



11 March 2016

Impact Assessment Unit (Planning)  
Department of Environment, Land, Water & Planning  
GPO Box 2392  
MELBOURNE VIC 3001

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Western Distributor Project**

The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to lodge a submission on the Draft Scoping Requirements of the Western Distributor Project.

Please note that the CfG's submission is not confidential.

The CfG is an independent, member-based organisation that advocates for the best overall long-term outcomes for Geelong. Our members represent the broad political spectrum and a breadth of industry both by sector and size. We work with members, leaders, stakeholders and governments to provide strategic leadership and influence to leverage the economic potential of the region to make Geelong a world-class place. As an independent advocate for Geelong, the CfG has a history of achieving genuine results by actively looking at ways to solve problems and confront challenges.

Given that the Western Distributor Project will significantly affect the transformation of our region, the CfG welcomes the opportunity to comment on the Draft Scoping Requirements.

Firstly, the CfG appreciates the improvement of infrastructure to ensure greater capacity for the Geelong community in accessing Melbourne. We view the Western Distributor Project as a positive step towards this.

Based on the current Western Distributor Project scope, the CfG makes the following comments:

1. As Geelong is Victoria's second largest city, good infrastructure links are vital to ensure that our city can transform and freely access Melbourne, even when the transport system is under pressure from accidents or incidents. Accordingly, the CfG seeks to understand why an upgrade of the old Geelong road has been discounted in the current proposal. The CfG believes that, if the current design followed the east west link alignment, there may be a possibility to upgrade the old Geelong road. This technical solution would provide two

arterial roads into Melbourne (i) the old Geelong road and, (ii) the west gate freeway. This would ensure that there are always two travel options for the Geelong community to follow should there be an accident or incident on either road.

2. Geelong commuters need to have some surety that they will not have to engage in excessive weaving movements (between the western ring road and the tunnel portal) prior to their arrival at the bridge/tunnel. A solution that is similar to the west gate flyovers, between the west gate bridge and kings way, could alleviate this issue.
3. The CfG has some concerns about how six lanes of traffic will be controlled (especially as this will be the first twelve lane freeway in the country). Six lanes is a great deal of traffic to merge through to exit either left or right. With the tunnel portal exits being on the right hand side, the CfG seeks to understand how the State Government proposes to keep six lanes of traffic moving freely and safely in order to manage cars weaving from the left hand side to the right hand side, or vice versa.
4. The CfG believes that the current pinch point for the Geelong community in accessing Melbourne is the M80 interchange, where the decision-making of the road user is not provided for early enough. This interchange currently has four lanes (one to the ring road, one onto the old Geelong Road, with three lanes to the west gate freeway that later reduce to two lanes). When travelling from Geelong, there are lots of exits in close proximity. The CfG therefore seeks to understand if there are any plans in the Western Distributor Project to rationalise the M80 interchange? Given the importance of this interchange, the CfG believes that it should be included in the scope of the Western Distributor Project in order to rationalise and improve the flow of traffic.
5. As a result of the experiences with the M80 interchange, the CfG urges the State Government to ensure that the decision points for the Western Distributor Project are provided for as early as possible. This will go some way to alleviate congestion at the intersection.
6. Based on current traffic volumes, the CfG seeks to understand what bodies the State Government is liaising with regarding forecast traffic projections. The CfG is very much focussed on the transformation and growth of Geelong, and future proofing any new infrastructure is vital to ensure that Victoria's second largest city is well provided for in the times ahead.

Whilst it is to be expected that there will be some delays when many road users from the Geelong community are heading to the same place at the same time. We acknowledge that this is a broader social issue that needs to be addressed by all tiers of Government in partnership with industry. However, the CfG is focussed on ensuring that the Geelong community can reach Melbourne in a timely, efficient and safe manner.

We are therefore hopeful that the Western Distributor Project will go some way to alleviate the current issues experienced by the Geelong community in accessing Melbourne, and we look forward to the project being delivered in an efficient and timely manner.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rebecca Casson', written in a cursive style.

Rebecca Casson  
**Chief Executive Officer**