



12 February 2020

**Verbal presentation from the Committee for Geelong Ltd:  
Jennifer Cromarty CEO & Kirsten Kilpatrick, Board Director in attendance**

**City of Greater Geelong - Draft Settlement Strategy & Amendment C395 Submission**

1. The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to present its submission to the Panel.
2. The CfG lodged submissions to the City of Greater Geelong's consultation process in June 2018 and via Amendment C395 in July 2019.
3. The CfG is a member-based, independent, not for profit organisation that advocates for the best interests of Geelong.
4. Key strategic projects include the Winning from Second report (2016), Australian Gateways to Growth report (2019) and Committee for Geelong Strategic Framework 2019-2022.

**Scene setting – designing our best future**

5. Geelong provides a great opportunity for the state and nation to be an exemplar of 'good growth'.
6. If Australia is serious about managing the increasing pressures on our capital cities and encouraging higher growth in regional cities, the impacts and planning required needs to occur now.
7. Geelong is currently experiencing unprecedented growth of 2.7% and is growing faster than Melbourne. If we refer to the City of Greater Geelong's Settlement Strategy – using the 'aspirational' population growth rate of 2.5% – Geelong should hit 500,000 in 2047 and one million population in 2075.

**T** +61 3 5227 8075  
**W** [www.committeeforgeelong.com.au](http://www.committeeforgeelong.com.au)  
**E** [cfg-admin@committeeforgeelong.com.au](mailto:cfg-admin@committeeforgeelong.com.au)  
**P** PO Box 1418 Geelong VIC 3220  
**ABN** 53 600 539 231

**Committee for Geelong**  
Deakin University Geelong Waterfront Campus  
Level 1, The Sally Walker Building  
1 Cheringhap Street Geelong VIC 3220

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8. If we use the Council's 3% growth rate scenario we reach 500,000 by 2041 and one million at 2065.
9. This is still vastly underestimated the scenarios put forward by the Regional Australia Institute. Last year the Regional Australia Institute released its 'Regional Population Growth – Are we ready?' report.
10. According to the Regional Australia Institute's report, if Geelong takes a larger percentage of Melbourne's project population growth (which it needs to in order to ease population pressures), we will have 1,120,312 on our doorsteps by 2056. If we are to seriously look at our regional cities to ease population pressures from metro capitals – we need to plan for that growth accordingly.
11. However, the Victoria in the Future population forecasts 1.7% growth for the Geelong region (Statistical Area 4 p.11 Victoria in the Future 2019) from 2016-2056. In terms of the City of Greater Geelong as an LGA - the growth rate is predicted to be 2.0%.
12. This is clearly well below the current population growth rate and also the growth rate forecasted by the City of Greater Geelong via the 'aspirational' rate of 2.5%. Both scenarios highlights that Geelong and the population figures being used to plan for our future are not reflective of reality as well as the need for greater population to be dispersed throughout the state on percentage levels.
13. Nine years ago, the Victoria in the Future figures stated Geelong's forecast population growth rate to be around 1.2 %. In reality it was closer to 1.9 % - this has caused a significant lag in planning for infrastructure best reflected in the dire need for better, more reliable transport connections from Geelong to Melbourne and within the Geelong region itself.
14. Geelong is uniquely placed, and in fact has never been better placed to continue to grow at accelerated rates by capturing the excess growth from Melbourne as it continues to experience pressures. The demand should be updated to reflect the surge from the past few years. Given this opportunity we should be planning for a higher growth rate above 3% p.a., as per scenario E (as listed on page 50) especially

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given the Strategy acknowledges the significant ramifications if growth is under catered.

15. The CfG recommends that the City of Greater Geelong plans for a higher growth rate of at least 3% until 2036, with aspirational targets set at 4%.
16. Bernard Salt, in his Bigger can be Better Report commissioned by the CfG, identified 'out-of-the-box' thinking that the Geelong region could reach 750,000 by 2050 - which is far more aspirational than the 500,000 currently planned for by 2050. This target is only sharing in 5% of Melbourne's population explosion. The question is, who will absorb the population growth if Geelong is not positioned to?
17. Prime Minister Morrison and The Hon. Alan Tudge, Minister for Population, Cities and Urban Infrastructure launched the Federal Government's 'Planning for Australia's Future Population' document which references Geelong as one of Australia's strongest growing regional centres.
18. So, what does this all mean? It means we need to think about how we function as a city-region, how we deal with increasing pressures on our transport, health and education systems, where this population growth will occur and in what fashion, and what it means in terms of impact to the environment and our lifestyle.
19. If we want Geelong to be an exciting, sophisticated and diverse metropolis that offers a rich lifestyle, broad employment opportunities and an engaging cultural experience – we need to get this right and accept that growth is coming and will continue.
20. When the City of Greater Geelong Council was sacked by the Victorian Government several years ago the Commission of Inquiry report made recommendations for a long term plan. We have a vision - 'The Clever and Creative Future' but we need an updated and refreshed plan for the Geelong region.
21. The Commission of Inquiry made several findings – and those outlined on page 13 of the Inquiry report, include:
  - *Urgent priority be given to the development of a 20 to 30-year outcome-focused vision and strategy for the Council and the City developed in*

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*consultation with key business, community and other stakeholders (Vision has been completed); and*

- *The long-term vision and strategy to guide Council's approach to investment in and advocacy for the economic development, population growth, environmental sustainability and community services of Greater Geelong. Subsequent development of long-term capital investment, business and advocacy plans to guide the Council's work for the City will be essential.*

22. **The Committee for Geelong has long advocated for a 'Plan Geelong'.** Our history of research and policy development includes the Winning from Second report published in 2016, and late last year the Australia's Gateways to Growth report – a collaboration between the City of Greater Geelong, the City of Newcastle and the Wollongong City Council. This work will take the opportunity of these Gateway Cities to the Federal sphere – with discussions already occurring with the newly formed Centre for Population created by Minister for Cities, Population and Urban Infrastructure.

23. In essence, Geelong does and will play a significant role in easing the population pressures of Melbourne whilst maintaining liveability, affordability and accessibility – but only if the planning is long term, strategic and supported by all levels of government.

24. Until this work is agreed and completed – it is very difficult to align other significant planning work conducted by the City of Greater Geelong eg the Settlement Strategy or the 10 year Transport Network Operating Plan in isolation.

25. In addition - The Committee for Geelong would like to submit its views on Amendment C395.

- The current growth rate stated in the Settlement Strategy is not sufficiently aspirational and the reliance upon land supply data from 2017 continues to be unrepresentative of the current situation.
- There are general concerns which the Committee for Geelong stated in the initial submission in 2018 about the use of lag data being used regarding land

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supply. The land supply data in the settlement strategy is from 2017. Thousands of housing lots have been sold in Geelong since that time and sale data in 2018 showed that the market was booming.

- Several Committee for Geelong members have shared that they are still physically delivering lots sold in 2017, and through 2018, well after that relevant lot supply date of “1 January 2017”, as stated in the Settlement Strategy.

26. We strongly recommend that this Settlement Strategy be modified to reflect the extent of forward contracted sales to have greater confidence in the current lot supply and land capacity.

27. **The introduction of any permanent settlement boundary in the Settlement Strategy is not supported.** The settlement boundary is based on a 2.5% growth rate and will cause undue delays in bringing planned land on-line for development which undermines the ability for this strategy to plan for long-term growth options. Furthermore, it will likely result in a dramatic impact upon upward land prices.

28. Legislated settlement boundaries will hamstring the future growth potential in Geelong. Their introduction will also generate the perception of land shortages, which was experienced in Melbourne when the UGB were introduced in 2005. Land values surged 50% in six months.

29. Flexible or notional settlement boundaries are far more acceptable to the Committee for Geelong, with the flexibility for organic growth which can adapt to the surge in Geelong’s future opportunities

30. CfG recognises that with strong population growth comes the demand for infrastructure, services and facilities. It is important that contributions are gathered to fund necessary infrastructure. CfG are of the view that each growth area should fund necessary infrastructure on an equitable basis via preparation and implementation of an infrastructure contributions plan (ICP).

31. In addition, in recognition of the total quantum of projected growth, consideration should be given to the possibility of **introducing a Growth Areas Infrastructure**

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**Charge (GAIC) equivalent** charge for Geelong. The GAIC equivalent charge could be gathered from individual growth areas and directed toward delivery of shared, higher order infrastructure.

32. Other items to note from our earlier submission:

- a) The current ambiguity around the planned growth of Torquay and the wider Surf Coast region, along with no major planned growth fronts in Golden Plains creates greater emphasis on the need for assuming a higher growth target as previously stated.
- b) It is suggested that Council consider breaking the Geelong market into 5 regions or submarkets and monitor supply and demand in each market and ensure 15 years of supply in each of these sectors. Unlike metropolitan municipalities, Geelong is an extremely diverse area and therefore the compartmentalisation of the market is critical to respond to the different markets.
- c) The Strategy places a significant reliance upon urban consolidation doubling from 25% to 50% to accommodate a share of Geelong's growth. This has many layers of complexity from commercial reality, differing views of what is consistent with the 'character' of established suburbs and political involvement in the decision-making process of planning proposals.
- d) There is a fundamental lack of policy or framework support currently to make this target achievable, Council will need to finalise Urban Design Frameworks (UDF's) for Pakington Street and High Street, Belmont in addition to the recommendations on Page 80-82 in order to make this ambition a reality.
- e) The Strategy also lacks clarification regarding management of potential land use conflicts particularly around industrial areas.
- f) The Strategy lacks meaningful discussion and commitment to affordable and social housing provision. This is a significant issue in Geelong and the Strategy should take a greater role in advocating for the provision of such facilities. We note that Council are currently developing a policy around this issue, before the



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Strategy is finalised the outcomes of that policy should be reflected.

Many thanks for the time to present this submission. If you have any further questions please contact me on [jennifer.cromarty@committeeforgeelong.com.au](mailto:jennifer.cromarty@committeeforgeelong.com.au) or call the office on 03 5227 8075.

Kind regards  
Jennifer Cromarty, CEO

Committee for Geelong

**T** +61 3 5227 8075  
**W** [www.committeeforgeelong.com.au](http://www.committeeforgeelong.com.au)  
**E** [cfg-admin@committeeforgeelong.com.au](mailto:cfg-admin@committeeforgeelong.com.au)  
**P** PO Box 1418 Geelong VIC 3220  
**ABN** 53 600 539 231

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1 Gheringhap Street Geelong VIC 3220