



COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG

SUBMISSION TO City of Greater Geelong
Amendment C395 – Settlement Strategy and Northern &
Western Growth Areas

29 July 2019

T +61 3 5227 8075
W www.committeeforgeelong.com.au
E 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 Gheringhap Street Geelong VIC 3220

1. Introduction

The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to lodge a submission to City of Greater Geelong's (CoGG) amendment C395 – Settlement Strategy and Northern & Western Geelong Growth Areas.

In submitting the below feedback, the CfG acknowledges that Council adopted the City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy in October 2018, and in March 2019 adopted the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan. The purpose of Amendment C395 is to implement these documents into the Planning Scheme.

This submission has been collated to reflect the views of the Committee, on behalf of its members. CfG members are aware that the changes proposed by the amendment include:

- Minor changes to Clauses 21.03 Objectives – Strategies - Implementation, 21.11 Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area and 21.16 Anakie to reflect the Framework Plan.
- Replace the Municipal Framework Plan at Clause 21.04 to implement the Settlement Strategy.
- Replace and amend Clauses 21.06 Settlement and Housing, 21.08 Development and Community Infrastructure and 21.14 The Bellarine Peninsula to implement the Settlement Strategy.
- A new Clause 21.20 Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas to implement the Framework Plan.
- Rezone land in the Northern and Western Growth Areas from Rural Living, Farming, Public Park and Recreation and Industrial 1 Zones to the Urban Growth Zone.

The CfG made a submission in relation to the CoGG Draft Settlement Strategy in June 2018 (refer attachment 1) The CfG requests that you consider this original submission along with our further commentary below. The CfG believes that while some matters from the original submission have been met, there are still several issues that need to be addressed, namely the items listed in point 2 (below).

2. Amendment C395 - Settlement Strategy Response

The CfG would like to submit the below observations and feedback to Amendment C395:

- The Strategy lacks an ambitious vision for Geelong's future growth, embodied within CoGG's stated maximum planned growth rate of 3%. 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 incomprehensible.
- The Victorian Government released the "*Victoria in Future 2019: Population Projections 2016 to 2056*" report last week and the strategy growth rate should take into account the information from this report.
- 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 given the Strategy acknowledges the significant ramifications if growth is under catered.
- The introduction of a permanent settlement boundary 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- The Strategy also lacks clarification regarding management of potential land use conflicts particularly around industrial areas.
- 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 Strategy is finalised the outcomes of that policy should be reflected.
- The submission needs to change the status of the planning in the Northern and Western Growth Areas.
- The submission identifies the core issues in a summary way but does not relate any of them directly to requested changes to the exhibited Amendment.

3. Contact Details

Jennifer Cromarty
CEO, Committee for Geelong
☎ +61 413 241 033
✉ Jennifer.cromarty@committeeforgeelong.com.au



COMMITTEE FOR GEELONG

SUBMISSION TO City of Greater Geelong Draft Settlement Strategy

25 June 2018

T +61 3 5227 8075
W www.committeeforgeelong.com.au
E 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 Gheringhap Street Geelong VIC 3220

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

Contents

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Background	1
3.	Settlement Strategy Response	2
3.1	Growth Targets	3
3.2	Land Availability	4
3.3	Future Growth.....	4
3.4	Role of the Victorian State Government.....	5
4.	Conclusion.....	6
5.	Contact Details	7

THIS PAGE HAS BEEN INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK

1. Introduction

The Committee for Geelong (CfG) is pleased to lodge a submission to City of Greater Geelong's (CoGG) Draft Settlement Strategy. This is an important strategic project which will guide the future land use and growth in Victoria's Second City.

The CfG, as an independent, member-based organisation, provides strategic leadership and influence to leverage the economic potential of our city-region, to make Geelong a world-class place.

We work collaboratively with an authoritative group of stakeholders and influencers to deliver that growth. Our members include local, national and international organisations and individuals who set aside commercial gain, sectoral interest and personal perspectives to provide a united voice on the issues facing Geelong.

The CfG has a history of achieving results for Geelong by actively advocating to solve problems and confront challenges. Our success allows us to influence policy and see our highly valued opinion consistently sought by key decision makers.

We share one passion with our members – the vision of a Clever and Creative Geelong.

As thought leaders, the CfG encourages innovation and debate around opportunities for Geelong. We welcome the opportunity to comment on CoGG's Draft Settlement Strategy. This submission has been collated to reflect the views of the Committee, on behalf of its members.

2. Background

Geelong as Victoria's second largest city with a population of approximately 220,000 people, has now grown to become Australia's 12th largest city. Geelong's economy is diverse – health, education and service sectors are now the key employers, however manufacturing is still important.

Geelong has the potential to be a great city, but strong population growth and settlement planning is vital for Geelong to prosper. For those fortunate enough to live in Geelong, there are daily reminders of why our city is in such an enviable position. World class education, employment opportunities, access to Avalon Airport, and approximately one hour travel time from Melbourne, the state's capital. The presence of developing industries, elite sporting teams, a thriving arts and cultural scene which contribute to Geelong's liveable city-region.

The CfG believes that Geelong could be better positioned at a national level as Victoria's 'second city'. In 2016, the CfG undertook a global study tour of eight "second" cities in Europe and the USA to identify strategies to underpin the future vision for Geelong as Victoria's second city. The study tour findings were consolidated in the CfG's Winning from Second: what Geelong can learn from international second cities (Wf2) research report. This report, written in collaboration with the United Nations Global Compact - Cities Programme and RMIT's Centre for Urban Research, draws insight from the change and economic transformation process of international second cities.

As a result of the CfG's advocacy, Geelong has been designated as Victoria's second city in Plan Melbourne. "Growing Geelong as Victoria's second city by prioritising land-use strategies that position the G21 region for accelerated growth and becoming a centre of employment, and re-energising the central business precinct and waterfront zone through the Revitalising Central Geelong Action Plan." Given that growing Geelong as Victoria's Second City is now in the planning scheme, the CfG believes the time is right to build on this.

The CfG's 'second city' policy framework includes clear actions and outcomes aimed at improving the economic prosperity and growth of Geelong.

The Second City Policy Framework aims at being an innovative world-leading framework to shift the paradigm in a rapidly changing society. It is vital that all tiers of government have the

appropriate resources to develop the second city policy at both a state and national level. Victoria is growing and there will be a push for more than one second city in the coming years. Geelong is the first and the most relevant city to create and implement a policy framework that can be adopted across all tiers of government.

Geelong has built a platform for economic growth, it now needs to create and implement a clear strategic direction to take advantage of the opportunities.

The population of Geelong is expected to grow by 7% in the next 12 months, from 230,000 to 247,000. Looking to 2050, the population growth has been projected to be anywhere from 400,000 to 750,000 (Salt, 2017). This is comparable to Melbourne's population forecast to be 8,000,000 by 2050.

The time is now for the City of Greater Geelong to embark on a visionary and transformational strategy to exponentially grow Geelong, and build a distinct identity and competitive advantage. Support and partnership across all levels of government is critical to this growth.

3. Settlement Strategy Response

The CfG supports the intent and principles of the Draft Settlement Strategy (referred here in as the Strategy). In its current format, the CfG does not support the content of the Strategy. The Strategy, in its current form constrains land supply, and threatens the status of Geelong, and its transformation and future prosperity.

Lifestyle and affordability are key drivers for people moving to Geelong and the future planning needs to provide a range of housing options. Density and diversity are the greatest form of social equity as they give more people access to jobs, opportunities and experiences.

The CfG supports sustainable development of our city-region, where settlement is balanced across urban Geelong, with a focus on Central Geelong, the new growth areas of Lovely Banks and Batesford, and recently established growth areas in Armstrong Creek, Lara and also the Bellarine.

Developments at Armstrong Creek, Lara, Lovely Banks, Batesford and carefully planned development on the Bellarine, together with cross-municipality infill development, have the ability to provide a range of housing and employment opportunities for future residents. Existing District Towns on the Bellarine play a very important role in offering choice and affordable housing options. The existing role of these District Towns should assume increased status in the Settlement Strategy to consolidate their existing role and to relieve pressure from other less suitable locations. Restricting their potential growth to 'within existing settlement boundaries' undermines the potential of the District Towns and is inconsistent with the long term role of the Settlement Strategy

There are a range of other parcels of land in the city-region that should not be discounted as potentially developable by introducing discreet settlement boundaries around growth nodes highlighted in the Strategy. Ensuring a diversity in desirable and equitable locations and also product is a key driver to Geelong's population growth and success into the future.

Geelong has infrastructure that will bring people to the area, including an established domestic and developing international airport, regional rail with the prospect of a high-speed rail, and better connectivity to greater Melbourne forecast with the upgrades to the Westgate Freeway and potential ferry services.

Geelong needs to focus on visionary growth in our city-region. The Strategy does not address key issues affecting the municipality associated with accelerated population growth.

Getting Geelong right must be a national priority, and responsibility for the transformation of our significant city needs to be shared between local, state and national parties.

3.1 Growth Targets

The CfG is concerned that there is insufficient emphasis in Strategy on progressive and accelerated population growth of Geelong that aligns with growth forecasts in Australia's city-regions

As stated in the Strategy, Geelong is growing at a faster rate than the rest of Victoria. In recent years, population growth in Geelong is consistently exceeding 2.7% per annum. CfG is strongly advocating that the population growth target of at least 3% is applied, and perhaps greater, in the Strategy. Based on current growth experienced across the city-region, Geelong has the potential to grow at 4% per annum if the market was provided with an adequate supply of developable land. Geelong would surpass more than 3% growth if there was a greater degree of land available to cater for the diverse market that Geelong now invites.

The G21 Regional Growth Plan, released more than five years ago in April 2013, provided a framework for settlement planning across the G21 region, including Geelong. The Regional Plan set an aspirational growth target of 2.5% for the five regional Councils. CfG believes that this target growth rate, specified in 2013 for a region across a diverse landscape and spatial spread, is not visionary nor reflective of the growth potential specific for the city-region of Greater Geelong.

Geelong, as Victoria's second city, is afforded many advantages including its proximity to key rail, sea and air transport infrastructure which provides good access to Melbourne, regional Victorian, interstate and international markets. Geelong has an excellent, health and education sector and growing professional services industry, particularly in social insurance. Geelong is a growing city, and has the potential to be a great city.

The Draft Settlement Strategy acknowledges Geelong as one of the fastest growing regions in Victoria. Melbourne is growing at unprecedented levels, with its population to reach 8 million by 2050. An additional 1.6 million homes will be required in Melbourne by 2050, and Geelong is sharing a significant proportion of Melbourne's growth. This is expected to continue, most likely at an accelerated rate. Armstrong Creek is one of the fastest growth areas in the State, if not Australia. Recent data indicates that sales to people migrating from Melbourne to Armstrong Creek are increasing at a rapid rate.

The draft Settlement Strategy does not reflect the synergies that have been evident between exponential growth and demand between Melbourne's outer west suburb of Wyndhamvale and Armstrong Creek. Wyndhamvale is Australia's strongest growing market and in recent times housing prices and population growth in Armstrong Creek has surpassed Wyndhamvale. Wyndhamvale is located 44 km from Geelong's CBD and Geelong is in a prime position to continue to share the growth experienced in Melbourne's outer western suburbs.

Latest housing data indicates that house and land prices are equivalent at Armstrong Creek and Wyndhamvale, yet prices in Armstrong Creek have increased by 8.3%, compared to Wyndhamvale which has experienced a 2.4% recession in price. As a comparison, median house prices in metropolitan Melbourne have risen on average by 4.4%.

The CfG considers that an aspirational population growth rate targeted for Geelong at 2.5% is too low – especially when Melbourne and its western suburbs will continue to grow at a much higher rate. The CfG recommends that CoGG plans for a higher growth rate of at least 3% until 2036, with aspirational targets set at 4%. The expected growth rate of 2.5 per cent would see the population increase by 153,000 to 388,000 by 2036. 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?

3.2 Land Availability

Land availability presented in the Draft Settlement Strategy utilises data from January 2017. The CfG believes these figures are outdated and do not reflect the actual land availability of the city-region in June 2018. The most recent surge in land sales has resulted in land being consumed at an unpredictably faster rate than reflected in the figures in January 2017.

Figures presented by CfG members indicated that land sales in recently established growth areas have hit an unprecedented level in the last 12 months. The lack of competition on the market reduces choice, market diversity and competition, which all in turn reduces housing affordability. Geelong is already experiencing a decline in housing affordability. Housing in Geelong is reaching an unprecedented level of unaffordability, with the median rent at \$350.

Each of the newly established growth areas provide a unique market, unlike the next. Each land package serves an individual market that are not directly comparable. Armstrong Creek captures a different market to that of the Bellarine. Similarly, the introduction of the Western and Northern Growth Areas will service their own niche markets.

CfG believes there is an urgency to releasing land in the NGA and WGA as soon as possible. The CfG is concerned that there will be a shortage in market availability across Geelong if only one Precinct Structure Plans (PSP) is commenced by 2025.

There are a number of areas across our city-region that should be more carefully considered for urban growth, and considered as part of a logical inclusions process. Land which has proximity to embedded infrastructure services, such as rail, arterial roads and power and water services should be included in the city-region's growth boundaries due to the efficiency and diversity that can be achieved. As an example, land in Moolap and Point Henry provides a unique opportunity to establish an iconic and desirable development that will cater for a high end medium to high density residential market, however appropriate industry buffers need to be preserved. The opportunity to develop this parcel of unique coastal land that is located 6 km from Geelong's CBD, at the gateway to the Bellarine, directly accessible from Geelong Ring Road's extension and providing coastal living cannot be ignored by CoGG. The development of this unique land parcel is supported by the State government, and it is irrational for CoGG to ignore its potential.

3.3 Future Growth

The CfG believes CoGG should provide a more strategic approach to identifying potential urban growth areas across the city-region. The Strategy only acknowledges particular growth areas, not consideration of potential growth across the entire region.

There is a gap across Geelong with serving the needs of a diverse market. The Strategy should establish criteria for assessment of land within the city-region, in order to determine adequacy of land to contribute to population growth and closing the gap of diversity in the housing market.

It has been suggested that a defined radius of 20-30 km could be applied from the CBD where potential land applicable for population growth, or logical inclusion, can be identified against a set of defined criteria. This will provide an unbiased and equitable assessment of land. Potential locations that can effectively cater for development and population growth should be more broadly considered, instead of identifying parcels of land and land locking them with legislative urban growth boundaries (UGB) or settlement boundaries.

The CfG does not support the establishment of legislated settlement boundaries as this has the potential to limit growth in our booming city-region. This will lead to further land shortages and housing unaffordability. The intent for Geelong is to provide affordable and diverse housing for future prosperity across a diverse market.

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.

The CfG does not support the introduction of UGB's into Geelong. We recognise the importance of settlement boundaries to facilitate appropriate development within designated locations, but these should not be legislated. Defined settlement boundaries should not be introduced without first understanding and articulating what they will mean, how they apply, and what the review process and frequency will be. Creating a statutory UGB will have implications for future growth and will create a legislative barrier in the municipality. Flexible or notional settlement boundaries are far more acceptable to the CfG, with the flexibility for organic growth which can adapt to the surge in Geelong's future opportunities.

3.4 Role of the Victorian State Government

CfG recognises the wealth of experience and capabilities of CoGG's Urban Growth team. CoGG has facilitated the success of a number of significant PSP's in Greater Geelong. Consistent with a large number of Councils, CoGG is under resourced and its capacity is currently stretched.

CfG also recognises the role the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA) has within state significant statutory planning projects. CfG strongly believes that the growth and transformation of Geelong is of state significance. The Settlement Strategy for our city-region should be completed in partnership with the State Government. A whole of city-region strategic document such as *Plan Geelong*, is required to integrate the strategy for population growth strategy with a larger more concentrated long term planning approach for Geelong.

The CfG's Second City Policy Framework outlines a number of strategic initiatives that can transform Geelong. The Second City Policy will provide a paradigm shift for whole of government. It will provide the platform for economic transformation, better infrastructure servicing, health services, social inclusion and superior education initiatives. These will all assist with prosperous and strong population growth.

The Council is in a strong position to push beyond the conventional approach of PSP's for future growth areas. There is no time like the present for CoGG to adopt a leading edge to provide a platform for future residential development across the city-region to venture beyond standardised residential development and apply an innovative, sustainable and world-class standard to urban design. The qualities of our city-region, including liveability, quality of life, and turquoise lifestyle set amidst Corio Bay, the Bellarine and Barwon River, and affordability can all be prominent features in our future residential developments.

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

Due to the differences in the market share that the Northern and Western Growth Areas will attract, CfG believes that the PSP or similar should commence for both areas concurrently. VPA should play a key role in the strategic direction and settlement planning in Geelong, particularly the development of these two growth areas and others outside of those already identified that may be deemed applicable.

4. Conclusion

The CfG welcomes the opportunity to lodge this submission. Geelong is on a transformational trajectory and is commencing a journey of exciting change within Victoria's economy and settlement pattern. Geelong is becoming an appealing and welcoming city-region and this is evident by strong population growth experienced in recent years. Geelong is being recognised as Victoria's second city and provides a diverse choice of land, affordable living, a unique turquoise lifestyle, and key infrastructure, services and facilities. Our city-region is sharing the growth experienced in Melbourne and this market share is set to significantly increase well until 2050.

CfG does not support the draft Settlement Strategy released in May 2018 due to a number of concerns, including:

- **Lack of vision for Geelong's growth**
The strategy does not outline visionary long term growth and opportunities that will provide a platform for the transformation of Geelong. The growth target specified in the Strategy of 2.5% establishes a future target of negative growth for the region, based on actual growth that is being realised in June 2018 of 2.7%. A based growth target of 3% is necessary, with an aspirational target 4% and possibly greater.
- **Outdated Land Availability Data**
The evidenced based data to assess and calculate the land availability outlined in the draft Strategy is 18 months old, and does not reflect the current land availability projections. Available land is being consumed at a significantly faster rate, particularly in the last 12 months, than previously forecast. This has a significant impact on the future estimates of land and the rate at which it will be consumed.
- **Consider developable land beyond those specific areas outlined in the Strategy**
There are a number of areas across our city-region that should be more carefully considered for urban growth, and considered as part of a logical inclusions process. Land which has proximity to embedded infrastructure services, such as rail, arterial roads and power and water services should be considered in the city-region's settlement boundaries as they provide efficiency and diversity to the market.
- **Settlement boundaries will reduce growth**
Establishing legislative settlement boundaries around discreet land packages, particularly the five growth pockets of Armstrong Creek, Lara, Northern and Western Growth Areas and the Bellarine is premature at this stage in Geelong's transformation. Settlement boundaries will create significant legislative barriers that will reduce housing diversity and affordability in the city-region.
- **Greater involvement from State government**
Geelong is recognised as Victoria's second city, and is on the cusp of significant transformation. The future of Geelong is of state significance and planning of its growth and prosperity should be a whole of government commitment. The VPA should be strongly involved in the future of Geelong and should be supporting Geelong to develop a robust and prosperous plan for Geelong's future.

5. Contact Details

Rebecca Casson

CEO, Committee for Geelong

☎ +61 487 000 786

✉ rebecca.casson@committeeforgeelong.com.au