

**AMENDMENT C395
GREATER GEELONG
PLANNING SCHEME**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING
ASSESSMENT**

URBIS

PREPARED FOR CITY OF GREATER GEELONG

URBIS STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS REPORT WERE:

Director	Michael Barlow
Associate Director	James Hamilton
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1. INTRODUCTION

1. I have been engaged on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong (the **Planning Authority**) in my capacity as an expert in the field of urban planning.
2. I have been asked to review the Geelong Settlement Strategy and draft Planning Scheme Amendment C395 and provide a strategic planning assessment. I have also been requested to review and respond to the public submissions in respect of the Draft Geelong Settlement Strategy and associated amendments to the provisions of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme as proposed in Amendment C395.
3. The Amendment proposes to implement the City of Greater Geelong's Settlement Strategy (2018) and Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (2019).
4. The Amendment includes policy changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) as follows:
 - Amend **Clause 21.03 Objectives – Strategies – Implementation** to include reference to 21.18 Corio Norlane and 21.20 Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas.
 - Replace **Clause 21.04 Municipal Framework Plan** with a new Clause 21.04 to implement the Settlement Strategy through a new Municipal Framework Plan.
 - Replace **Clause 21.06 Settlement and Housing** with a new clause including objectives, strategies and references to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.08 Development and Community Infrastructure** to update strategies on Transport and Development Contributions to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.11 Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area** to reflect the role of the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas.
 - Amend **Clause 21.14 The Bellarine Peninsula** to update objectives, strategies, further work and references to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.16 Anakie** to implement the Settlement Strategy by amending objectives and strategies, deleting reference to the Anakie Structure Plan 1996 and replacing the map.
 - Include the City of Greater Geelong's *Settlement Strategy (2018)* and *Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan (2019)* in the Schedule to Clause 72.08 Background Documents.
 - Insert a new **Clause 21.20 Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas** including new objectives, strategies, references and plans to implement the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan.
5. The Amendment proposes to give effect to the policy changes by also rezoning areas of land in the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas from Rural Living Zone, Farming Zone, Public Park and Recreation Zone and Industrial 1 Zone to Urban Growth Zone.

1.1. INSTRUCTIONS

6. I have been requested by Harwood Andrews, on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong (the Planning Authority) to:
 - (a) attend a meeting to discuss the issues raised in your preliminary opinion/evidence;
 - (b) consider and advise on any post-exhibition changes;
 - (c) prepare an expert witness report (to be filed on a date to be confirmed) which contains your opinion on
 - i. the role and structure of Geelong and its contribution to Victorian Settlement strategy
 - ii. the strategic planning merits of the PSA, including whether the Settlement Strategy is strategically justified having regard to the above
 - iii. issues raised in submissions to the PSA relating to the Settlement Strategy

- iv. any issues you consider should be addressed by way of post-exhibition changes
- (d) review and advise on relevant expert witness reports filed on behalf of other parties;
- (e) present evidence on behalf of our client at the Panel hearing (the panel hearing is currently scheduled for 11 to 22 November 2019).

7. In undertaking my assessment, I have had regard to:

- The Greater Geelong Urban Growth Strategy 1996
- The Geelong Region Plan – A sustainable growth strategy (2007)
- The Housing Diversity Strategy (July 2007 - Amended 23 September 2008)
- The G21 Regional Growth Plan, April 2013 and associated documents.
- The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 and supporting background documents.
- The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme including the key parts of the Planning Policy Framework relevant to the Settlement Strategy.
- The proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C395 including the proposed amendments to the various policies of the MSS.
- Ministerial Direction No. 12 – Urban Growth Areas.
- Ministerial Direction No. 17 – Localised Planning Statements
- The Northern and Western Growth Areas Framework Plan – noting that this is not a focus of my evidence.
- Submissions made regarding the Settlement Strategy and the associated planning scheme amendment (PSA) relevant to my planning expertise.

1.2. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

8. Appendix A contains a statement setting out my qualifications and experience, and the other matters in accordance with Planning Panels Victoria's 'Guide to Expert Evidence'.

1.3. DECLARATION

9. I declare that in preparing the material contained in this report I have made all inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.



Michael Barlow

Director – Urbis Pty Ltd

2. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES, OPINIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. KEY ISSUES

10. Based on my strategic planning review of the Settlement Strategy, the accompanying background reports, the proposed changes to the policies forming part of the Local Planning Policy Framework and submissions regarding Amendment C395, I have identified the following key issues relevant to my expertise:
 - Confirming the appropriate location for additional urban land to accommodate the increased rate of growth and provide adequate future capacity to cater for even higher growth scenarios.
 - The future role and spatial extent of the Bellarine Peninsula townships, particularly when having regard to the long-term desire to protect the Bellarine Peninsula's rural qualities and landscapes and maintain appropriate breaks between towns.
 - The form of 'settlement boundaries' to be established around all urban areas and the implementation of the boundaries.

2.2. OPINIONS

The Need for a new Settlement Strategy

11. Victoria is expected to accommodate up to 11.2 million people by 2056 (see VIF 2019) up from 6.5 million at 2018 representing a 72% increase in less than 40 years. Whilst Melbourne is expected to accommodate the significant share of that growth (nearly 4.3 million people) Greater Geelong will experience the greatest population growth (in terms of actual number of people) outside the metropolis. VIF estimates that the Geelong SA 4 Region (excluding Colac-Otway) will achieve a population of approximately 500,000 people by 2051.
12. Geelong by virtue of its existing size (with a wide range of higher order services and facilities not found elsewhere in the region) and its location near Melbourne is likely to continue to significantly grow. *Plan Melbourne* acknowledges the importance of Geelong as Victoria's second city and seeks to facilitate accelerated growth.
13. A series of strategic plans have guided the development of the Geelong region for the past 30 years. Geelong has benefitted from this planning and has always provided several urban development options for the city (i.e. coastal town, new urban areas, established areas) and choices for consumers.
14. There are several key drivers for the development of the new Settlement Strategy in addition to the increased population growth that is forecast to occur within Greater Geelong over the next 15 plus years. These include:
 - The declining amount of 'new urban land' (being broad-hectare and major infill areas) available for development. Based on the estimates provided by Spatial Economics and the forecast growth rate the supply of land (as at 1 January 2017) may accommodate 15-20 years of further growth. This fact alone confirms the need for the updated strategy and the identification of the additional locations for urban development.
 - The clarification of the future role of the larger Bellarine townships. That is do they continue to serve as ever growing dormitory suburbs for urban Geelong or are there physical and policy limits to their spatial growth?
 - If the Bellarine townships are not to significantly increase in scale then additional growth areas are required to meet forecast demand, offer choice in the market to current and future residents and ensure ongoing competition in the land market and hence affordability.

- The need to provide an unambiguous direction as to where future urban growth will be located.

Consistency with Victoria’s Settlement Strategy and Role of Geelong

15. It is considered that the Settlement Strategy directly and properly responds to the overall settlement policy for Victoria and the associated policies as follows. The Strategy:

- Provides a clear direction for the future growth of Geelong and enables it to accelerate its growth as Victoria's second city. The assessment of future growth and its preferred locations has been considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.
- Is based on a robust assessment of future demand and current supply of urban land across the municipality and has identified two new growth areas that will major growth in around urban Geelong. These growth areas are immediately adjacent to urban Geelong and can access a wide range of facilities, services and jobs within the established parts of the city.
- Provides a long-term strategy that is capable of accommodating a range of growth scenarios including high long-term growth rates of 2.5 – 3.0% per annum cumulative.
- Has used Scenario E (the most ambitious growth scenario) to understand the potential for significantly greater growth than the current forecasts (64% higher providing an average growth of 9,500 people per annum) to test the possible supply required to accommodate a higher than anticipated demand. The new growth areas together with ongoing development of the Bellarine townships and existing urban areas of Geelong provide sufficient capacity to meet Geelong’s future growth for 25 plus years.
- Provides that sufficient land is available to meet forecast demand taking into account opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.
- Advocates the use of settlement boundaries to protect valued non-urban areas and landscapes– this is discussed in detail in Sections 5 and 6 of this report.
- Identifies that the Bellarine district towns should not be major focuses of new growth into the future thereby reducing the need for these towns to continue to spatially expand. This will have the consequential benefit of ensuring that further urban development does not adversely affect the valued environments and landscapes of the Bellarine Peninsula. This approach is entirely consistent with the strategies of Clause 11.03-5S.

The Future Role of the Bellarine Townships

16. It is appropriate to direct Geelong’s principal future growth at other locations away from the Bellarine, for the following reasons:

- The identification of the Bellarine Peninsula as requiring an overarching Localised Planning Statement due to its significant visual landscape characteristics, individually distinct coastal settlements in a rural setting, sweeping views across rolling hills, coastlines, wetlands and open farmed spaces¹.
- It is timely that the long-term aspiration to protect the non-urban parts of the Bellarine is recognised. The recent declaration of the Bellarine Peninsula as a Distinctive area and Landscape will likely serve to restrict the spatial extent of the existing townships.
- If the nominated coastal towns were to seek to accommodate a similar proportion of Geelong’s growth as it has in the past (approximately one third of Geelong’s annual growth) the size of these townships would increase significantly beyond that of a district town with significant consequential impacts on the surrounding areas.
- The identification of other locations adjacent to urban Geelong capable of accommodating long-term major growth in locations that are relatively close to a wide range of existing and higher order services and facilities and range of employment options that cannot be provided in the coastal townships.

¹ DELWP – Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement, September 2015; page 13

- The new growth areas are of a scale that will support significant infrastructure and higher order facilities and services within proximate locations, whereas the Bellarine townships cannot.
17. Given these factors, the designation of the ongoing role of the larger Bellarine townships as district towns, but not growth areas, is appropriate.

Expansion of Urban Geelong

18. With the accelerating growth of Greater Geelong, it is the right time to focus future growth within areas proximate to essential services, key transport networks and key employment nodes. Both Armstrong Creek and the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas offer the opportunity to create large communities. This scale in turn creates the ability to provide not just housing but a range of significant infrastructure and higher order facilities and services within proximate locations.
19. The detailed review of the two new growth areas (both within the G21 Regional Growth Plan and subsequently with the preparation of the Framework Plan) highlights several major benefits of developing these areas as opposed to major expansion elsewhere, including:
- The relative proximity of the areas to the well-established parts of urban Geelong. The north-western extremity of the Western Growth Area is located approximately 12 kilometres from the city centre – a distance that is similar to (or less than) many of the suburbs located within Melbourne’s inner south-eastern region.
 - This proximity provides superior access to a wide range of jobs within the major employment nodes, retail and other services, higher education etc. Simply put the two areas are well located to be supported at the early phases of their development by existing services.
 - The development of the Western Growth Area provides several major public benefits including the opportunity to provide a major open space and biodiversity network centred on the Moorabool River and to re-use the existing quarry for other purposes.
 - The opportunity to create attractive neighbourhoods utilising the settings and topography of the two areas.

Settlement Boundary

20. I consider that it is appropriate to impose settlement boundaries around urban Geelong and the Bellarine townships. However, there are different factors influencing the potential application of the settlement boundaries between the two.
21. I am concerned at the choice of the words to describe the proposed boundary for urban Geelong. The Settlement Strategy identifies an “*indicative permanent settlement boundary*”. The word ‘*permanent*’ has the connotation of an inflexible, irrevocable boundary that will not change. I do not consider that this is the intention of the Settlement Strategy, that may have a life of 20 years or so. In my view a better word to describe the boundary is ‘*long term*’.
22. I consider that the use of a specific and strong local policy to create and enforce the settlement boundary is sufficient and any change will be subject to appropriate check and balances through the planning scheme amendment process.
23. The process to identify a long-term settlement boundary should be carried out after the approval of the overarching Settlement Strategy and Amendment C395. Given the Bellarine’s growth challenges will be considered under the realm of the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes project, it is appropriate that urban Geelong carries out a separate long-term settlement boundary assessment process.

2.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Clause 21.14 – Bellarine Peninsula

24. Given the formal declaration of the DAL for the Bellarine it is recommended that the following modifications be made to the exhibited clause as follows:

Further Work – page 7 of 17

- Update the proposed task Work with the state government on the designation of the Bellarine-Peninsula under the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act 2018 to reflect the fact the declaration has been made and the next step is to finalise a Statement of Planning Policy
- Modify the requirement to undertake a structure plan to that of reviewing the long-term township boundary having regard to all but one of the considerations listed in the clause. Replace the words *other planned growth on the Bellarine Peninsula* (dot point 3) with the words *other planned growth in Greater Geelong*.

Introducing a Settlement Boundaries

25. The exhibited version of the Housing and Settlement Framework Plan map at Clause 21.06 shows the *indicative permanent settlement boundary*. I recommend that the word permanent be removed from the map. Once the full review process has been undertaken the Settlement Framework plan can be revised to reflect the approved boundary.
26. I recommend that the Settlement Strategy could be modified to refer to a '*long-term settlement boundary*' for urban Geelong rather than a permanent settlement boundary. Reference to the settlement boundaries for the Bellarine townships could be described as 'enduring settlement boundary's'.

Boral Land – Submission 38

27. it is considered that the Boral land by virtue of its size and proximity to the Armstrong Creek growth area has potential for future urban land. Given this I consider that the northern part of the Boral land has future potential to be included in the growth of urban Geelong and could be identified as a Future Investigation Area (FIA).
28. The site should not be reviewed in isolation, rather the assessment of this land should be undertaken as part of a broader review of the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area. This approach would ensure that a holistic assessment of the site's broader strategic relationship with established and growing growth areas is undertaken.
29. The timing of the further investigation of this area should be informed by several triggers in combination (that will form part of the monitoring of Geelong's growth) such as:
 - When Armstrong Creek is nearing completion and the Northern and Western growth areas are established.
 - When residential land supply stocks for urban Geelong approach the 15-year supply; or
 - In combination with other considerations, where the Strategy's intent to achieve a 50% infill contribution rate to supply is significantly constrained.

3. OVERVIEW

3.1. BACKGROUND TO THE CURRENT POLICY SETTING FOR GREATER GEELONG

3.1.1. Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy 1988

30. In 1988 the former Geelong Regional Commission released a strategy for the Geelong region entitled *Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy*. It was supported by several studies including an Urban and Township Development Strategy and associated working papers. The development of some of the Bellarine townships beyond their then local role to that of a District Town had its genesis in this Development Strategy.

Figure 2 — FIVE YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: A GEOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

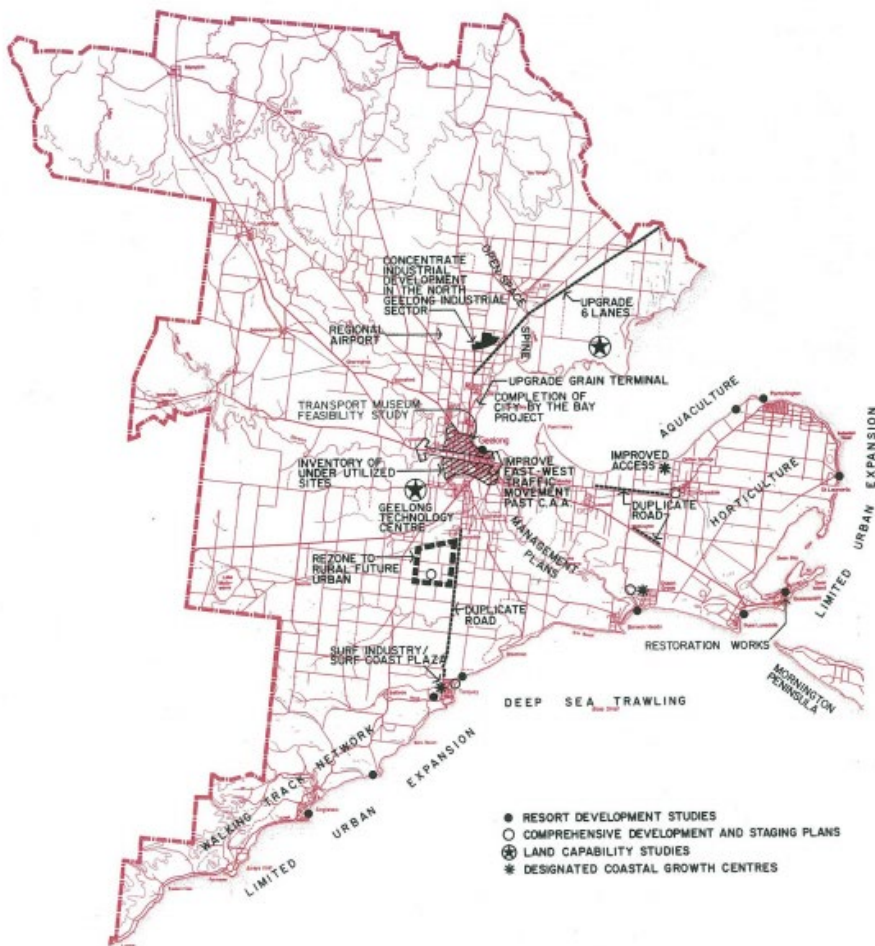


Figure 1 – Five Year Implementation Plan: A Geographical Summary

Source: *Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy 1988* – page 11

31. The Strategy set a ten-year vision up to 1998, which included a five-year implementation plan as shown above. Key elements of the Strategy included:
 - Preferred direction of urban expansion of Geelong towards Armstrong Creek – Mt Duneed and, on the coast, in the Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Ocean Grove and Torquay/Jan Juc Centres (each nominated as Coastal Growth Centres).
 - Limit urban capacity in non-designated coastal and rural towns.²

3.1.2. City of Greater Geelong Urban Growth Strategy 1996

32. Prior to the preparation of the Geelong Urban Growth Strategy (**UGS**) in 1996, the Bellarine was already identified to accommodate growth in key coastal townships such as Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Ocean Grove and Leopold via respective structure plans. As detailed above, the Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy 1988 set the overarching framework.
33. Building on this work, the purpose of the UGS³ was to identify areas considered most suitable for urban development to the year 2020. This also included providing clear policy for Council, landowners, developers and the market for future directions of urban growth and identify the likely land areas, beyond existing zoned land, required to accommodate the anticipated future population of Geelong. The major policies of the strategy were subsequently included in the planning scheme of the day.
34. Following the amalgamation of a number of local Councils to create the City of Greater Geelong the *Urban Growth Strategy* was released in 1996. It proposed to put in place development strategies that could accommodate an additional 71,000 people or 26,000 households (dwellings) on the most optimistic forecast⁴. The Urban Growth Strategy's recommendations led to three key strategic directions for growth⁵ being:
 - Continued growth of the various townships in accordance with the existing structure plans;
 - Consolidation within Urban Geelong; and
 - Designation of Stage 1 of Armstrongs Creek/Mount Duneed as the direction for future urban growth.
35. It is noteworthy that the population of Greater Geelong between 1996 and 2018 increased from 184,000 to 255,300 people – an increase of 71,000 people. The long-term planning for Greater Geelong has not simply relied on the 1996 strategy to guide the municipality's growth. A number of key strategies have been developed including:
 - The *Geelong Region Plan – A sustainable growth strategy* (2007) which was prepared in conjunction with the Shires of Surf Coast, Golden Plains and Colac-Otway to provide a regional approach to managing and facilitating future growth. The vision for 2050 envisaged that *the population has reached half a million and the region has again been rated the strongest regional economy in Australia*⁶.
 - The *Housing Diversity Strategy* (July 2007 - Amended 23 September 2008) that sought to better utilise the existing services and facilities of urban Geelong through an increase in housing diversity and densities in key locations as well as facilitating the growth of 'traditional' housing in urban and growth areas.
 - The *G21 Regional Growth Plan* (April 2013) which was prepared in conjunction with the Shires of Surf Coast, Golden Plains and Colac-Otway to provide a regional approach to managing and facilitating future growth. The Plan and its supporting reports and Implementation Plan provide detailed assessments of key opportunities and locations to accommodate future growth.

² Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy 1988- Page 14

³ City of Greater Geelong - Urban Growth Strategy 1996 – Page 1

⁴ City of Greater Geelong – Urban Growth Strategy 1996; page i

⁵ *ibid*, page 24

⁶ G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Region Plan – A sustainable growth strategy 2007; page 13

36. Collectively, these documents have formed the strategic basis for the management of Greater Geelong's growth since the mid-2000s. The following sections of the report briefly outline the key elements of the two G21 Plans and Housing Strategy and the key growth assumptions that informed their preparation.

3.1.3. The Geelong Region Plan 2007

37. The Geelong Region Plan provides a whole of region approach to managing growth and other key issues for the municipalities of Greater Geelong, Golden Plains, Surf Coast and Colac-Otway. The Plan was prepared on the basis of 'steady' growth reflecting the circumstance of the 1990s for Victoria. Whilst the strategy aspires to achieve a regional population of 500,000 people by 2050 the forecast population change (based on Victoria in Future 2004) expected a population of approximately 400,000⁷ being an increase of approximately 130,000 people over a period of 45 years.

38. The Plan estimated that the region would need a further 57,000 dwellings with growth principally focused in urban Geelong (including Armstrong Creek) with towns including Bannockburn, Torquay and Drysdale each accommodating 20-30,000 people. The Plan noted⁸ that:

There is a potential to contain the major proportion of new population in the region over the next 45 years to 2051 within existing boundaries through an increase in dwelling densities and urban infill development.

39. The Plan acknowledged that there would need to be a significant change in the then attitudes to density together with increased density in new greenfield development (an increase from 10 to 15 dwellings per hectare).

3.1.4. Greater Geelong Housing Diversity Strategy July 2007

40. The Housing Diversity Strategy seeks to provide for a greater supply of new housing in the established urban areas of Greater Geelong, particularly urban Geelong given the existing comprehensive range of services and facilities within the city. The Strategy anticipates that:

Between 2006 and 2031 it is anticipated that the City of Geelong will grow to accommodate approximately 63,000 additional people and around 41,000 additional dwellings.

...

It is anticipated that the City will need to accommodate between 6300 and 9500 medium or higher density dwellings to 2031, and around 29,000 conventional detached dwellings⁹.

41. The Strategy identifies¹⁰ that:

By allowing for the development of a more diverse range of housing types within existing urban areas, particularly areas around public transport infrastructure and activity, we can:

- Reduce the City's outward expansion into the surrounding rural and coastal environments
- Reduce trip distances in cars and, consequently, oil consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, road accidents and congestion
- Give more people, particularly elderly people and those on low incomes, better access to existing employment, activity and transport nodes
- Protect productive agricultural land
- Maintain the non-urban break between Geelong and Melbourne, and between individual settlements within the municipality
- Protect the amenity and tourism functions of rural and coastal areas

⁷ G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Region Plan – A sustainable growth strategy 2007; page 31

⁸ *ibid*; page 33

⁹ City of Greater Geelong – Housing Diversity Strategy July 2007; page 19

¹⁰ *ibid* page 23

- Improve social diversity and reduce social exclusion
- Enhance the vitality and viability of the city's activity centres
- The need for more sustainable development and increased housing diversity

42. The Strategy identifies five *Key Development Areas* being:

- Central Geelong
- West Fyans Key Development Area
- Waurn Ponds Key Development Area
- Proposed Armstrong Creek Medium and Higher Density Housing Areas
- Other designed precincts in new residential areas

43. The strategy¹¹ also identifies 23 *Increased Housing Diversity Areas* based around activity centres and transport hubs. The locations range from the town centres of the Bellarine townships to major shopping centres and railway stations in urban Geelong.

3.1.5. G21 Regional Growth Plan April 2013

44. The G21 Regional Growth Plan (April 2013) sets a growth framework for a period of 40 years (up to 2050) and was the result of detailed studies of the options to accommodate the anticipated growth of the Geelong Region.

45. The key aspects of the Plan include:

- Principles for Growth
- Building on the region's strategic assets
- Building on our identified planned growth
- A proposed Plan for managing settlement growth and key land uses
- Identification of the major regional level infrastructure required to support growth

46. The Plan makes the following comments¹² on the region's future growth:

The Growth Plan does not predict a growth rate or forecast population size at specific periods in time. Instead, it accepts there will be steady growth in the region and that the population is likely to reach, and potentially exceed, 500,000 in the next 30-40 years.

Population growth in the region is occurring as a result of:

- people moving from Melbourne and other regions in Victoria
- natural population increases (that is, births exceeding deaths)
- migration from other states and countries
- more people choosing to stay in the region
- people permanently moving to coastal holiday homes.

47. Importantly the Growth Plan does not set a specific population target for a set date in the future. Rather it opts to provide a series of growth scenarios recognising that the Geelong region was beginning to experience increased demand from the factors outlined above.

48. The agreed settlement and employment growth directions for the G21 region (Map 7 – page 27) includes three key directions for Greater Geelong being:

¹¹ City of Greater Geelong – Housing Diversity Strategy, July 2007; page 36

¹² G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Regional Growth Plan 2013; page 7

Supporting the growth of Geelong with a focus on infill housing opportunities

A focus on infill housing opportunities at targeted activity centres and Key Development Areas as identified in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.

Supporting planned growth and reinforcing the role of district towns

Encourage growth of district towns or centres consistent with existing Structure Plans/Growth Plans. With Armstrong Creek, this will accommodate a further 125,000 people over the next 20 – 30 years. Development of underutilised sites and urban infill is actively recommended within these settlements to ensure a range of housing choice.

Identification of two Further Investigation Areas in Geelong

Potential development of these areas is not likely to be required ahead of identified planned growth. They will require further assessment of suitability and capacity for growth and the monitoring of land supply within the region to determine timing. The Lovely Banks area near Lara potentially has a higher priority, given greater connection to Melbourne and links with proposed national transport logistics employment areas. (my underlining)

49. The Growth Plan¹³ when discussing identified planned growth noted that there was significant capacity to accommodate the range of population growth scenarios (including a 2.5% compound annual growth rate scenario), and:
- The current identified growth areas have been selected through local planning processes that involved extensive community engagement. Central Geelong, Armstrong Creek, Ocean Grove, Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Leopold, Lara, Torquay/Jan Juc, Bannockburn and Colac are identified for significant growth. These settlements will contain the majority of new residents and jobs. They play an important role in supporting surrounding communities and our productive farming activity.*
50. The Growth Plan is supported by a comprehensive *Implementation Plan*¹⁴ that provides direction for future growth area planning beyond the established urban areas (see Chapter 4), Bellarine Peninsula townships and the Armstrong growth area. The Growth Plan identified two Further Investigation Areas (FIA) that could have the potential to accommodate future growth in the medium to long term.
51. The two FIAs are the Northern and Western. The Northern FIA is located north of the Geelong Ring Road and extending north to the Lara growth area. The potential area includes both rural land and established rural residential development. The Western FIA extends west of the Geelong Ring Road to Dogs Rock/Friend In Hand Roads, south of the Ballarat Geelong rail line and north of the Barwon River. The area is principally comprised of the Batesford Quarry operations, rural residential development and rural land.
52. The Implementation Plan summarises the future opportunities for the Northern and Western FIAs as follows:
- The Northern FIA has minimal land capability constraints and is relatively straight forward to develop and service; however the public transport options and the potential for isolation from the rest of Geelong would need to be addressed.
 - The Western FIA presents an opportunity to create major regional community assets and biodiversity enhancements integrated with a diversity of housing options; however complex site, road connection and capacity challenges would need to be addressed.
53. The Implementation Plan and supporting Background Document outline the critical strength/opportunities and weakness/threats for each FIA against six goals, together with defining a series of desired outcomes, site specific considerations and the next steps in planning for the FIAs.
54. The Implementation Plan makes a number of key observations regarding the timing of releasing one or both FIAs for urban development, including:

¹³ G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Regional Growth Plan 2013; page 24

¹⁴ G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Regional Growth Plan – Implementation Plan, November 2013

4.4.1 Timing

...

The Growth Plan's directions for the sequencing of growth identify that the FIAs provide a medium to long term housing growth role. This direction is confirmed and reinforced by current land supply levels identified in the City of Greater Geelong Land Supply Report. This report indicates that at present levels of lot supply consumption, existing zoned land and identified future growth area supply is sufficient to meet the growth needs of Geelong for around 20 years before one of the FIA areas might be required. Increased infill housing activity will also extend growth capacity within existing urban and identified growth areas. A range of factors will continue to influence annual population growth and future housing activity rates.

4.4.2 Out of Sequence Considerations

A significant magnitude of investment in infrastructure is required to enable initial development of an FIA or support its subsequent growth. This includes major water and sewerage infrastructure, roads and extensive community infrastructure. Rezoning land too early or rezoning both FIAs at the same time could result in inefficient growth outcomes.

4.4.3 One growth area or two?

As identified in the Background Report, there is a high risk associated with allowing the FIAs to develop as growth areas at the same time. Developing both areas would require substantial upfront infrastructure, including separate sewerage treatment plants, which is not financially sustainable and would exacerbate the impacts identified above.

Together, the two FIAs provide capacity for over 25,000 homes and 60,000 people which substantially exceeds growth forecasts and demands to well beyond 2050 given existing planned growth and infill capacity.

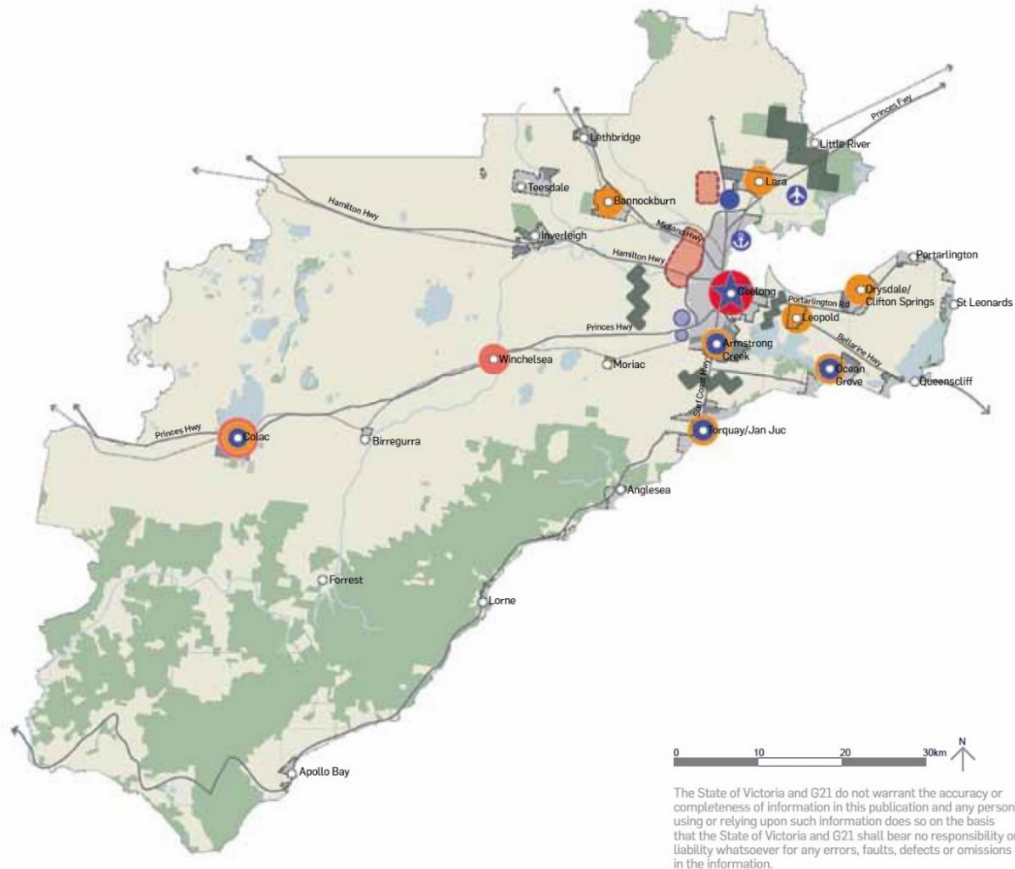
It is recommended that only one FIA be developed in its entirety including consideration of any logical inclusions to build on existing investment before the other is considered for development consistent with the timing identified above. This means the second FIA is unlikely to be needed as a growth area in the foreseeable long term future.

However, in order to consider the longer term growth of Geelong well beyond 2050 it is considered appropriate that the FIA designation remain, requiring some policy direction will be required to enable some broader land use activity and limited subdivision.

55. The key aspects of the G21 Regional Growth Plan are included in the Planning Policy Framework regarding Settlement – Geelong G21 (Clause 11.01-1R Greater Geelong Planning Scheme). Most notably the Growth Plan and the planning policy specifies clear strategies to guide the planning for the future development of existing and future settlements as follows:
- Support the role of Central Geelong as a major regional city and revitalise and strengthen its role as Victoria's second city.
 - Support the growth of ..., Colac, Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Lara, Leopold, Ocean Grove ... as district towns by building on existing and planned infrastructure and focussing growth along key road and rail networks.
 - Provide for long term growth options that build on existing infrastructure, including two further investigation areas north and west of Geelong.
 - Reinforce the role of district towns in providing services to surrounding areas.
 - Maintain a significant settlement break between the region and Melbourne.
 - Provide for settlement breaks between towns to maintain their unique identities.
 - Require a settlement boundary for all towns.
 - Protect critical agricultural land by directing growth to towns.
56. In summary, the G21 Regional Growth Plan anticipated that the region will potentially grow to a population of approximately 500,000 people by the mid-century.

57. The Plan calculated that Greater Geelong (population of 223,000 in 2011) and the existing urban and growth areas had sufficient capacity to accommodate growth for between 22-32 years (measured from 2011) to reach a population of approximately 388,600 people. The Plan also noted that there was significant unzoned planned growth supply identified in Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Leopold and St. Leonards.

MAP 7 – SETTLEMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH DIRECTIONS



- ★ Reinforcing the role of Central Geelong as a regional city and Victoria's second largest city**
Major infill is proposed to support the revitalisation and strengthening of central Geelong.
- Supporting the growth of Geelong with a focus on infill housing opportunities**
A focus on infill housing opportunities at targeted activity centres and Key Development Areas as identified in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.
- Supporting planned growth and reinforcing the role of district towns**
Encourage growth of district towns or centres consistent with existing Structure Plans/Growth Plans. With Armstrong Creek, this will accommodate a further 125,000 people over the next 20 – 30 years. Development of underutilised sites and urban infill is actively recommended within these settlements to ensure a range of housing choice.
- Introducing new targeted growth nodes**
Grow Colac to a town of 20,000 and Winchelsea to a town of 10,000. Further strategic work will need to be undertaken for both towns to identify the most appropriate areas for growth and to identify major incentives to support growth. These areas are not anticipated to be required until at least 2030-2040.
- Identification of two Further Investigation Areas in Geelong**
Potential development of these areas, is not likely to be required ahead of identified planned growth. They will require further assessment of suitability and capacity for growth and the monitoring of land supply within the region to determine timing. The Lovely Banks area near Lara potentially has a higher priority, given greater connection to Melbourne and links with proposed national transport logistics employment areas.
- Strengthening and protecting the identified existing and planned employment areas (shown on map)**
As well as tourism precincts and district town activity centres (not shown on map).
- Maintain productive agricultural areas**
Consistent with existing Rural Land Use Strategies and includes opportunities for broadacre cropping and livestock, intensive livestock and horticulture, irrigated agriculture, forestry and emerging agricultural activities.
- Identifying new employment nodes**
A new Education, Health and Research Hub at Deakin University, the long term potential employment hub at Waurin Ponds South, subject to further investigation, and the expansion of industrial employment areas in Colac and Winchelsea, subject to more detailed planning.
- Identification of four key settlement breaks**
Discussion provided in section 4.11.
- Designation of settlement boundaries for all towns**
The region's other rural and coastal settlements will continue to experience modest growth and play an important tourism and agricultural role to surrounding areas. Growth will be limited to identified structure plan settlement boundaries.
- Maintain and enhance natural assets**
Protect and build on our natural assets by maximising key opportunities to link and rehabilitate ecosystems and enable sustainable and planned productive uses. Sustain the health of our natural assets by considering future challenges in the management, planning and development of these assets.

G21 REGIONAL GROWTH PLAN

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Figure 2 – Extract from G21 Regional Growth Plan (April 2013)

58. It is observed that the calculations for the capacity of the various urban areas to accommodate the future growth was also predicated on a significant proportion of housing to be provided within the existing urban areas of Geelong (excluding Armstrong Creek and Lara) – approximately an additional 27,000 dwellings. Based on this assessment the Northern and Western FIAs were seen to be potential areas for future expansion of the city in the medium to longer term only.

3.1.6. Plan Melbourne 2017 – 2050

59. Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 rightly has regard to improving links to regional Victoria and assisting in creating new growth opportunities for the key cities outside the metropolis. Key Directions include:
- Direction 7.1 – Invest in regional Victoria to support housing and economic growth
 - Direction 7.2 – Improve connections between cities and regions
60. Relevant policies include that to *stimulate employment and growth in regional cities* (Policy 7.1.1 – page 131). The Plan Melbourne Implementation Plan notes that one of the initiatives of the plan¹⁵ is underway:

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. (my underlining)

3.2. A THIRD WAVE OF GROWTH

61. Victoria has experienced a significant surge in population growth since the mid-2000s that has continued for approximately 15 plus years. Whilst this 'third wave' of growth has been concentrated within metropolitan Melbourne is also apparent that the City of Greater Geelong (including the townships outside urban Geelong) are growing at higher levels.
62. More recently the rate of population growth in Greater Geelong has increased well above the long-term average and even the increased rates experienced since the early 2000s. This is well illustrated in the Settlement Strategy where it discusses population growth and implications¹⁶.
63. A number of population growth forecasts have been prepared for Greater Geelong up to 2036 (and beyond) including five scenarios¹⁷ in the Settlement Strategy as set out below:

SCENARIOS:	A	B	C	D	E
Population in 2036	307,400	320,800	352,300	387,900	427,121
Population growth, 2016–36	72,100	85,400	116,900	152,600	191,778
Annual average change – population	1.3%	1.6%	2.0%	2.5%	3.0%
Households in 2036	127,400	133,000	146,000	160,800	177,062
Household growth 2016–36	32,300	37,900	50,900	65,700	81,930
Average annual household change	1.5%	1.7%	2.2%	2.7%	3.2%
Dwellings in 2036	142,300	148,400	163,000	179,500	197,638
Change in dwellings, 2016–2036	36,200	42,300	56,900	73,400	91,543
Average annual change – dwellings	1.5%	1.7%	2.2%	2.7%	3.2%

64. Whilst there are uncertainties with any future forecast there are several factors that indicate Geelong is likely to continue to experience higher population growth, including:
- Melbourne's very significant growth, particularly over the past five years, has created a series of 'growing pains' that are manifesting themselves through increased congestion and

¹⁵ DELWP – Plan Melbourne Implementation Plan 2017 – page 33

¹⁶ City of Greater Geelong – The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 – page 38

¹⁷ ibid – Table 10 page 50

travel times, increased housing prices, sub-optimal accessibility to services for parts of the new metropolitan growth areas to name only a few. This has created a 'push factor' for people to consider relocating to places that offer less congestion etc. but most importantly continued access to a large job market.

- Recent forecasts¹⁸ estimate that metropolitan Melbourne will have negative net intrastate migration equivalent to approximately 11,000 per annum in the period of 2016-2021 rising to 20,000 per annum by the 2050s.
 - Geelong with its smaller size (as compared to metropolitan Melbourne) does not suffer from significant congestion or lack of reasonable access to services (in terms of travel time). Geelong's housing prices are generally less than those found in Melbourne for comparable properties. Most importantly Geelong has an extensive range of existing facilities and other amenities that can support and serve the new population – unlike some of Melbourne's newer growth areas.
 - All of these attributes, plus Geelong's proximity to metropolitan Melbourne, act as 'pull factors' and serve to attract a large share of 'intrastate migration' from metropolitan Melbourne plus a small share of the significant net overseas migration coming to Victoria.
 - Victoria and Melbourne are forecast to continue to experience significant ongoing growth through to the 2050s. Geelong will undoubtedly share in that growth because of the factors mentioned above.
65. Since the five growth scenarios were prepared the Victoria in Future forecasts¹⁹ have been updated and now estimate the total population for Greater Geelong in 2036 will be approximately 360,000 people which is less than that of Scenarios D and E. The demographic consultancy id Consulting, forecasts that the population will be 361,000 in 2036.
66. As a point of comparison, the estimated resident population for the G21 Region as at June 2018 stood at 332,073 people and VIF 2019 now estimates that the population for the region will be 464,250 people in 2036 – a significantly higher figure than the forecasts that informed the preparation of the G21 Regional Growth Plan.

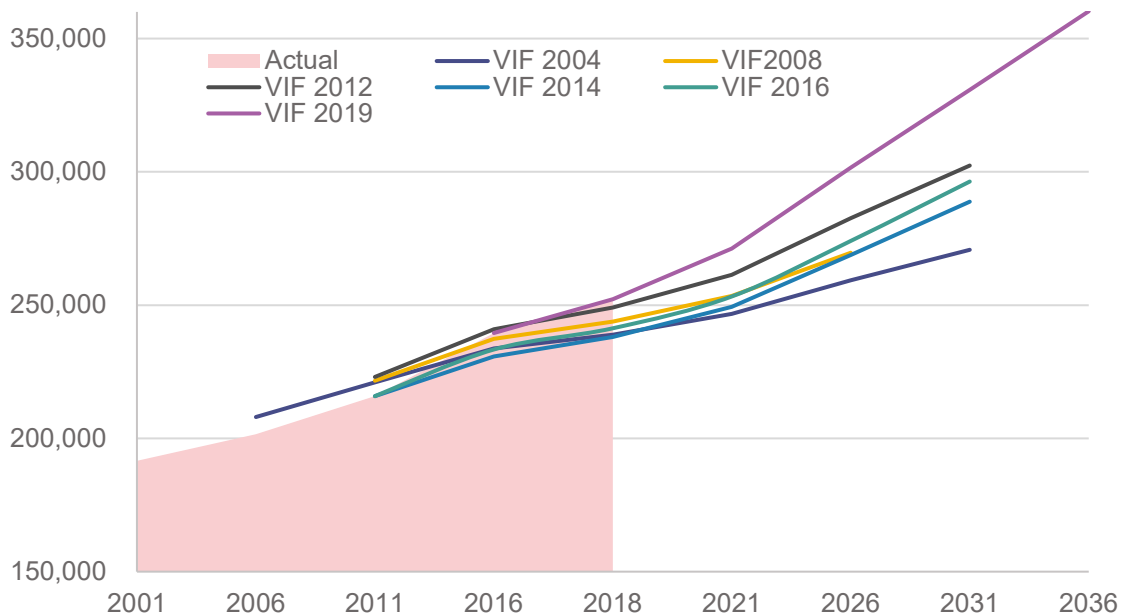


Figure 3 – Greater Geelong Population Growth, Actual vs Projected

Source: Victoria in Future forecasts; Urbis

¹⁸ The State of Victoria DELWP – Victorian in Future 2019 - Major Regions 2056 Forecast

¹⁹ ibid - page

67. It is always difficult to predict the future and in a country such as Australia with significant net immigration demographic forecasts are difficult. Indeed, the VIF forecasts since the turn of the century have under-estimated growth within Greater Geelong as set out above.
68. Nonetheless, there are a range of growth forecasts for Greater Geelong that all agree the municipality is likely to experience significant ongoing growth at a rate of approximately 6,500 plus people per annum over the next 15 – 20 years.
69. It is possible that Geelong could experience a higher growth rate than the VIF and id Consulting forecasts (Scenarios D and E of the Settlement Strategy) as it becomes more attractive through improved transport links with Melbourne and maintains a price advantage relative to house prices in the new suburbs serving metropolitan Melbourne (especially those in the west).

3.3. SUMMARY

70. In summary, Victoria is expected to accommodate up to 11.2 million people by 2056 (see VIF 2019) up from 6.5 million at 2018 representing a 72% increase in less than 40 years. Whilst Melbourne is expected to accommodate the significant share of that growth (nearly 4.3 million people) Greater Geelong will experience the greatest population growth (in terms of actual number of people) outside the metropolis. VIF estimates that the Geelong SA 4 Region (excluding Colac- Otway) will achieve a population of approximately 500,000 people by 2051.
71. Geelong by virtue of its existing size (with a wide range of higher order services and facilities not found elsewhere in the region) and its location near Melbourne is likely to continue to significantly grow. *Plan Melbourne* acknowledges the importance of Geelong as Victoria's second city and seeks to facilitate accelerated growth.
72. A series of strategic plans have guided the development of the Geelong region for the past 30 years. Geelong has benefitted from this planning and has always provided several urban development options for the city (i.e. coastal town, new urban areas, established areas) and choices for consumers.
73. During this time a number of preferred strategic outcomes have been consistently identified including:
 - The continued concentration of growth in urban Geelong and the encouragement of infill development as a key part of the growth.
 - A focus of urban growth in a limited number of townships outside urban Geelong.
 - The protection of important landscapes, coastlines and rural land from urban encroachment.
 - The maintenance of non-urban breaks between Geelong and Melbourne and the various townships within the municipality and neighbouring areas (e.g. Bannockburn and Torquay).
 - The location of urban growth to optimise access to existing infrastructure and other services.
 - The provision of long-term growth options adjacent to Geelong to accommodate future growth.
74. With the higher than expected population growth some of these matters have now reached a point where fundamental decisions are required. These include:
 - Confirming the appropriate location for additional urban land to accommodate the increased rate of growth and provide adequate future capacity to cater for even higher growth scenarios.
 - The future role and spatial extent of the Bellarine Peninsula townships, particularly when having regard to the long-term desire to protect the Bellarine Peninsula's rural qualities and landscapes and maintain appropriate breaks between towns.
 - The form of 'settlement boundaries' to be established around all urban areas and the implementation of the boundaries.
75. I address these matters together with my assessment of the Settlement Strategy and proposed amendments to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme in the following sections of the report.

4. DELIVERING A BALANCED APPROACH TO THE GROWTH OF GREATER GEELONG

4.1. THE KEY ELEMENTS OF THE SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

76. In response to the anticipated population growth and the constraints on further expansion in the Bellarine Peninsula area the Settlement Strategy proposes several key directions and actions to guide the future growth of Greater Geelong being:
- To introduce an approach to establish long-term settlement boundaries for the Bellarine townships that defines the role and spatial extent of each township and protects the non-urban parts of the Peninsula from further urban encroachment.
 - To accommodate the majority of forecast future growth of the municipality within urban Geelong. This will be achieved by:
 - The creation of two major growth areas to the north and west of urban Geelong
 - Continuing the development of the growth area at Armstrong Creek
 - Continuing the development of the Lara growth area to the north of urban Geelong
 - Facilitating urban infill in identified key locations within urban Geelong
 - Continuing with incremental infill within established areas
 - To introduce an approach to establish the long-term settlement boundaries for urban Geelong including the abovementioned growth areas.
77. The Housing Framework Plan for the Settlement Strategy highlights these key aspects as shown on the following page. The Settlement Strategy also seeks to encourage housing diversity both within the established and growth areas.
78. There are several key drivers for the development of the new Settlement Strategy in addition to the increased population growth that is forecast to occur within Greater Geelong over the next 15 plus years. These include:
- The declining amount of 'new urban land' (being broad-hectare and major infill areas) available for development. Based on the estimates provided by Spatial Economics and the forecast growth rate the supply of land (as at 1 January 2017) may accommodate 15 – 20 years of further growth. This fact alone confirms the need for the updated strategy and the identification of the additional locations for urban development.
 - The clarification of the future role of the larger Bellarine townships. That is do they continue to serve as ever growing dormitory suburbs for urban Geelong or are there physical and policy limits to their spatial growth?
 - If the Bellarine townships are not to significantly increase in scale then additional growth areas are required to meet forecast demand, offer choice in the market to current and future residents and ensure ongoing competition in the land market and hence affordability.
 - The need to provide an unambiguous direction as to where future urban growth will be located. The detailed review of the two new growth areas (both within the G21 Regional Growth Plan and subsequently with the preparation of the Framework Plan) highlights several major benefits of developing these areas as opposed to major expansion elsewhere, including:
 - The relative proximity of the areas to the well-established parts of urban Geelong. The north-western extremity of the Western Growth Area is located approximately 12 kilometres from the city centre – a distance that is similar to (or less than) many of the suburbs located within Melbourne's inner south-eastern region.

- This proximity provides superior access to a wide range of jobs within the major employment nodes, retail and other services, higher education etc. Simply put the two areas are well located to be supported at the early phases of their development buy existing services.
- The development of the Western Growth Area provides several major public benefits including the opportunity to provide a major open space and biodiversity network centred on the Moorabool River and to re-use the existing quarry for other purposes.
- The opportunity to create attractive neighbourhoods utilising the settings and topography of the two areas.

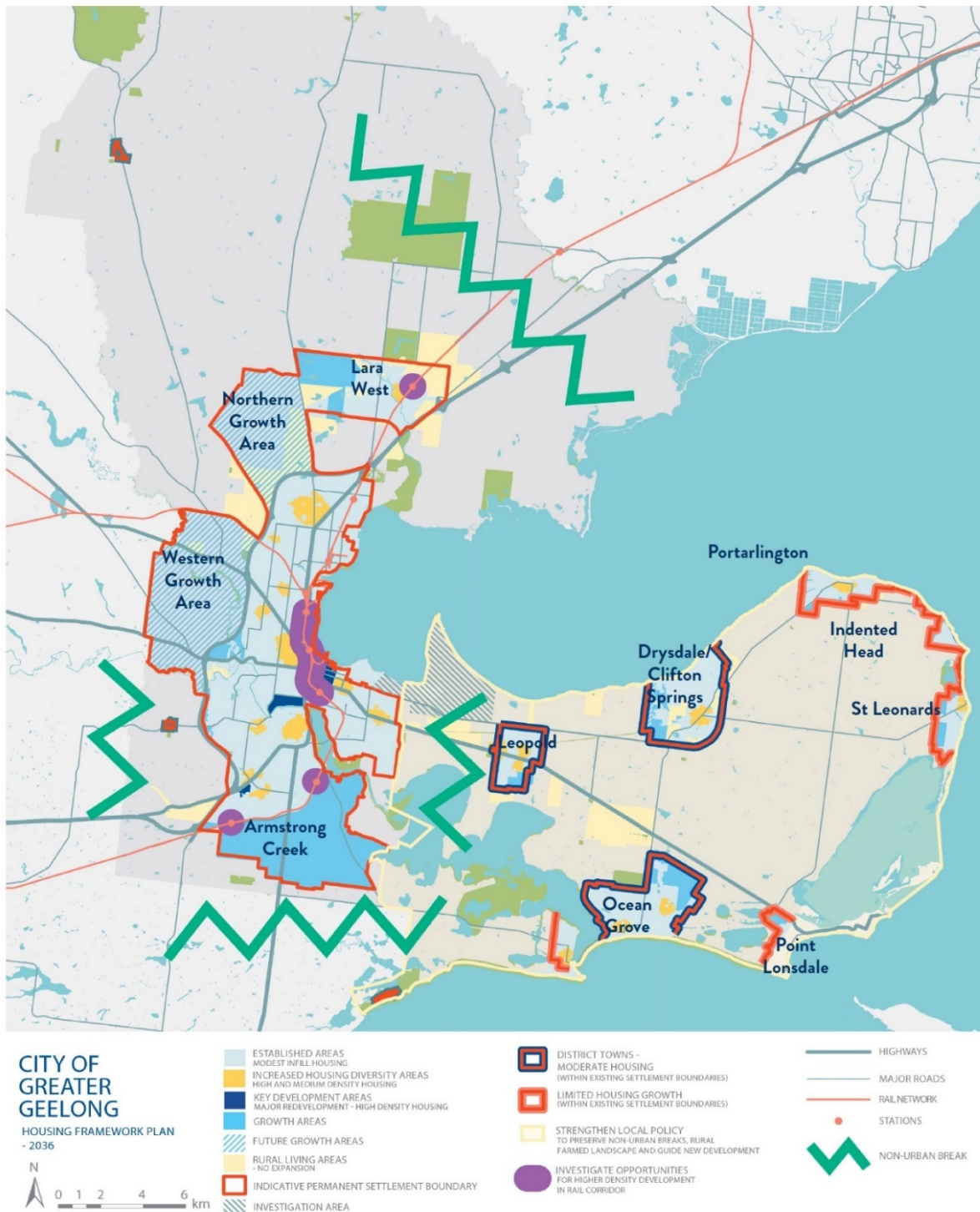


Figure 4 – Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy – Housing Framework Plan

4.2. THE PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK GUIDING SETTLEMENT POLICIES

79. The development of settlement strategies for urban development comprise the assessment of a wide range of factors and influences ranging from environmental and landscape considerations; to servicing solutions and costs; to population growth rates and the anticipated needs of the future population. Occasionally, in the case of small townships, there is an obvious answer that presents itself. In the case of major towns and cities the potential opportunities are significantly increased.
80. It is often the case that several options will each be considered valid with different advantages and outcomes. Yet not all options will be required, and choices need to be made. The Planning Policy Framework identifies a range of objectives and strategies to assist in guiding these choices. In the case of the proposed Settlement Strategy the key policies are:
- Clause 11.01-1S – Settlement
 - Clause 11.01-1R – Settlement-Geelong G21
 - Clause 11.02-1S – Supply of urban land
 - Clause 11.02-2S – Structure planning
 - Clause 11.02-3S – Sequencing of development
 - Clause 11.03-2S – Growth areas
 - Clause 11.03-3S – Peri-urban areas
 - Clause 11.03-4S – Coastal settlement
 - Clause 11.03-5S – Distinctive areas and landscapes
81. The regional and state policies provide a balanced approach that seeks to ensure that sufficient land is available to accommodate forecast demand for housing and other activities whilst recognising that ever expanding urban areas create a number of dis-benefits that need to be managed. The key strategies of this suite of policies emphasise several key themes relevant to the Settlement Strategy, being:
- The requirement to undertake 'long-term' planning to ensure that there is sufficient land available to meet forecast demand with plans to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period in defined locations.
 - Planning for residential land supply should be undertaken on a municipal (or regional) rather than a town-by-town basis.
 - **Identify and protect areas that are strategically important** for the environment, biodiversity, landscape, open space, water, agriculture, energy, recreation, tourism, environment, cultural heritage, infrastructure, extractive and other natural resources.
 - To protect and enhance the valued attributes of identified distinctive areas and landscapes.
 - To **locate new urban growth close to transport corridors and services** and provide efficient and effective infrastructure to create sustainability benefits while protecting primary production, major sources of raw materials and valued environmental areas.
 - Limit urban sprawl and direct growth into existing settlements.
 - Create and reinforce settlement boundaries that assist to:
 - Encourage opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas.
 - Preserve and protect rural land and areas of important landscapes and natural beauty.
 - Maintain non-urban breaks between townships.

- **Develop Growth Area Framework Plans** identifying the long term pattern of urban growth, the key components of the growth area including transport networks and links, the location of broad urban development types and the location of open space to be retained for recreation, and/or biodiversity protection and/or flood risk reduction purposes, etc.
- **Undertake comprehensive planning for new areas as sustainable communities** that offer high-quality, frequent and safe local and regional public transport and a range of local activities for living, working and recreation.
- **Ensure that the sequence of growth in new urban areas is managed** to ensure that infrastructure is available to service the development of the land and support new communities.

82. It is considered that the Settlement Strategy directly and properly responds to the overall settlement policy for Victoria and the associated policies as follows. The Strategy:

- Provides a clear direction for the future growth of Geelong and enables it to accelerate its growth as Victoria's second city. The assessment of future growth and its preferred locations has been considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.
- Is based on a robust assessment of future demand and current supply of urban land across the municipality and has identified two new growth areas that will major growth in around urban Geelong. These growth areas are immediately adjacent to urban Geelong and can access a wide range of facilities, services and jobs within the established parts of the city.
- Provides a long-term strategy that is capable of accommodating a range of growth scenarios including high long-term growth rates of 2.5 – 3.0% per annum cumulative.
- Has used Scenario E (the most ambitious growth scenario) to understand the potential for significantly greater growth than the current forecasts (64% higher providing an average growth of 9,500 people per annum) to test the possible supply required to accommodate a higher than anticipated demand. The new growth areas together with ongoing development of the Bellarine townships and existing urban areas of Geelong provide sufficient capacity to meet Geelong's future growth for 25 plus years.
- Provides that sufficient land is available to meet forecast demand taking into account opportunities for the consolidation, redevelopment and intensification of existing urban areas
- Advocates the use of settlement boundaries to protect valued non-urban areas and landscapes– this is discussed in detail in Sections 5 and 6 of this report.
- Identifies that the Bellarine district towns should not be major focuses of new growth into the future thereby reducing the need for these towns to continue to spatially expand. This will have the consequential benefit of ensuring that further urban development does not adversely affect the valued environments and landscapes of the Bellarine Peninsula. This approach is entirely consistent with the strategies of Clause 11.03-5S.

83. In summary, the Settlement Strategy is a direct and logical extension of the detailed work undertaken in the preparation of the G21 Regional Growth Plan that has created new development direction for the municipality. Importantly the Settlement Strategy provides a balanced approach to create additional urban land and protect critical environments.

4.3. IMPLEMENTING THE SETTLEMENT STRATEGY

84. It is proposed to include (Schedule to Clause 72.08 Background Documents) the Settlement Strategy and its key directions into the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme by policy changes to the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) as follows:

- Amend **Clause 21.03 Objectives - Strategies – Implementation** to include reference to 21.18 Corio Norlane and 21.20 Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas.
- Replace **Clause 21.04 Municipal Framework Plan** with a new Clause 21.04 to implement the Settlement Strategy through a new Municipal Framework Plan.

- Replace **Clause 21.06 Settlement and Housing** with a new clause including objectives, strategies and references to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.08 Development and Community Infrastructure** to update strategies on Transport and Development Contributions to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.11 Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area** to reflect the role of the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas.
 - Amend **Clause 21.14 The Bellarine Peninsula** to update objectives, strategies, further work and references to implement the Settlement Strategy.
 - Amend **Clause 21.16 Anakie** to implement the Settlement Strategy by amending objectives and strategies, deleting reference to the Anakie Structure Plan 1996 and replacing the map.
 - Insert a new **Clause 21.20 Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas** including new objectives, strategies, references and plans to implement the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas Framework Plan.
85. It is considered that the proposed modifications to the existing policies identify the key issues and influences as identified in the Settlement Strategy and the major directions and strategies to achieve the desired outcomes. I discuss possible changes to the exhibited Clause 21.14 in Section 5 of this report.

5. THE FUTURE ROLE OF THE BELLARINE TOWNSHIPS

86. I consider that the future role of the Bellarine townships is one of the most significant raised by the Settlement Strategy as it sets a long-term direction that will vary from the planning strategies and development trends of the past 30 – 40 years.
87. It is now proposed to direct major future urban growth to key growth locations at Armstrong Creek and the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas. The new strategy signals that the growth of the Bellarine has now reached a point where its future share of 'greenfield development' will decline overtime and new approaches to development within the defined settlements commences.
88. My consideration of this matter includes a review of several submissions that directly pertain to the question of the Settlement Strategy and the future of urban development within the Bellarine Peninsula. I note that specific submissions have been made in respect of sites on the Bellarine including locations in Barwon Heads, Leopold and Ocean Grove²⁰. A number of these submissions also call for a review of existing settlement boundaries, including the Ocean Grove and Leopold boundaries before the Settlement Strategy is implemented.
89. The request for additional land to be identified in these coastal locations brings to the fore the ongoing balancing act of growth versus protection of the Bellarine' key attributes. It is clear the key landowners in coastal growth locations consider there to be significantly more development potential of land adjoining existing settlement boundaries.
90. Several other submissions sought to reinforce the requirement to protect the valued attributes of the Bellarine Peninsula²¹. These submissions raised the historical role of the Bellarine as an urban growth location and that there is a need to revisit this planning position to ensure the area is not identified for future growth and thus have a detrimental impact on the valued characteristics of the area. Other submissions supported growth being directed to areas with established transport infrastructure rather than the Bellarine.
91. I have had regard to the broad principles raised in these submissions but have not examined the merits of including specific land parcels or locations within a settlement or township.

5.1. EXISTING SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

92. As discussed in Section 3 of this report the growth of a number of Bellarine townships received strategic support commencing with the Geelong Regional Commission (**GRC**) strategy *Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy*. A key part of the strategy included:
 - Preferred direction of urban expansion of Geelong towards Armstrong Creek – Mt Duneed and, on the coast, in the Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Ocean Grove and Torquay/Jan Juc Centres.
 - Limit urban capacity in non-designated coastal and rural towns.²² *My underlining*
93. The 1996 Urban Growth Strategy (**UGS**) generally continued the key directions of the GRC strategy. I note that Ocean Grove was not a preferred location for future growth in the original UGS. The UGS²³ notes that in Council's consideration of submissions to the exhibited version of the UGS it ultimately resolved that future urban growth on the Bellarine Peninsula should be focussed at both Ocean Grove and Drysdale/Clifton Springs instead of only the latter as recommended in the exhibited version.
94. What is apparent from reviewing the UGS is that the issues around the need to protect key attributes of the Bellarine were equally relevant as accommodating future population growth. The UGS ultimately sought to largely support the existing planning framework that applied to coastal townships at that time but importantly did acknowledge some of the key locational and environmental constraints associated with these areas on the Bellarine.

²⁰ Submission Nos 13, 14, 40, 51, 53, 62, 82, 92, 93

²¹ Submission Nos 31, 67, 68, 69, 94, 98, 99

²² Directions: The Geelong Region Development Strategy 1988; page 14

²³ Ibid - Introduction

95. Whilst the UGS was principally focussed on the settlement strategy it acknowledged the competing interests of environmental and landscape attributes versus growth within the Bellarine Peninsula. Relevant UGS objectives²⁴ include:
- Ensuring the sound and orderly planning of future urban area
 - Promotion of higher residential densities within established and future urban areas
 - Protection of natural rural and coastal features
 - Conservation of natural habits and areas of environmental sensitivity
 - Ensuring that development occurs in an environmentally sensitive manner
96. The UGS continued to guide overarching growth in Geelong well into the 2000's underpinned by respective structure plans for each of the Bellarine townships.
97. Since 1996, when the population stood at 184,000 people, urban Geelong has accommodated the greater share of growth (approx. 65%), but the highest rates of growth were to be found in several of the Bellarine townships, in particular Ocean Grove, Leopold and Drysdale/Clifton Springs and the Armstrong Creek Growth Area. The Bellarine townships now accommodate approximately 27% of all people in Greater Geelong.
98. The role and scale of the three largest Bellarine townships has changed to the extent that they are in effect dormitory suburbs of urban Geelong and no longer small coastal townships serving a small hinterland.
99. Tourism has long played a part in the Bellarine Peninsula and the smaller townships continue to be principally used for this purpose.
100. The Bellarine is currently well placed to accommodate existing planned growth within its respectively defined settlement boundaries (see Clause 21.14 and relevant structure plans), with a focus on the urban growth locations at Leopold, Drysdale/Clifton Springs and Ocean Grove. It is noted that planned future growth is also being seen in other smaller townships such as St. Leonards, which in relative terms is a quite significant development front.
101. The existing Structure Plans for urban development within Leopold, Drysdale/Clifton Springs and Ocean Grove had the capacity (as at 1 January 2017) to accommodate approximately 19,500 people and 9,400 dwellings²⁵. It is noted that this includes some unzoned land at Drysdale/Clifton Springs. A further 1,500 dwellings can be accommodated in future growth area within the settlement boundary at St. Leonard.
102. It is noteworthy that of the Structure Plans for each of the Bellarine township includes a definition of the settlement boundary (in accordance with *Planning Practice Note 36 – Implementing a Coastal Settlement Boundary*). In most cases this simply defines the boundary of the existing urban zoned land. In the case of Drysdale/Clifton Springs the current settlement boundaries also include land not yet zoned for urban purposes but designated as growth areas. Some of the Structure Plans also make note of the importance of protecting land immediately outside the settlement boundary for rural and ecological purposes or to maintain as a settlement break.

5.2. THE BELLARINE: WHAT HAS CHANGED?

5.2.1. The Future Role of the Bellarine Townships

103. For the past four decades, the Bellarine has seen significant change in the context of population growth. Whilst having a readily available stock of land supply for some time through the identification of respective coastal growth locations. Recently there has been a marked shift in planning policy for the Bellarine Peninsula.

²⁴ Ibid - Page 1

²⁵ City of Greater Geelong – The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 – page 36

104. Numerous strategies and structure plans affecting the Bellarine have long recognised its significance for uses other than to accommodate population growth. In doing so, respective iterations have attempted to ‘strike a balance’ between providing for a much sought after coastal lifestyle through the utilisation of readily available land and the protection of significant assets and rural land use activities. It is this balancing act which is increasingly coming to the fore and leading to a desired shift in planning policy for this area.
105. The G21 Regional Growth Plan states that in its preparation it needed to ensure that what is love(d) about living here is protected so that our unique region can be passed in good condition to future generations.²⁶
106. For the identified growth centres, the Regional Growth Plan allows for:
- ... growth of these centres to be contained to existing settlement boundaries a generally identified in Structure Plans. Allowances for minor boundary adjustments should follow a Structure Plan process.*²⁷ (my underlining)
107. It is apparent that the Regional Growth Plan does not intend major growth of these centres.
108. The Regional Growth Plan reinforces the role of structure plans as the key policy document to provide more detailed growth planning for towns. This is reflected in the specific requirements of the current local planning policy for the Bellarine Peninsula – Clause 21.14 of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme. It is also noted that the clause under the heading further work recommends:
- Review township structure plans as scheduled (in structure plans) to meet emerging needs of communities.*
- Review the planning framework for land identified in the Coastal Spaces Landscape Assessment Study as regionally significant in the south west of the Bellarine Peninsula to ensure the protection of landscape values is adequately addressed.*
109. This is an appropriate process for considering many of the local conditions and drivers but can lead to the review only focussing on ‘local’ matters.
110. It is appreciated that the planning authority has of recent years taken account of the supply of potential lots across the Bellarine Peninsula in assessing changes to individual structure plans. However, in the past there has been a natural pressure to ensure that each of the larger townships maintains a 15-year supply of development land (for both permanent and holiday residents) rather than defining a maximum spatial extent of the township and managing growth within that context.
111. The Settlement Strategy will ‘fill a gap’ between the Regional Growth Plan and the respective structure plans to ensure that the distribution of long-term urban growth is considered at the municipal level. This approach is consistent with a key strategy of *Clause 11.01-2S – Supply of urban land*, being:
- Plan to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15 year period and provide clear direction on locations where growth should occur. Residential land supply will be considered on a municipal basis, rather than a town-by-town basis.* (my underlining)
112. With the accelerating growth of Greater Geelong, it is the right time to focus future growth within areas proximate to essential services, key transport networks and key employment nodes. Both Armstrong Creek and the Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas offer the opportunity to create large communities. This scale in turn creates the ability to provide not just housing but a range of significant infrastructure and higher order facilities and services within proximate locations.
113. The Bellarine townships, including Ocean Grove/Barwon Heads, do not and cannot match this scale. They have access to a good range of local services and facilities but not the higher order facilities and services found in urban Geelong.

²⁶ G21 Regional Alliance - Geelong Regional Growth Plan 2013; page ii

²⁷ Ibid – Page 28

114. The Settlement Strategy proposes the guiding principle for the urban development of the Bellarine Peninsula²⁸ will be to:

Maintain the unique township, landscape, tourism, farming and environmental values of the Bellarine Peninsula.

115. This will be achieved through five Directions²⁹, being:

- a. Recognise that Drysdale/Clifton Springs, Leopold and Ocean Grove are fulfilling their roles as district towns
- b. Discontinue the use of the term 'growth area' in favour of 'district town'
- c. Acknowledge the share of housing development going to the Bellarine Peninsula should decrease over time
- d. Review housing opportunities within townships to determine if further localised housing intensification can be achieved
- e. Ensure development reflects the preferred character of the townships

116. The directions very clearly mark a change of the status of the 'Bellarine coastal growth areas' by acknowledging that these towns are already district towns and do not to continue to expand beyond the current boundaries to achieve that role and that they are no longer a key focus of urban growth within Greater Geelong. These five directions are further reinforced by the first principle of the future spatial distribution of growth and land supply and its associated directions³⁰.

117. Some may be concerned that this shift immediately closes the opportunity for future development of the townships. It is important to recognise that there is still a significant amount of development to occur within the currently defined settlement boundaries as noted in paragraph 84 of my report.

5.2.2. Protecting the Bellarine

118. The commitment in 2015 by the State government to initiate the preparation of a Localised Planning Statement for the Bellarine was another signal of the changing perceptions of the Bellarine.
119. The Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement 2015 (**LPS**) was developed in conjunction with City of Greater Geelong, Bourgh of Queenscliff and State Government. The LPS was prepared to formally recognise this highly valued area which has significant geographic and physical features and are a distinctive part of the state.
120. The LPS acknowledges that with this comes pressure for growth and change and the need to ensure that the area is not undermined. Importantly the LPS built on existing strategies and policies that were in place for the Bellarine.
121. Building on the foundations of the LPS, the State Government in 2018 passed an amendment to the Planning and Environment Act to recognise and safeguard the state's Distinctive Areas and Landscapes. The purpose of this control is to recognise the importance of distinctive areas and landscapes and to protect and conserve the environmental, social and economic value of these areas.

²⁸ City of Greater Geelong – The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 – page 74

²⁹ *ibid* – page 74

³⁰ City of Greater Geelong – The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 – page 6

122. The Minister for Planning formally made the declaration that the Bellarine Peninsula is a Distinctive Area and Landscape on 30 October 2019 – see map of area below:

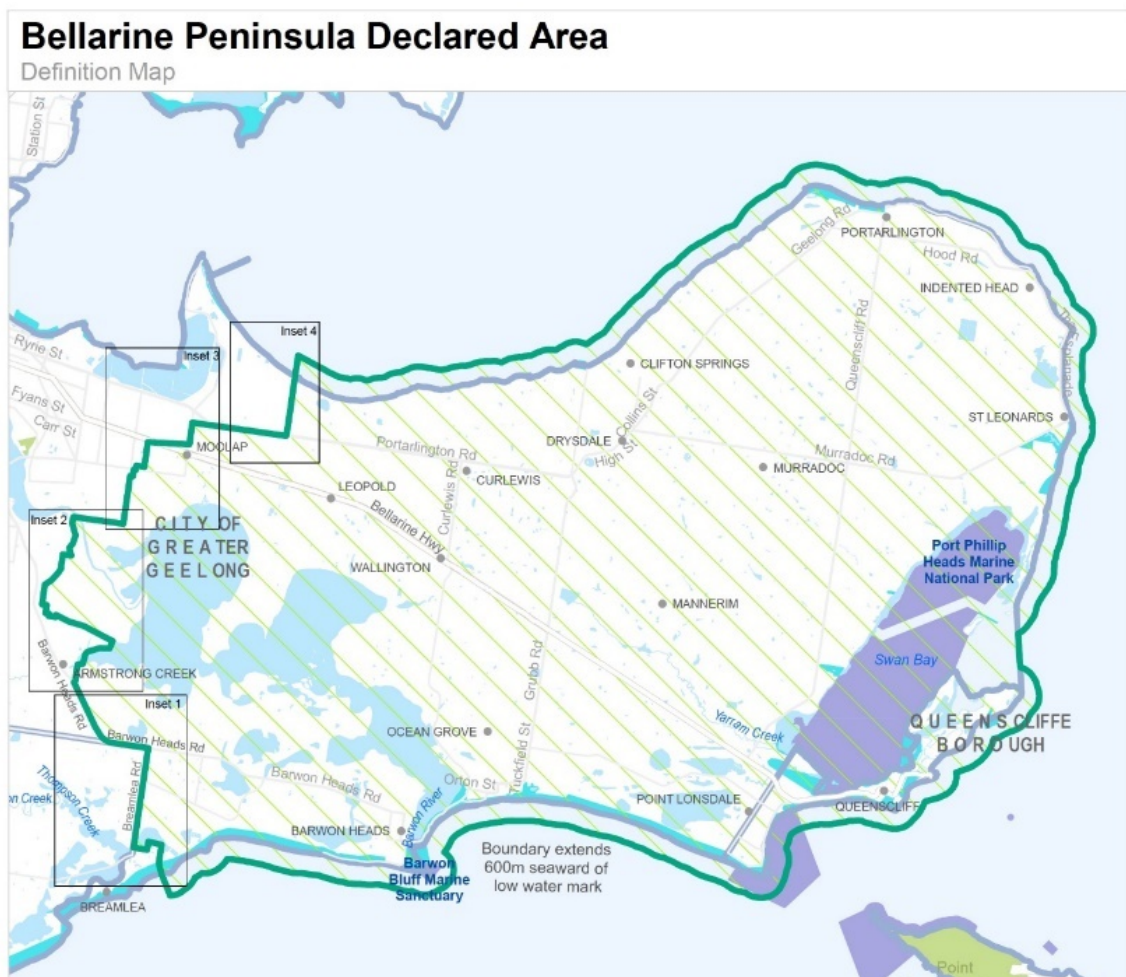


Figure 5 – Bellarine Peninsula Declared Area and Landscape Definition Map

123. The next step in the process is prepare a Statement of Planning Policy that sets a 50-year vision for the declared area. The document accompanying the plan explains the process for the preparation of the Statement as follows:

To achieve a long-term vision for the region and guide future land use and development, a Statement of Planning Policy (the Statement) including a Strategic Framework Plan will be developed with:

- The local Councils
- Traditional Owners
- The community

This will be informed by the localised planning statement that is already in place for the Peninsula.

The Statement provides a framework to protect the Peninsula.

It will ensure important attributes are conserved and continue to be of special significance to the people of Victoria. It will also celebrate Aboriginal Victorians connection to Country.

The Statement will consider height controls and identify long-term protected settlement boundaries. This will ensure development does not inappropriately encroach into valued natural and rural landscapes.

These will be subject to the same strong protections in place for Melbourne's permanent Urban Growth Boundary, requiring parliamentary approval to amend them. Implementing these boundaries will safeguard valuable landscapes and protect them from overdevelopment and encroachment.

Some changes to local planning controls may be required in order to implement the Statement. These controls will ensure that the region's environmental values – attributes loved by locals and Victorians – are protected. (my underlining)

124. It is noted that the current Clause 21.14 Bellarine Peninsula of the Planning Scheme specifically requires that the existing Structure Plan for Ocean Grove be reviewed³¹, including an assessment of long-term growth options (both infill and settlement expansion), by no later than 2021. The exhibited modified Clause 21.14 retains this requirement.
125. The clause specifically mentions key matters for consideration including specific locations and uses together with the importance of rural activities and landscape issues and whether any adjustments to the settlement boundary are required. The exhibited modified Clause 21.14 proposes to include two additional general tasks within the Future Work section, being

Review housing opportunities within townships to determine if localised housing intensification can be provided.

Work with the state government on the designation of the Bellarine Peninsula under the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act 2018.
126. Several submitters have raised concerns that the Settlement Strategy and the introduction of 'permanent boundaries' for the townships, particularly Ocean Grove, will pre-empt the structure plan review. The submitters recommend that the Structure Plan review should be undertaken before the final adoption of the Settlement Strategy.
127. Given the preparation of the Statement of Planning Policy within the next year it is evident that it is the process outlined above that will introduce settlement boundaries and determine the spatial extent of the Bellarine townships. The Settlement Strategy and the proposed changes to the associated local planning policies (particularly Clause 21.14 in this instance) acknowledge and accommodate this process.
128. I discuss the question of the appropriate form of settlement boundaries for the urban areas of Greater Geelong at Section 7 of this report but note that the declaration means that the boundaries for the Bellarine townships are likely to be enduring features of the planning policy setting for the area within the Bellarine Distinctive Area and Landscape.

5.2.3. Summary

129. The Settlement Strategy brings a holistic approach to the consideration of future growth and brings together several factors that, when combined, highlight the desirability of directing Geelong's principal future growth at other locations away from the Bellarine, this includes:
 - The identification of the Bellarine Peninsula as requiring an overarching Localised Planning Statement due to its significant visual landscape characteristics, individually distinct coastal settlements in a rural setting, sweeping views across rolling hills, coastlines, wetlands and open farmed spaces³².
 - It is timely that the long-term aspiration to protect the non-urban parts of the Bellarine is recognised. The recent declaration of the Bellarine Peninsula as a Distinctive area and Landscape will likely serve to restrict the spatial extent of the existing townships.
 - The desire to maintain strong and effective urban breaks between townships.
 - An understanding that the future growth requirement of Greater Geelong will be more significant than those accommodated over the past 30 years.

³¹ Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Clause 21.14-4 – Bellarine Peninsula, Implementation; page 7 of 17

³² DELWP – Bellarine Peninsula Localised Planning Statement, September 2015; page 13

- If the nominated coastal towns were to seek to accommodate a similar proportion of Geelong's growth as it has in the past (approximately one third of Geelong's annual growth) the size of these townships would increase significantly beyond that of a district town with significant consequential impacts on the surrounding areas.
 - The identification of other locations adjacent to urban Geelong capable of accommodating long-term major growth in locations that are relatively close to a wide range of existing and higher order services and facilities and range of employment options that cannot be provided in the coastal townships.
 - The new growth areas are of a scale that will support significant infrastructure and higher order facilities and services within proximate locations, whereas the Bellarine townships cannot.
130. Given these factors, the designation of the ongoing role of the larger Bellarine townships as district towns, but not growth areas, is appropriate.
131. The establishment of a permanent settlement boundary for each of the townships will occur as part of the development of the Statement of Planning Policy for the Bellarine Distinctive Area and Landscape.

5.2.4. Recommendations

132. I consider that the proposed modifications to Clause 21.14 – Bellarine Peninsula properly reflects the desired future for the development of the various townships. Given the formal declaration of the DAL it is recommended that the following modifications be made to the exhibited clause as follows:

Further Work – page 7 of 17

- Update the proposed task Work with the state government on the designation of the Bellarine Peninsula under the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes Act 2018 to reflect the fact the declaration has been made and the next step is to finalise a Statement of Planning Policy

Further Work - Ocean Grove – page 7 of 17

- Modify the requirement to undertake a structure plan to that of reviewing the long-term township boundary having regard to all but one of the considerations listed in the clause. Replace the words *other planned growth on the Bellarine Peninsula* (dot point 3) with the words *other planned growth in Greater Geelong*.

6. INTRODUCING PERMANENT SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

6.1. OVERVIEW

133. The Settlement Strategy proposes to establish a series of settlement boundaries around urban Geelong and the other townships within the municipality. The discussion³³ accompanying the proposed Principle and Directions for Permanent Settlement Boundaries suggests two approaches being:
- The creation of an Urban Growth Boundary in a similar manner to that which exists for metropolitan Melbourne.
 - The use of the Distinctive Areas and Landscape controls that includes provision for the designation of long-term settlement boundaries, which can only be amended with approval of both houses of State Parliament.
134. It is suggested that permanent settlement boundaries are required to:
- Protect valued non-urban land including areas of landscape value and
 - Remove the pressure to expand urban areas through measures that strengthen existing boundaries and contain growth to strategically identified locations.
 - As the Settlement Strategy provides for ample land to facilitate Geelong's growth over the next 25 plus years.
135. The proposed Settlement Strategy Framework Plan (see Figure 4 – page 15) proposes that all townships, including urban Geelong, will have 'permanent' settlement boundaries. The Settlement Strategy does not nominate what form of control will be applied to create the settlement boundaries. It also outlines the preferred process (together with some suggested matters for consideration) to setting the permanent boundaries suggesting that an approach similar to that utilised by the Logical Inclusions Advisory Committee that reviewed the Melbourne Urban Growth Boundary in 2011.
136. The Strategy also notes that the 'logical inclusions' process should commence as soon as resources allow and must precede any further township structure plan reviews³⁴.
137. Submitters³⁵ raise a number of points in relation to the desirability of creating a permanent settlement boundary, particularly around urban Geelong. The submitters are concerned that:
- The amount of land allocated in the expanded could be insufficient if growth is greater than anticipated in the growth scenarios prepared to inform the preparation of the Settlement Strategy.
 - The reliance on urban consolidation to provide 50 per cent of new housing supply is overly optimistic.
 - It is premature to place a permanent boundary around urban Geelong at this stage in Geelong's growth and will create significant constraints in future years.
 - The boundaries will create significant legislative barriers that will reduce housing diversity and affordability in the city-region.

³³ City of Greater Geelong – The City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018 – page 75

³⁴ *ibid* – page 75

³⁵ Submission Nos. 21 and 51

6.2. SETTLEMENT BOUNDARIES

6.2.1. The Role of Settlement Boundaries

138. The Planning Policy Framework provides a strong emphasis on creating settlement boundaries with specific reference to this matter in Clauses 11.01S – Settlement, 11.01-1R – Settlement-Geelong G21 and 11.03-4S – Coastal settlement. Other clauses dealing with urban development and distinctive areas and landscapes seek to concentrate urban development to specific locations and avoid use and development that could undermine the long-term natural or non-urban use of land in these areas.
139. It is observed that the Urban Growth Boundary for metropolitan Melbourne was introduced as part of Melbourne 2030 to *better manage outward expansion and to facilitate the achievement of a more compact city*³⁶. Another desirable outcome was the protection of *other valuable land from urban development pressures*³⁷.
140. In effect there are two aims of a settlement boundary being; first, to define where urban growth can go and manage that growth within known limits (particularly for greenfield development) and secondly, to protect other land (including green wedges within the city) from urban development.
141. It may be argued that the current use of planning policies, framework and structure plans and zones provide ample opportunity to maintain robust settlement boundaries. In my opinion the use of a settlement boundary is a proper planning tool to manage the impacts identified above for the following reasons:
 - It calls for greater scrutiny of any future proposal to change the boundary and allow expansion. For example, without a settlement boundary it is easier to argue incremental changes that over time can lead to significant change. Whereas with a settlement boundary in place the larger issues of the proposed change are likely to be more carefully scrutinised having regard to the broader strategic implication of changing the boundary.
 - The boundary adds greater certainty as to the long-term role of non-urban land.
 - It places greater focus on the better utilisation of the existing and new urban land e.g. increasing densities in growth areas or encouraging reuse of former industrial land etc.

6.2.2. Implementing a Settlement Boundary

142. I consider that it is appropriate to impose settlement boundaries around urban Geelong and the Bellarine townships. However, there are different factors influencing the potential application of the settlement boundaries between the two.
143. In the case of the Bellarine townships it is considered that enduring settlement boundaries are required to protect the Bellarine Peninsula's vales and to ensure that large non-urban breaks are maintained for the very long term. In this instance, the application of a permanent settlement boundary that can only be changed by both houses of Parliament is highly likely due to the recent decision by the Minister for Planning to declare the Bellarine as a Distinctive Area and Landscape (DAL).
144. Urban Geelong on the other hand has three boundaries (north, west and south) that each have different attributes and contexts. For example, the south boundary of urban Geelong (the southern and eastern edge of the Armstrong Creek growth area) is the edge of part of the declared Bellarine DAL and the Surf Coast DAL. It is highly likely that the DAL designation will serve to act as an enduring edge to the extent of urban Geelong.
145. The western boundary of the Western Growth Area is the municipal border between the City of Greater Geelong and Golden Plains Shire. Whilst the northern extent of urban Geelong needs to maintain a sizeable urban break from metropolitan Melbourne and keep clear of the flight paths serving Avalon Airport.

³⁶ State of Victoria – Melbourne 2030 – Planning for Sustainable Growth, October 2002; page 61

³⁷ *ibid* page 61

146. I am concerned at the choice of the words to describe the proposed boundary for urban Geelong. The Settlement Strategy identifies an “*indicative permanent settlement boundary*”. The word permanent has the connotation of an inflexible, irrevocable boundary that will not change. I do not consider that this is the intention of the Settlement Strategy that may have a life of 20 years or so.
147. In my view a better word to describe the boundary is ‘long term’.
148. The form and location of the settlement boundary for urban Geelong will be very much influenced by the time horizon that is used. For example, if it is intended never to change the boundary, that is a permanent boundary, then prudence suggests that a much larger area is included within the urban area.
149. If the intention is to create a strong boundary that will not ‘fray’ over time but is capable of strategic change, that is a long-term boundary, then a smaller urban area can be delineated. This circumstance better fits with the likely time horizons envisaged by the Settlement Strategy.
150. It is my view that a long-term settlement boundary should be introduced for urban Geelong. This will provide certainty for the community but acknowledge that the boundary may change in the longer term if the limits of the city to accommodate further growth are being approached.
151. If this approach is accepted, then the key question is what from the boundary should take in the planning controls. There are two possible approaches being:
 - Utilise legislation in a manner similar to that for the Melbourne UGB. In this approach the boundary can only be changed with the approval of both houses of State Parliament.
 - Create a specific local policy in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme that includes a plan of the long-term settlement boundary for urban Geelong together with a clear statement of the purpose of the boundary and the criteria that must be satisfied if the boundary is to be changed. These criteria could include matters such as the appropriateness of the new land to be included within the settlement boundary and the exploration of options to accommodate the further growth without expanding the urban area (e.g. brownfield sites etc.). This approach would utilise the planning scheme amendment process to implement any change.
152. Given that the circumstances for urban Geelong are significantly different to metropolitan Melbourne (i.e. Melbourne is 20 times larger and spans over 50 kilometres in each direction) I do not consider that it is necessary to rely on a legislative approach to support the long-term settlement boundary. The use of a specific and strong local policy to create and enforce the settlement boundary is sufficient and any change will be subject to appropriate check and balances through the planning scheme amendment process.
153. The process to identify a long-term settlement boundary should be carried out after the approval of the overarching Settlement Strategy and Amendment C395. Given the Bellarine’s growth challenges will be considered under the realm of the Distinctive Areas and Landscapes project, it is appropriate that urban Geelong carries out a separate long-term settlement boundary assessment process.
154. I generally agree with the approach advocated in the Settlement Strategy and recommend that a further planning scheme amendment process be followed to introduce the long-term boundary. In adopting this approach, submitters to the exhibited Settlement Strategy, who sought inclusion of their land within the “indicative permanent settlement boundary”, including other areas identified on the Settlement Strategy Overall Framework Plan³⁸ such as the investigation area at Moolap/Pt Henry, would have an opportunity to test the proposed extent of urban Geelong and the settlement boundary.

6.2.3. Recommendations

155. I note the exhibited version of the Housing and Settlement Framework Plan map at Clause 21.06 shows the indicative permanent settlement boundary. I recommend that the word permanent be removed from the map. Once the full review process has been undertaken the Settlement Framework plan can be revised to reflect the approved boundary.
156. I recommend that the Settlement Strategy could be modified to refer to a ‘long-term settlement boundary’ for urban Geelong rather than a permanent settlement boundary. Reference to the settlement boundaries for the Bellarine townships could be described as ‘enduring settlement boundaries’.

³⁸ City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy – Page 12

7. EXPANDING URBAN GEELONG'S FOOTPRINT

157. A number of submissions are principally focussed on the inclusion of a specific property within the urban footprint for Geelong as defined by the Settlement Strategy. These include Submissions 17 (Boral Quarry), 25 (372 – 450 Charlemont Road), 71 (70 Baensch Road, Connewarre), 73 (55 Williams Road, Mt Duneed) and 89 (VPA). Each of the submitters considered that a property had merit to be joined with an existing part of the Geelong, principally the ArmstrongCreek Growth Area.
158. There was a mix of proposals for land to be included within the indicative permanent settlement boundary or as part of a future logical inclusions process.
159. As I noted earlier, I have not investigated the details of these properties excepting the Boral property due to its large size of 1020 hectares.

7.1.1. Boral Land³⁹

The Proposal

160. Boral put forward its Waurm Ponds landholdings for consideration as suitable for future growth. Boral advises that as a consequence of Boral's construction of a new clinker grinding and distribution facility adjacent to Lascelles Wharf in the Port of Geelong, this site land will become surplus.
161. Boral has requested that its landholdings be zoned Urban Growth and that it be designated in local policy as a growth area within the Urban Growth boundary.
162. I also note the Victorian Planning Authority⁴⁰ made a submission to the amendment, which was generally in support of the Boral submission.
163. The VPA recommends that the Settlement Strategy consider identifying the Waurm Ponds Boral landholdings (particularly the northern part) as a future investigation area or alternatively through a future logical inclusions type review. I further note that the VPA states that the key policy decision is one of timing and distribution of planning growth ahead of new growth areas.

Site Characteristics

164. I note the Boral submission outlines several reasons to support its request to rezone the land from SUZ7 to UGZ and its designation as a new growth area within the urban growth boundary, including:
 - Scale of landholdings under single ownership- some 1020 hectares of land;
 - Access to existing services
 - Proximity to central Geelong and other key activity centres;
 - Proximity to key employment nodes and transport infrastructure and
 - Proximity to the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area and thus comprising a logical extension
165. My review of the Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape definition that nearly half of the Boral landholdings are affected by the Minister for Planning 's recent declaration of the Surf Coast as a Distinctive Area and Landscape.
166. Figure 7 following shows the extent of the Surf Coast declared area including affected land north Mt Dunned/Lower Mt Duneed Road within the City of Greater Geelong. The declared area includes all of the Boral land located south of Reservoir and Whites Roads.

³⁹ Submission No. 17

⁴⁰ Submission No. 89

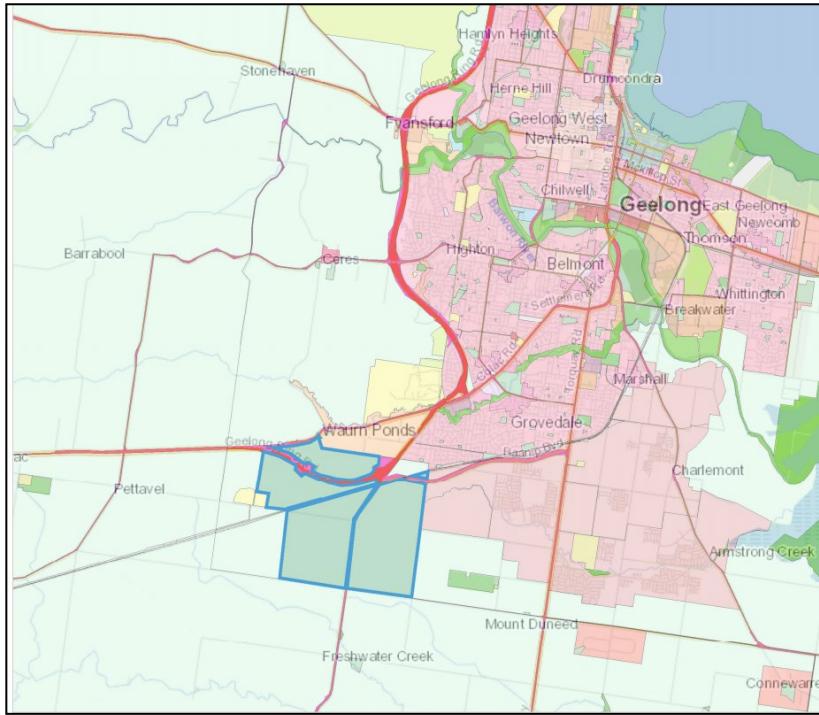


Figure 6 – Waurn Ponds Boral landholdings – Site location
 Source: VicPlan 2019



Figure 7 – Surf Coast Distinctive Area and Landscape – Declared Area
 Source: DELWP website (October 2019)

Discussion

167. The Settlement Strategy did not consider the need for additional land beyond the existing planned areas and new growth areas north and west of the ring road. The reasoning for this is evident having regard to range of population growth scenarios (including a high growth option) and the capability of the existing areas and the two new growth areas to accommodate this growth and have additional capacity.
168. The Northern and Western Geelong Growth Areas are set to accommodate in excess of 110,000 people and there is a clear commitment to facilitate development in these growth areas through the preparation of framework plans for each area and subsequent PSP process.
169. I note there is ample residential land supply identified in the Settlement Strategy and located at multiple development fronts, including the Bellarine townships. It is apparent that the Settlement Strategy adequately plans for the provision of residential land supply well beyond the 15-year requirement contained in the planning scheme.
170. It is my view that to introduce an additional new growth front at this stage, which has not undergone a full strategic assessment, is unnecessary. As mentioned, there is no need for the Boral land at this time to meet the urban development needs of Greater Geelong.
171. However, it is considered that the Boral land by virtue of its size and proximity to the Armstrong Creek growth area has potential for future urban land. Given this I consider that the northern part of the Boral land has future potential to be included in the growth of urban Geelong and could be identified as a Future Investigation Area (FIA).
172. I consider that the site should not be reviewed in isolation, rather the assessment of this land should be undertaken as part of a broader review of the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area. This approach would ensure that a holistic assessment of the site's broader strategic relationship with established and growing growth areas is undertaken.
173. The timing of the further investigation of this area should be informed by several triggers in combination (that will form part of the monitoring of Geelong's growth) such as:
 - When Armstrong Creek is nearing completion and the Northern and Western growth areas are established.
 - When residential land supply stocks for urban Geelong approach the 15-year supply; or
 - In combination with other considerations, where the Strategy's intent to achieve a 50% infill contribution rate to supply is significantly constrained.

7.1.2. Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area

174. Several other submissions⁴¹ have sought that additional land be included within the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area. One submission also sought to revisit the Employment Precinct in south west of the Armstrong Creek Growth Area at Ghazeepore Road for residential uses.
175. As with the Boral land, a wholesale review of the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area would be an appropriate time to consider additions to this area or revisiting existing precincts considered to be no longer viable for their original intended use. A review of the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area could form part of a broader review of the Settlement Strategy as outlined in the previous section.
176. I note that a number of submissions⁴², which have sought to be included within the Armstrong Creek Urban Growth Area, are also affected by the Surf Coast Distinctive Areas and Landscapes declaration area. This declaration by the Minister for Planning carries weight insofar as the desire to maintain the non-urban break between Geelong and Torquay. The declaration boundary effectively responds to areas under pressure for development and the desire to protect valued areas, landscapes and assets.

⁴¹ Submissions Nos 25, 63, 71, 73, 102

⁴² Submissions Nos 25, 73, 102

7.1.3. Other Areas

177. Other submissions⁴³ were put forward for consideration such as land north of Lara outside the proposed indicative permanent settlement boundary. I note the strategic direction for growth at Lara, being the Lara West Growth Area and also, its relationship to the new Northern Geelong Growth Area on Bacchus Marsh Road.
178. The desire to develop north of the town centre towards Serendip Sanctuary has been a challenging prospect for developers in the past. I note that to leap-frog Windermere Road would create an isolated growth front in a significant landscape due to its proximity to the You Yangs.
179. It is considered that the Settlement Strategy's direction of growth to the North, west of Bacchus Marsh, within the Northern Geelong Growth Area, creates a better nexus with the existing Lara West growth area and utilisation of existing infrastructure.

7.1.4. Summary

180. In summary, a number of submitters consider that a specific property should be included within the proposed settlement boundary for urban Geelong.
181. Nearly all of the proposed properties are fully or partly located in areas of high landscape value. The recently declared Distinctive Areas and Landscapes for Surf Coast and the Bellarine Peninsula has effectively created a southern settlement boundary for urban Geelong that coincides with the current extent of the Armstrong Creek growth area. It is appreciated that the definition of the two DALs was probably prepared to capture all land was outside the urban areas and there is a possibility that the boundary could be moved.
182. It is also equally possible that the DAL area was defined to provide a basis to prevent any further encroachment of urban development into either Surf Coast of the Bellarine. This matter will be addressed over the next 12 months as the Statement of Planning Policy is prepared and settlement boundaries defined.
183. It is considered that there is no immediate need to include these properties within the urban footprint of urban Geelong. The preparation of the Statement of Planning Policy will determine whether some or all of these properties are included within the DAL or not. If not, the recommended logical inclusions review as discussed in Section 6 of my report will then consider if the land should be included within the long-term settlement boundary.
184. I note that if some land parcels are included within the settlement boundary it is possible that the sites will be designated as a Future Investigation Area (FIA) not zoned to Urban Growth given that there is ample land available to accommodate the forecast growth.

⁴³ Submission Nos 101

APPENDIX A GUIDE TO EXPERT EVIDENCE RESPONSE

Name and Address

Michael Bruce Barlow
Urbis Pty Ltd
Level 12, 120 Collins Street,
Melbourne, VIC 3000

- **Qualifications**

I am a Director of Urbis Pty Ltd. I am a qualified town planner and have practised as a town planner for over 35 years (including 34 years as a consultant planner) and hold a Diploma of Applied Science (Town Planning) from Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology for which I qualified in 1981.

- **Experience**

My experience includes:

- 2011 to present: Director of Planning, Urbis Pty Ltd
- 2002 to 2010: Managing Director, Urbis Pty Ltd
- 1990 – 2001: Director of Urbis Pty Ltd (and its predecessors including A.T. Cocks Consulting)
- 1985 – 1990: Senior Planner, A.T. Cocks Consulting
- 1982 – 1985: Planning Officer and Appeals Officer, City of Melbourne
- 1981 – 1982: Planning Officer, Shire of Eltham
- 1977 – 1980: Planning Officer, City of Doncaster and Templestowe

I advise on the development of cities; their principal activities and land uses and have extensive experience in strategic and development planning. I have been engaged on a wide range of projects throughout Australia, China and the Middle East. I have particular project experience involving major urban development projects across a range of localities and activities including:

- The analysis of drivers of change in cities and their impacts and influence on industry, employment and economic development, retail and activity centres, residential development strategies and policy, metropolitan growth and urban management.
- The preparation of master plans for institutional and educational establishments, airports and new urban development.
- A wide range of international urban development projects including the planning of the new port city serving Shanghai and major city and new town strategies for a number of cities within the Yangtze River corridor, China.
- Leadership of the development of a comprehensive Framework Plan for the Emirate of Dubai. This project created a Vision to guide the economic development of the Emirate, an Urban Framework Plan and an Urban Management System for the government of Dubai.
- Advice on new and specialist land uses and development concepts including the ongoing development of major Australian airports, the introduction and impacts of new retail concepts and standalone megaplex cinemas and the introduction of the casino into central Melbourne.
- Major retail developments comprising central city centres, super-regional centres and mixed-use developments.
- Major commercial and residential developments in the Melbourne central city area including the CBD, Docklands and Southbank and throughout metropolitan Melbourne.

I provide expert evidence at various forums including the Supreme Court of Victoria, Federal Court of Australia, Land and Environment Court (NSW), the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal and independent planning panels regarding the planning implications and impacts of development.

- **Expertise to make the report**

I have advised on and assessed the introduction of new planning controls across Victoria ranging from the introduction of the new format schemes, new urban area development controls to site-specific development controls over the past 30 years.

- **Instructions**

I have been requested by Harwood Andrews, on behalf of the City of Greater Geelong (the Planning Authority) to:

- (a) attend a meeting to discuss the issues raised in your preliminary opinion/evidence
- (b) consider and advise on any post-exhibition changes
- (c) prepare an expert witness report (to be filed on a date to be confirmed) which contains your opinion on
 - i. the role and structure of Geelong and its contribution to Victorian Settlement strategy
 - ii. the strategic planning merits of the PSA, including whether the Settlement Strategy is strategically justified having regard to the above
 - iii. issues raised in submissions to the PSA relating to the Settlement Strategy
 - iv. any issues you consider should be addressed by way of post-exhibition changes
- (d) review and advise on relevant expert witness reports filed on behalf of other parties
- (e) present evidence on behalf of our client at the Panel hearing (the panel hearing is currently scheduled for 11 to 22 November 2019)

I confirm that I am the author of this report I have been assisted by Mr James Hamilton in undertaking background research of the Amendment and the development of the draft Settlement Strategy.

- **The Facts, Matters and Assumptions on which the Opinions are expressed in this Report**

In undertaking my assessment, I have familiarised myself with the project area and surrounding environs as relevant and have had regard to the following documents:

- *The G21 Regional Growth Plan, April 2013.*
- *The City of greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, October 2018* and supporting background documents.
- The Greater Geelong Planning Scheme.
- The proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C395
- Submissions made regarding the Settlement Strategy and the associated planning scheme amendment (**PSA**) relevant to my planning expertise.

The matters addressed within this report fall within my planning expertise. I note in the body of my report (if relevant) where I have specifically relied on the detailed technical assessments and supporting documentation prepared by others to assist my assessment of a particular matter.

- **Declaration**

I declare that in preparing the material contained in this report I have made all inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld from the Panel.

- **Findings**

My findings are set out in the body of this report.

