victoria’s largest specialised bulk goods port, trading in both dry and wet cargo including petroleum products, grain, woodchips and fertiliser. Last financial year the port handled more than 13 million tonnes of cargo, worth \$8.4 billion. It is a vital component of Victoria’s transport infrastructure and plays a key role in the economic health of not just the city and surrounding region, but the state as a whole. The draft document needs focus on freight and airports, which are both supported by the CfG.

A recent Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA) -commissioned economic impact study forecasts that jobs and trade will grow by 50 per cent in the next two decades. Getting infrastructure right – both on land and water – will play an important part in maximising that growth and lifting port productivity.

The CfG also supports greater participation in physical activity to improve the health of our community. We support improvements to public spaces to encourage walking and social interaction, including in Central Geelong.

It is critical that what has been started at Simonds Stadium is finished. The capital investment to date must be appropriately supported and the project completed to fulfil the strategic vision and long-term potential of this pivotal piece of infrastructure for regional Victoria. The final stage of the redevelopment will support events and activities which are estimated to inject more than \$624 million into the local economy over a decade. As Victoria's second city, we cannot afford to squander the myriad of opportunities that a fully redeveloped Kardinia Park site presents.

A thriving creative heart is also essential for a city to grow and prosper. And it is vital to ensure the commitment to the arts in Victoria's second city is commensurate with the investment in sport and other infrastructure. The arts provide a critical balance to community development and the population of Geelong and the diversity of the regional residential profile demands appropriate cultural investment. The GPAC redevelopment should stand proud as a key civic facility for our region, attracting an expected four million visitors to Geelong over a decade and bringing increased opportunities for artists, community access to world class productions.

The Library investment is the first step in our enhanced cultural landscape, the redeveloped gallery and performing arts centre complete the trinity of accessible arts options that Geelong deserves. The redeveloped GPAC would also serve as another essential inducement for the increased workforce being sought for key employers who continue to grow their footprint in the Geelong region.

3.4. Smart Policy

The CfG supports the 'City Deal's policy and we believe that it could easily be applied to Geelong. We support the development of a collective plan for growth, job creation, housing affordability and environmental outcomes.

The CfG also supports regulatory reform, which will facilitate greater investment in Geelong through clear governance frameworks and clear strategic outcomes.

3.5. Smart Technology

The CfG strongly supports investment in technology to sustain how we live, learn and work. Investment in high speed broadband to all parts of the Geelong community is vital to make the city competitive on a global scale.

In addition, industry-led initiatives – such as the Runway project – are crucial for Geelong's future. The ICT economy in Geelong is poised to explode, with innovation and knowledge-centred development the aspirational focus of future growth in Victoria's second city. Already home to a number of globally successful startups, Geelong's future business leaders are already laying the foundations in software development and technology-based solutions. The Federal Government has outlined its vision for 'supporting productive, accessible, liveable cities that attract talent, encourage innovation and create jobs and growth' through its Smart Cities Plan and we believe Geelong's Runway project, ticks all of those boxes. The Government says it is committed to 'smart investment, smart policy and smart technology'. The Runway project in Victoria's second city has the potential to deliver all three.

4. Conclusion

The CfG welcomes the Smart Cities Plan and we would be delighted to further engage with the Federal Government regarding the development of a national second city policy for Australia, and a long-term vision to transform Geelong.

5. Contact details

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