**Geelong: The place for growth**

**WORLD-CLASS EDUCATION**

There is no doubt that Geelong offers the widest choice of world-class education opportunities per capita of any city in Australia. These include Geelong Grammar, Deakin University, The Geelong College, The Gordon, Kardinia International College, Belmont High School, Diversity, Avalon College, North Geelong College, Christian College, Geelong Lutheran College, Sacred Heart College, St Joseph’s College and more.

**Students to Think Geelong**

A recent project called Think Geelong (www.thinkgeelong.com.au) involves the collaboration of nine local education providers in partnership with Tourism Greater Geelong and The Bellarine. The aim is to provide collated information for potential students, particularly international students, considering the Geelong region for their studies. This useful resource has enjoyed great success since launching in late 2014.

**Becoming a university city**

The exposure of Geelong to international markets via media publicity, research delegations and ambassadorial visits continues to generate keen interest from overseas students, educators and researchers.

In turn, the growing number of students living and working locally is creating the unique appeal of a university presence. The thriving café culture is only a small part of a new vibe in Central Geelong. Markets, pop-ups, food trucks and live music are all on the rise.

**CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR INJURY & DISABILITY INSURANCE**

The Transport Accident Commission (TAC) relocated to Geelong in 2009. The State Government is now committed to relocating WorkSafe Victoria’s head office from Melbourne. The relocation program is underway, with planning and readiness activities being undertaken.

In 2013, Geelong also became home to the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) headquarters. Together, the three organisations form the backbone of the newly-created Australian Injury and Disability Insurance Network (ADIN), positioning Geelong as a centre of excellence in personal injury and disability services.

A key initiative of ADIN is the establishment of a Professional Development Centre which the partners will use to source and develop capability for the Geelong-based ADIN workforce of the future. The Centre is a partnership with Deakin University and The Gordon to be based at Deakin’s waterfront campus. The Network will support the beneficiaries of the three schemes, while creating investment, education and employment opportunities for the wider community.

**SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS**

Geelong Connected Communities is a community company established for the benefit of every Geelong resident. It is a vehicle for all of Geelong to work together and experience the benefits of having its own community company. A Bendigo Bank initiative, the aim is to keep profits in Geelong and reward every Geelong resident. Established in July 2013, the company has been supported by a group of leading organisations. This group established a culture of giving in the Geelong community, tapping into the collective sentiment of caring about each other, for which the city and its people have long been renowned. In its first 19 months, Geelong Connected Communities gave out $398 grants worth $315,000.

**Celebrating diversity**

Geelong’s people have earned a well-deserved reputation for rallying to support each other and for caring about broader social issues. The ever-growing population has a fascinating mix of cultures, ethnicities, ages and backgrounds. The potential of this diverse population is fostered by the likes of Diversitat, a multi-faced organisation offering youth and community services. Providing English Language education to new arrivals to the region, Diversitat builds social inclusion and provides pathways for migrants and refugees to join and contribute to the Geelong community.

The many and varied community services and not-for-profit organisations, such as St Laurence, Pathways and Karingal, provide much-needed support and assistance to people in need. The role played by these organisations cannot be understated; they are pivotal in creating a culture of care in Geelong.

A proud history of news

From the Wathaurong people’s Jilong, through the highs of a manufacturing boom and the move to a modern smart economy, Geelong has always been a city in transformation. And for almost 175 years the Geelong Advertiser has been there every step of the way as this city has changed, reinvented itself and embraced the future.

The Geelong Advertiser broke the news of the discovery of gold, it was there through the world boom, the war years and the dawn of the manufacturing golden era.

Today Geelong is a wonderful place to live and work, with a broad, vibrant economy of high-tech manufacturing, growing health and education sectors and a growing population base.

As the city and region transforms for years to come, the Geelong Advertiser will continue to record the stories, lead debate and play a role in setting the course for an exciting future.

**COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Through industry partnerships, CSIRO is building a strong manufacturing sector that contributes to national productivity, economic growth and job creation. Its manufacturing research and development supports the metals, chemicals, fibres, biomedical and biotechnology industries. CSIRO’s presence boosts the region’s technical and scientific capability.

Boosting this expertise are joint initiatives such as the Geelong Centre for Emerging and Infectious Diseases, a collaboration with Deakin University, Barwon Health and City of Greater Geelong.

The $12 million project is underway with the $6 million construction phase fitting out a floor of Barwon Health’s Teaching, Training and Research building. Collaboration with Deakin, CSIRO and Victorian Centre for Advanced Materials Manufacturing has established the Australian Future Fibres Research and Innovation Centre (AFFRIC). AFFRIC conducts research on all aspects of fibre manufacturing, including carbon fibre, exploiting the expertise of these organisations.

Deakin University’s Carbon Nexus is an exciting example of Geelong’s typically collaborative approach being applied with global success. Carbon Nexus symbolises the strategic and intelligent approach to Geelong’s future. World-first carbon fibre technology has been developed and is now being commercialised by specialist wheel manufacturer Carbon Revolution. The company has completed a $6 million building at Deakin University, next to Carbon Nexus, as part of a $24 million facility that will ultimately produce 50,000 units and then up to 250,000 wheels per year for the automotive and aerospace industries. The company expects to employ over 300 people in the region over the coming years, while also creating huge opportunities for local suppliers of materials and equipment.

**Geelong is Victoria’s largest city after Melbourne, leading a region as rich with beauty as it is with opportunity.**

Brimming with potential, the economy of greater Geelong is as diverse as both its topography and its vast population. With nearly 220,000 residents, the Geelong region comprises the central business district, local industrial precincts, residential suburbs, as well as semi-rural properties and broadacre farmland. While there has been some attention to closures in the manufacturing sector, this has been far outweighed by new announcements, particularly in the construction, infrastructure, education and skills-based sectors. This city is definitely open for business and the momentum is building daily.

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WELCOME TO VIVA ENERGY

Geelong Refinery has a new name and new owners but the commitment to Geelong remains the same. The business, formerly owned by Shell, transitioned to Viva Energy Australia in August 2014. It includes the Geelong Refinery, 870 retail sites and a bulk fuels and bitumen, chemicals and lubricants marketing business supported by more than 20 fuel storage terminals nationally.

Proud of its business in Victoria and the significant contribution it makes to the economy, Viva Energy supplies around 55 per cent of the State’s fuel needs.

The Geelong Refinery employs more than 750 employees and spends more than $200 million each year in wages and services.

Investing in people and communities

Viva Energy understands the importance of its connection to the local community and the broader economy. Like Geelong, Viva Energy is looking towards a sustainable future. For the business, this involves continually looking at ways to improve efficiencies and productivity. It also means ensuring ongoing support for the people of the region and the Geelong Refinery has a proud history of working in partnership with the local Geelong community.

Viva Energy continues to provide support by spending hundreds of thousands of dollars each year on social investment and sponsorships such as Give Where You Live, Northern Bay Guarantee and Water Smart Kids. The company, and its people, support the local economy and the community through small grants and larger workplace giving programs.

A sustainable future

Viva Energy expects to invest $1 billion in its Australian operations during the next five years. Leaders in the local transformation, Viva Energy is committed to the refinery’s ongoing operation and is investing $150 million during the next two years on

PORT OF PLENTY

Geelong is actively leveraging its status as Victoria’s largest regional city, using all the natural assets and its road, air and port infrastructure to full advantage.

Staying shipsheape

Geelong’s port is a key gateway to the world for businesses in the city, the region and across the state. And with trade and jobs forecast to double at the port by 2030, its leaders are planning and implementing a range of infrastructure improvements both onshore and in the water to ensure the thriving shipping hub builds on its competitive edge and is well positioned to grasp future trade opportunities.

The port, Victoria’s premier bulk cargo port, has played an important part in the economic growth of Geelong for more than 150 years. That trend continues with every ship that sails into Corio Bay, helping shift cargo worth about $7.6 billion through the port annually. More than 660 ships with a record total of 16.5 million gross tons visited Geelong in 2013-14, up 200,000 gross tons on the previous year. Crude oil, petroleum products, fertiliser, grain and woodchips contribute the bulk of trade volume through the port.

No 4 Berth. Woodchip exporter, Midway Limited, reported that the berth upgrade immediately boosted its competitive edge.

New faces

GrainCorp, Viva Energy, Incitec Pivot and Midway Limited Geelong are among the major businesses at the port. But its facilities, position and transport links are also attracting new companies such as Bunge Australia to Geelong.

Infrastructure upgrade

The Victorian Regional Channels Authority (VRCA), which manages the port’s shipping lanes, invested $9 million in a 2014 dredging program to ensure the port remains accessible to increasingly bigger ships. With safe navigation, port productivity and efficiency as the key project drivers, work focused on widening the channel at City Bend and deepening Corio Quay North Wharf to optimise trade capacity.

Looking forward

As ship owners turn to larger vessels to achieve economies of scale, the challenge is for port leaders, stakeholders, governments and the VRCA to plan ahead to ensure Geelong’s shipping hub evolves with changes in commodities and the global shipping industry.

A 50-year port and land infrastructure plan, released in 2013, is a part of that strategic planning and aims to develop Geelong’s port into South-Eastern Australia’s premier bulk and break bulk port by 2050. Multi-million-dollar projects already in the pipeline include proposed dredging by the VRCA around Geelong Pier berths and Geelong Port Wharfs to optimise trade capacity.

Avalon Airport continues to focus its efforts towards providing the region with an international airport, while also promoting the easy access and advanced facilities for freight.

As part of its aggressive future outlook, Avalon Airport is aiming to increase airlines, destinations and frequency of flights both nationally and internationally.

With a new Planning Scheme and approval of its comprehensive master plan, Avalon is ready to do bigger business across general aviation, as well as establishing a commercial and retail zone.

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A SUSTAINABLE AND SATISFYING LIFESTYLE

Revitalising Central Geelong – lights and action

Much of the Vision 2 project, a joint initiative of the Committee for Geelong, the City of Greater Geelong, Deakin University and the Victorian Government, has been adopted into the Central Geelong Action Plan. With lighting and beautification works visibly underway, the momentum and potential investment opportunities in Central Geelong are plain to see.

GMHBA is a not-for-profit, 100% member-based organisation and is an active contributor in building the health and wellbeing of communities.

University Hospital Geelong

Barwon Health, as Geelong’s largest employer, continues to provide high calibre services and significant capital investment in the region.

The $67 million redevelopment delivered the community a new private emergency department, three new operating theatres, a new hydrotherapy pool and rehabilitation centre, 64 inpatient beds, a new angiography suite, three levels of underground parking, a new chapel, medical centre, café and gift shop, along with upgraded staff amenities.

The new Epworth Geelong

Due to open in mid-2016, the 394-bed Epworth Geelong Hospital is located to the north of Deakin University’s Waurn Ponds campus and will provide an emergency department, inpatient beds, surgery, medical consulting suites, rehabilitation facility, a complex care unit, maternity ward and a clinical and education simulation precinct.

Stage 1 of the $277 million project, developed by Epworth Healthcare in partnership with Deakin University, is well underway. The private hospital will provide a centre for clinically-based teaching for medical, nursing and allied health students at undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

The project is expected to support 1,000 direct construction jobs and create 1,100 new positions once all four stages are operational.

MAJOR COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Armstrong Creek in good health

Private health insurance provider, GMHBA, has set the tone for the future by announcing its $60 million commitment to creating a health precinct at Armstrong Creek.

When complete, the Armstrong Creek Health and Wellbeing Precinct will deliver the most comprehensive range of health services anywhere in the Geelong region. GMHBA’s vision is to deliver a precinct that offers holistic, co-ordinated and integrated healthcare in first-class, purpose-built facilities.

During construction it will deliver up to 500 jobs and once complete it will provide at least 80 ongoing jobs.

University Hospital Geelong

Launching the rebranded University Hospital Geelong in 2014, Barwon Health is leading the health and education nexus, which is positioned as the most powerful economic driver in Geelong.

With an additional 100 hospital beds in the central Geelong region and a further 300 jobs, the $93 million investment in the central Geelong hospital includes a $10 million helpdesk to enhance emergency services.

The capital commitment has already delivered a $35 million Intensive Care Unit. Another $8 million is being directed towards a revamp of renal services and a further $8 million for a surgical preparation area. Barwon Health is also playing a pivotal role in planning the $33 million health service facility in the northern suburbs of Geelong.

Modern Central Geelong health services

The St. John of God Hospital has become a landmark of modern health services, opening its doors in 2014 after a major upgrade.

The building, constructed in 1977, will be gutted and updated to meet more stringent standards, including a 5 Green Star energy rating.

Importantly, the project will be price neutral, with consolidation of buildings helping to fund the work.

Little Creatures comes to the city

In its first full year, Little Creatures Brewery firmly established itself as a not-to-be-missed CBD venue, successful in its aim to foster community spirit, diversity industry, develop skills, create a multitude of new jobs and boost local tourism. The conversion of the historic Valley Mills site into a brewery and hospitality venue represents a $60+ million investment by Little Creatures for the brewery in South Geelong.

Library leading the arts precinct development

The $30 million State Government-funded redevelopment of Geelong Performing Arts Centre and the proposed expansion of the Geelong Gallery will provide vital social infrastructure to support the liveability of Geelong. Leading the charge is the new Geelong Library and Heritage Centre. Opening in 2015, this iconic building is the cornerstone of the arts precinct and is anticipated to become a drawcard for locals and tourists.

Health, wellbeing and lifestyle

Many larger organisations have established offices in Geelong to take advantage of the growth of the education, health and emerging disability and personal injury sectors. Deakin University, for example, purchased the landmark T&G building to increase to at least 36,000. A fully funded redevelopment of Geelong precinct (GREP) is one of Geelong’s key employment nodes. Local and multi-national businesses are investing in this precinct on the basis of Geelong’s proximity to major transport and logistics hubs, creating new jobs and boost local tourism. The past 12 months has seen a significant increase in activity at the GREP.
**INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE COMMUNITY**

**Shopping and retail facilities**

The redevelopment of the Waurn Ponds Shopping Centre, which opened in May 2014, doubled the size of the popular centre. A state-of-the-art expanded Coles supermarket is complemented by a new Kmart store and 55 specialty shops. Coles is in the middle of delivering an exciting pipeline of projects in the Geelong region. Coles’ total investment in new and expanded shopping centres in the Geelong region is approximately $200 million. This includes the Waurn Ponds shopping centre (with Australian Unity), the Lara town centre expansion which opened in December 2014 and the Torquay Centre Redevelopment due to open in June 2015. Planning is also advancing for two more new stores – a freestanding supermarket in Drysdale and a new Coles-anchored shopping centre in the Armstrong Creek Town Centre.

The Waurn Ponds construction, led by Probuild, delivered 500 new ongoing retail jobs, while Coles Lara hired 80 new team members to supplement a team of 40 transferred from other stores. Coles Torquay is expected to employ 80-100 new team members when it opens. During construction, each project supports 100-200 construction jobs. Local subcontractors are used by Coles’ contractors where possible with representation from Geelong-based subcontractors on all projects.

**Sustainable housing growth**

Planning for the growth of Geelong is important. Demand for new housing in the Geelong region increased 11 per cent in 2015 and new residential developments in Armstrong Creek, Curlewis and Lara will continue to attract new residents to the region. New growth in areas such as Fyansford, Lovely Banks. Lara to Geelong’s north, will provide alternative housing and employment options. According to Tract Consultants, as Melbourne continues to grow, Geelong will become increasingly more significant in providing diverse and affordable housing choices.

Reports during 2014 and into 2015 indicate keen investor interest in the Geelong region, particularly from the Sydney market, as median house prices continue climbing in capital cities.

**Armstrong Creek booming**

The headline news of the Geelong region’s development is Armstrong Creek. Located south of Geelong on the Surf Coast Highway, Armstrong Creek is the gateway to the region’s surf coast. This 2,500 hectare land development is the largest contiguous growth area in the nation. Anticipated to ultimately house up to 65,000 residents, the locality will include two business park areas, providing future employment opportunities for a localised workforce. In 2015, there will be eight projects selling at Armstrong Creek creating more than 450 jobs in the provision of infrastructure, display village operations and project marketing.

In addition, more than 350 new homes are being built simultaneously which creates a further 875 jobs. By 2016, there will be at least ten projects on the market and 600-800 houses being built annually, creating an additional 550 infrastructure and 2,500 housing jobs. This will mean a total of approximately 3,000 jobs at Armstrong Creek over the next decade. With the Waurn Ponds train station now operational plus the impending launch of the Geelong Ring Road extension (Baanip Boulevard), the increased activity in Armstrong Creek will result in the continued employment of 3,000-5,000 people in the next 20-30 years. Armstrong Creek has already become a preferred growth corridor over the outer-Melbourne growth areas due to its existing infrastructure and wonderful lifestyle.

**North Geelong and Lara growth plan**

The renewal of Geelong’s northern suburbs continues through the New Norcia project. The $30 million investment includes a significant contribution by the Victorian Government and will create 160 new private homes and 160 public housing units by the end of 2015. Close to the Geelong Ring Road Employment Precinct (GREP), key road and rail infrastructure, the newly-zoned urban growth area of Lovely Banks, along with the existing Lara west urban growth area, will establish new communities with easy access to Geelong and Melbourne.

The town of Lara has seen significant development during the past 12 months, with Coles completing its Lara Village project and Woolworths announcing plans for further redevelopment of the town centre in 2015. A new residential estate, Lara Central by Bisnelli Developments, was released to market at the end of 2014 and three more Lara estates are scheduled to commence in 2015.

**The context for investment**

**Deakin bridging the gaps**

The Centre of Advanced Design in Engineering Training (CADET) will be the new home of Deakin University’s School of Engineering. Based at Deakin University’s Waurn Ponds Innovation Precinct, from September 2015 CADET will bridge the gaps between university-based advanced manufacturing, industry, TAFE and schools. CADET will use the latest technologies and specialist tools to train engineers for the jobs of the future including digital manufacturing, rapid prototyping, 3D modelling and visualisation technologies. A $55 million partnership project with the Australian Government, this new design-led, industry-facing approach to engineering education will offer new pathway and problem-solving opportunities – for students, for researchers and for industry.

**Key data sets are strong**

The economic picture is positive into 2015, with major underlying indicators showing improvement in the past year. Building activity is up 11.1 per cent on the previous year, to an annual total of more than $1 billion. Median house prices in the City of Greater Geelong show a growth of 4.2 per cent in 12 months. New dwelling approvals were up nearly 20 per cent in 2013-14 on the prior year, indicating a vigorous domestic building industry. Geelong’s gross regional product in 2014 at $10.65 billion, showed an increase of 1.9 per cent on the previous year.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

**The context for investment**

According to a recent survey conducted by the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, business confidence is high with three out of every four local firms confident about their own and Geelong’s future. Nearly 40 per cent of Geelong businesses said they are likely to employ more staff in 2015.

**About this publication**

This report update represents a relatively small sample of the major projects underway and recently completed in the Geelong region. Every day there are new opportunities and ideas emerging. Information is regularly compiled by various groups and this update is simply the latest on the continuum of Geelong’s transformation. The origin of this document was an economic status report commissioned by the Committee for Geelong, City of Greater Geelong and Willawong Properties in 2013. The first report responded to a demand by superannuation funds and other major potential employers seeking an insight into investment projects and the regional location in the context of future employment opportunities for Geelong. The July 2013 report aimed to articulate the current major activity in the region and the many sustainable jobs being created as a result. This 2014-15 progress update includes information prepared by, or on behalf of, a range of organisations including members of the Committee for Geelong. The Committee for Geelong also acknowledges other contributors including the Geelong Chamber of Commerce, Geelong Manufacturing Council, G21 – Geelong Region Alliance, Enterprise Geelong Opportunity and the City of Greater Geelong.