

# Amendment C434 to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme

Expert Evidence of John Christopher McNeill (B. Ec)

Prepared for  
Leaf Corporation



Ethos Urban acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, of the Kulin Nation, the Traditional Custodians of the land where this document was prepared, and all peoples and nations from lands affected.

We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

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<b>Contact</b>	Chris McNeill Director	cmcneill@ethosurban.com 0408 145283
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**Ethos Urban** Ethos Urban Pty Ltd | ABN 13 615 087 931 | Level 8, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 4000  
(Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Land) Melbourne | +61 3 9419 7226 | ethosurban.com

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# 1.0 Introduction

## Professional Details

1. My name is John Christopher McNeill and I practice as Director, Economics at Ethos Urban Pty Ltd located at Level 8, 30 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000.

## Area of Expertise

2. I hold a degree in Economics from Monash University.
3. My area of professional expertise is urban economics and the economic analysis of urban policy. This includes expertise in residential markets analysis which I have undertaken for a wide range of public and private sector clients throughout Australia.
4. My opinions expressed herein are, to the context relevant, made by me in reliance upon my above expertise.
5. I am a fellow of the Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association.

## Background

6. Leaf Corporation controls land at 8-14 Thompson Road, North Geelong and 6A Thompson Road, North Geelong (collectively referred to as the subject site).
7. Greater Geelong City Council (Council) has prepared Amendment C434 to the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme, which proposes to implement the Saleyards Precinct Plan, June 2021, including rezoning of land, application of overlay controls and local policy provisions. The Amendment is accompanied by a draft Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan and agreement under Section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* to collect development contributions for shared infrastructure and community projects.
8. The decision to prepare and exhibit the Amendment was made by Council at its meeting on 22 June 2021.
9. Council considered a report on the submissions to Amendment C434 on 27 September 2022 and resolved to refer them to an Independent Panel.
10. The subject site is situated in the area that is the subject of Amendment C434.

## Instructions

11. Rigby Cooke Lawyers, acting on behalf of Leaf Corporation, have requested that I review the proposed Amendment and relevant background documents from an economic perspective, and consider the following:
  - Height and density; and
  - Shared Infrastructure Plan

## Preparation

12. In preparing this statement:
  - I am aware that, as a witness giving evidence (by report, or otherwise) in a proceeding as an expert, I have a duty to assist the Panel and that this duty overrides any obligation that I may have to any party to the proceeding or to any person who is liable for my fee or expenses in this matter;

- I have neither received nor accepted any instructions to adopt or reject any particular opinion in preparing this report;
- I have made all the enquiries which I believe are desirable and appropriate and that no matters of significance which I regard as relevant have, to my knowledge, been withheld from the Panel; and
- I have considered the relevant documents disclosed by the parties to this proceeding, as well as the documents listed in this report.

13. Materials relied upon in preparing my evidence include:

- Greater Geelong Planning Scheme
- Saleyards Precinct Plan, City of Greater Geelong (June 2021)
- Proposed Amendment documentation
- Comprehensive Development Plan (Exhibited Version)
- Schedule 4 to the Comprehensive Development Zone (Exhibited Version)
- Comprehensive Development Plan (3 November 2022 – Panel Version Day 1)
- Schedule 4 to the Comprehensive Development Zone (3 November 2022 – Panel Version Day 1)
- Victoria In Future 2019, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
- Australian Bureau of Statistics, (Various)
- Broadhectare Residential Land Supply and Demand Assessment - City of Greater Geelong, Spatial Economics (April 2022)
- City of Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, August 2020 (City of Greater Geelong and Spatial Economics)
- Draft Saleyards Precinct Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan, May 2022 (City of Greater Geelong)
- Draft S173 Agreement – Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan, May 2022 (Maddocks Lawyers)
- G21 Regional Growth Plan, April 2013

14. I am familiar with the subject site and Amendment Area, having visited the location in September 2022.

## 2.0 Proposed Amendment C434

### Local Context

15. The proposed amendment applies to the former Geelong Saleyards site (125-135 Weddell Road), Gateways Support Services site (8-14 Thompson Road), 6A Thompson Road, part of the Sphinx Hotel land (2-6 Thompson Road) and 117-123 Weddell Road, in North Geelong. The area that is affected by Amendment C434 is identified in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Amendment Area**



Source: Amendment C434 Explanatory Report

16. The Explanatory Report explains that the proposed amendment facilitates the use and redevelopment of land in the Amendment area for, primarily, residential development as well as a limited mix of other uses. Development is to be generally in accordance with the Saleyards Comprehensive Development Plan, May 2022 (City of Greater Geelong).
17. The Explanatory Report further outlines that proposed Amendment C434 will:
- Rezone 125-135 Weddell Road (part), 8-14 Thompson Road, 6A Thompson Road and 2-6 Thompson Road (part) from the Industrial 1 Zone to the Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ4)
  - Amend the schedule to HO1915 to remove the exemption for prohibited uses;
  - Delete DDO20 as it applies to the Land;
  - Apply the EAO to 125-135 Weddell Road (part), 8-14 & 6A Thompson Road and 2-6 Thompson Road (part);
  - Amend Clause 21.06-8 Implementation to include the Saleyards Precinct Key Development Area in the Housing and Settlement Framework Plan and Key Development Area Maps.

- Amend the schedule to Clause 53.01 Public open space contribution and subdivision to include an amount of contribution for the land proposed to be rezoned to CDZ4.
- Amend the schedule to Clause 72.04 Incorporated documents to include a new incorporated document titled, '*Saleyards Comprehensive Development Plan, May 2022* (City of Greater Geelong), to inform key use and development outcomes for the land.
- Amend the schedule to Clause 72.08 (Background documents) to include Saleyards Precinct Plan (City of Greater Geelong, June 2021), Providing social housing as essential infrastructure in Geelong's Saleyards precinct (SGS, March 2022) and Geelong Saleyards Precinct Surface Water Management Strategy (BMT, April 2021).

18. It is also noted that:

- The part of the land at 125 Weddell Road, North Geelong currently in the Public Park and Recreation Zone will be retained in that zone.
- The Heritage Overlay (HO1915 – Geelong Sale Yards) applying to 125 Weddell Road and 135 Weddell Road (part) and Special Building Overlay, which affects part of the land, will also be retained.
- A correction is also proposed for 117-123 Weddell Road, North Geelong which is outside the Precinct Plan boundary, to be rezoned from the Special Use Zone (Schedule 3) to the Public Park and Recreation Zone. This will reflect its existing and continuing status as public open space.

19. Subsequent to the exhibition of Amendment C434 and consideration of submissions by Greater Geelong City Council, a revised version of the Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP) has been issued, with an identification, '3 November 2022 – Panel Version Day 1' (referred to in my evidence as the 3 November version of the CDP. It is further noted that a revised version of Schedule 4 to the Comprehensive Development Zone (CDZ) has also been provided with a 3 November 2022 date).

20. In accordance with my instructions and from an economic perspective, the following matters are of primary relevance to my evidence (Note: where relevant, these details are based on the 3 November version of the CDP and Schedule 4 to the Comprehensive Development Zone):

#### Density and Height

- The precinct is planned to accommodate 1,000-1,300 residents (CDP, Vision, page 4)
- The precinct will provide diverse forms of housing that will help meet existing and future housing demand (CDP, Vision, page 4)
- Buildings should achieve a minimum dwelling density of 60 dwellings per net developable hectare (CDP, Guideline 9, page 8)
- In the context of preferred maximum building heights, buildings should not exceed the following heights (CDP, Guideline 11, page 9):

*22 metres or 6 storeys (whichever is lesser) if located directly adjacent to Thompson Road, the Central Park, Mixed Use Area Plaza, the Northern and Southern Open Space, the golf course adjacent to the southern boundary of the precinct*

*15 metres or 4 storeys (whichever is lesser) in all other areas*

- A change proposed by Council now proposed in the 3 November 2022, Schedule 4 to the CDZ relates to permits that exceed the preferred maximum building height. In these instances it is proposed that a permit which exceeds a preferred maximum building height as set out in the Incorporated CDP by one storey or more must meet all of the following requirements:

*The development must materially exceed the minimum environmentally sustainable development standard set out in the Incorporated CDP*

*The development must demonstrate high quality architecture and urban design*

*The building height must not exceed 34 metres or 10 storeys (whichever is lesser)*

*The development must not result in an unreasonable loss of amenity to through overshadowing, overlooking and visual bulk; and*

*The development must provide a significant community benefit comprising affordable housing which is greater than the amount referred to in the Incorporated CDP; and/or a higher contribution to public open space than the requirement in clause 53.01*

#### Social Housing

- Social housing should be provided as a transfer of dwellings to an affordable housing association under the *Housing Act 1983* or the City of Greater Geelong Affordable Housing Trust at the rate of 5% of the total number of dwellings proposed on the land in the application, for zero consideration. (CDP, Guideline 7, page 8)
- The May 2022 version of the CDP (the exhibited version) took a different approach to the provision of social housing based on a rate of 0.036 square metres (gross floor area) for each square metre of commercially sales or leasable floorspace (gross floor area), with social housing dwellings being delivered at zero consideration. A number of alternative arrangements relating to cash payments are also provided.

#### Public Open Space

- The Public Open Space contribution is set at 10%

## 3.0 Density and Height

### Policy Context

21. The total area of the Saleyards Precinct is 12.51 hectares with a net developable area (inclusive of streets) of 9.04 hectares (Saleyards Precinct Draft Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan, May 2022). The CDP envisages a density of 60 dwellings per net developable hectare. Based on a minimum dwelling density of 60 dwellings per net development hectare and a net developable area of approximately 9ha, it is assumed that the Saleyards Precinct will accommodate at least 540 dwellings.
22. As part of Amendment C434, a change to Clause 21.06<sup>1</sup> of the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme (Settlement and Housing) is proposed in which a map of the Saleyards Precinct will be included as one of Greater Geelong's 'Key Development Area Maps'.
23. It is noted in Clause 21.06-1 (Key Issues and Influences) that:
  - *Geelong is expected to grow by an additional 152,000 people by 2036 based on an average annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent. This growth will create demand for over 73,400 additional dwellings which can be met under the City's identified planned growth.*
  - *Suburban detached family homes make up 85 per cent of our current housing stock. Increasing the diversity of the City's housing stock overtime will help cater for the growing trend of smaller households, affordable housing, ageing in place, low maintenance housing and strong demand for housing in high amenity locations.*
  - *In order to meet these demands, there is a need to provide for a range of housing types including unit, townhouse, attached, multilevel and apartment dwellings in both established and developing communities.*
  - *A combination of greenfield and infill development will deliver housing for Geelong's growing population. Over time the share of new housing from infill is expected to increase.*
  - *Targeted infill development is supported in areas with access to infrastructure, goods and services. In order for medium and high density housing to be embraced by established communities it needs to deliver high quality design and achieve a high level of amenity for future residents while being appropriate for the site and neighbourhood.*
24. Clause 21.06-5 (Urban Consolidation) seeks to "facilitate infill development to increase its housing supply contribution to 50 per cent, by 2047".
25. Strategies to achieve this objective include "accommodating medium and high density housing in Key Development Areas (as defined by the maps included in this clause)."
26. The G21 Regional Growth Plan (April 2013) also places urban consolidation as a key area of focus including Principle 1 (Optimise Infrastructure and Consolidate): *Maximise capacity and leverage off existing infrastructure and services, particularly near central retail and transport nodes. Minimise additional land used for residential, commercial and industrial purposes by harnessing underutilised land and buildings in our settlements. Develop new infrastructure and services to facilitate consolidation and growth (page 20).*

### Geelong's Future Growth

27. As Victoria's second city, Greater Geelong is a major centre for population growth and residential development. More significantly, the relative importance of Greater Geelong as a growth centre has strengthened in recent years.
28. The story of population growth in Greater Geelong since the beginning of the 2000's is generally one of accelerating growth. Over the period 2006 to 2016, Greater Geelong's rate

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<sup>1</sup> It is noted that the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme has been translated into the new format and the new Clause 21.06 may not be at Clause 21.06

of population growth steadily closed the gap on Greater Melbourne and, more recently, exceeded that of Greater Melbourne and Victoria as a whole.

29. This is illustrated in Table 1, which highlights the strength of population in Greater Geelong. Between 2006 and 2011, population growth averaged 1.4% per annum. This increased to 2.1% per annum between 2011 and 2016 and accelerated further over the periods, 2017 (2.8%) and 2018 and 2019 (2.7%).
30. The period since (2020 and 2021) has seen the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic where Australia's population growth, which relies heavily on net overseas migration flows (in the order of the two thirds of national population growth is typically the net of international migration inflows less outflows), declined significantly as a result of a temporary cessation in immigration. This had a particularly significant impact on the rate of population growth of Greater Melbourne, where the population is estimated to have declined.
31. In numeric terms, Greater Geelong did not experience the sort of downturn in population growth that has occurred in Greater Melbourne as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Whereas the population of Greater Melbourne is estimated to have decreased in the 12 months to 30 June 2021 (-78,680 persons), Greater Geelong's population increased by +5,230 persons.
32. Since the beginning of 2022, immigration has returned at a national level. It can be reasonably expected that, with the continuation of this trend, population growth in Greater Geelong will return to levels broadly consistent with the period 2017 to 2019.

**Table 1: Average Annual Population Growth, Greater Geelong (2006-2021)**

Greater Geelong	2006	2011	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Population (no.)	201,500	215,840	239,530	246,240	252,920	259,780	265,550	270,780
Annual Growth (no.)		+2,870	+4,740	+6,710	+6,680	+6,860	+5,770	+5,230
Annual Growth (%)		+1.4%	+2.1%	+2.8%	+2.7%	+2.7%	+2.3%	+2.0%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

33. More broadly, it has been widely reported that since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many regional cities and towns have experienced a surge in population growth. A key question is to what extent this trend represents a structural realignment in regional and metropolitan population growth arrangements.
34. A combination of factors have been evident since the beginning of the pandemic that suggests that a period of even stronger growth may occur in Greater Geelong. Factors include:
  - A re-assessment of work-life balance for a growing number of households.
  - Improvements in technology and increased workplace flexibility providing work-from-home choices for many workers, particularly those in office-based environments.
  - Property prices in Greater Melbourne generally remain higher than in regional Victoria, including in Greater Geelong (though it has been recently reported that average vacant lot prices in Greater Geelong are now level with or higher than the average for Greater Melbourne)
  - A growing appreciation for the lifestyle attributes afforded by regional living.
  - Significant improvements in services and amenities (eg. schools, health facilities, entertainment options, etc) has improved the 'value proposition' of regional centres.
  - Investment in transport, both road and rail, has improved accessibility to many regional centres, including Greater Geelong.

## Importance of Infill Supply Opportunities in the Geelong Market

35. Greater Geelong's population is expected to continue to grow strongly into the future. The level of future growth varies based on different expectations of future growth.
36. The Victorian government's official population and dwelling projection series, Victoria In Future 2019 (VIF2019), project that 2,924 dwellings per annum will be required to support Greater Geelong's population growth between 2021 and 2021.
37. id forecasts, prepared for Greater Geelong City Council (last updated in December 2021) anticipates dwelling growth of 2,770 per annum between 2021 and 2041, to support population growth.
38. The *Greater Geelong Settlement Strategy, 2020* (City of Greater Geelong and Spatial Economics) (Settlement Strategy) considers a number of growth scenarios, and adopts a population growth rate of 2.5% per annum (Scenario D) as the primary basis for calculating dwelling demand. Scenario D would require in the order of 3,670 dwellings per annum (2016-2036). The Scenario D population growth rate is the figure referenced in the Greater Geelong Planning Scheme and, in my opinion, represents an appropriate basis for planning considerations.
39. In regard to the need for a more diverse range of dwelling stock to respond to the changing demographic composition of the population, it is appropriate to consider preliminary data from the 2021 National Census of Population and Housing (Table 2).
40. Although it is evident that the proportional share of households remained relatively constant in Greater Geelong between 2006 and 2021 (Note: Couple without Children Households increased in proportional terms but includes young couples who may soon become households with children), the substantial increase in the population means that each household type has experienced a significant numerical increase.
41. The number of Couple Families without Children households increased by approximately +5,600, while the number of One Parent Families increased by +1,330, the number of Other Families increased by +220, and the number of Group Households increased by +790. Although any household type may generate a demand for medium and high density dwellings, certain household types are generally regarded as more likely to do so than others. For example, Group Households, Lone Person Households, and Couple Families with no Children are considered more likely to drive demand for non-detached housing product, including townhouse and apartment development.
42. It is also relevant that non-detached forms of housing product are usually delivered at a lower cost base and therefore more affordably than non-detached housing, and therefore provides a range of housing product that provides a broader offering to households that are unable to participate in the detached housing market.

**Table 2: Changes in Household Type, Greater Geelong (2016-2021)**

Household Composition	2016		2021	
	No.	Share	No.	Share
<i>Couple family with no children</i>	23,191	25.3%	28,797	26.6%
<i>Couple family with children</i>	25,435	27.7%	29,542	27.3%
Couple family - Total	48,626	53.0%	58,339	53.9%
One parent family	10,178	11.1%	11,504	10.6%
Other families	873	1.0%	1,092	1.0%
Family households - Total	59,677	65.0%	70,933	65.5%
Lone person household	24,186	26.3%	28,649	26.5%
Group household	3,138	3.4%	3,926	3.6%
Other household	4,812	5.2%	4,744	4.4%

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

## Need for a Strong Pipeline of High Density Housing Supply

43. At present, accommodating Greater Geelong's population growth is largely reliant on the greenfields market, with Armstrong Creek, Lara West and remnant broadhectare areas on the Bellarine Peninsula providing the majority of growth area supply. The Armstrong Creek market is now a mature greenfields market, while sales and development at Lara West is progressing strongly. As a result of the recent Distinctive Areas and Landscapes process, no additional greenfields supply will be available beyond existing settlement boundaries.
44. Two major greenfield supply areas are presently in planning; the Western Geelong Growth Area and Northern Geelong Growth Area with each expected to accommodate in the order of 60,000+ residents (approximately 20,000 dwellings in each growth area).
45. As noted, planning policy seeks to increase the proportion of infill development in Greater Geelong over time, to reduce the reliance on the greenfields market. Strategic redevelopment sites, such as the Saleyards Precinct, are expected to play a key role in achieving this objective
46. The Settlement Strategy provides Principles and Directions in relation to Urban Consolidation (page 88), which include:
- *Principle: Increase the role of urban consolidation as part of Geelong's overall housing supply*
  - *Direction: Facilitate infill development to increase its housing supply contribution to 50%, by 2047*
  - *Direction: Investigate a 'rail corridor approach to infill opportunities from North Geelong Station through to Waurin Ponds.*
47. Urban Consolidation is likely to be achieved in four ways:
- High density development in the Geelong City Centre.
  - Medium and high density development in Activity Centres, which is often informed by Structure Plans.
  - Strategic sites, or Key Development Areas, (such as the Saleyards Precinct), where development plans can shape and guide development in a precinct-based manner. This nature of such development is informed by the location and can be provided as either medium or high-density development.
  - Ad hoc infill, where multi-unit development of, typically, two to ten, units are development on single or amalgamated sites.
48. The Settlement Strategy (page 47) notes that demand for major redevelopments, particularly in central Geelong is expected to increase in the future due to the "*growing size and diversity of the population and increasing number of professionals in the workforce is likely to mean that more people will choose a smaller dwelling in a central location, with good access to jobs and amenities, in preference to a larger suburban dwelling. This is in line with the Melbourne experience*".
49. The extent to which infill supply can provide an increasing component of Geelong's overall housing supply will depend in part on the location and sense of amenity of such development. It will also increasingly depend on the delivery of larger apartment-based developments. This is recognised at page 82 of the Settlement Strategy:
- To increase the percentage of new housing in established areas will require both scattered, small-scale, dispersed infill and a substantial upturn in medium/higher density apartment-type development. The following factors will likely see the share of new housing in established areas increase significantly:*
- *changing lifestyle choices of home buyers and renters*
  - *the demographic structure of Geelong's population*
  - *the rising cost of detached housing in Geelong's inner suburbs and on the Bellarine Peninsula and*

- *a 'demonstration effect' led by a growing trend towards urban consolidation in Melbourne.*
50. It is important not to underestimate the challenge involved in substantially increasing apartment style development in a medium sized city such as Geelong. Apartment development is unlikely to be viable in many established parts of Geelong, at least in the short to medium term.
  51. Each significant parcel of land, or strategic redevelopment site, that is successfully developed is one less that can be easily developed or redeveloped in the future. Unlike, greenfields supply, infill sites are finite and represent a high value resource. Moreover, assessments of infill capacity are often theoretical with some sites likely to be highly sought after by the market, while others, although theoretically available, attract little market attention.
  52. Typically, high density development is most viable in areas:
    - With a high sense of amenity; and/or
    - Where attractive views are available from upper apartment levels; and/or
    - Which are located near to key attractors, such as a train station with high frequency services; and/or
    - Where the median house price of the surrounding area is materially higher than selling price of new apartments in a development.
  53. In this regard, it is important to ensure significant redevelopment sites are developed at an intensity that makes the most of the available opportunity.
  54. The Saleyards Precinct is:
    - Separated from established residential areas by roads and has little in the way of sensitive interfaces
    - Accessible to North Geelong train station, with the centre of the precinct approximately one kilometre walking distance from the station. North Geelong station is serviced by approximately 55 trains each way (to the Geelong CBD or to Melbourne) on an average weekday.
  55. Having regard for these attributes, I believe the proposed controls set out in the CDP (up to 6 levels) represents an underdevelopment of a strategic site. In my view, a preferred maximum height of at least 10 levels (in those areas currently identified for 6 levels) would provide a more economically efficient and flexible approach to development of the site.
  56. Importantly, and assuming most development on the site is undertaken on a 'build to sell' basis, once development of the site has been completed, there is little prospect of redevelopment to realise a higher yield.
  57. If Greater Geelong is to gradually increase the proportion of new dwellings in established areas to 50%, a significant shift will need to occur. At present, infill markets (or urban consolidation) accounts for approximately 25% of total housing delivered (Broadhectare Residential Land Supply and Demand Assessment, City of Greater Geelong, April 2022 (Spatial Economics, page 8)). Based on a 2.5% population growth rate generating a need for 3,670 dwellings per year, the level of infill housing needs to increase from in the order of +920 dwellings per year, to +1,835 dwellings per year.
  58. Accordingly, I believe it is important to consider the development of the Saleyards Precinct through a long term lens. Sites that are relatively unconstrained and within walking distance of a train station with high frequency services are relatively rare and should be developed at a high intensity. An increase in the preferred maximum height to 10 levels is likely to deliver a density of nearer to 80 dwellings per net developable hectare.

## 4.0 Social Housing Requirement

59. I understand that the parties are in negotiation with Council concerning the provision of affordable housing and I have therefore been instructed not to consider this issue in my evidence.

## 5.0 Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan

60. The staging of development and delivery of infrastructure is set out at R25 and R26 of the proposed CDP.
61. The Draft Share Infrastructure Funding Plan (May 2022) sets out the projects to be funded. It is noted that a number of projects are located outside the Amendment Area including pedestrian crossing upgrades (RD02, RD03 and RD04), shared user paths and landscaping (TR1, TR2, TR3 and TR4).
62. In my opinion, nexus has not been demonstrated between the need for these projects and development of the Saleyards Precinct. If no nexus is demonstrated, these projects should be deleted from Table 1 in the proposed CDP and from the Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan.
63. Moreover, to the extent nexus could be demonstrated, accordingly, funding of this infrastructure by development in the Amendment Area should only be provided based on a projected share of use by future residents of the Saleyards Precinct.
64. The charge rate at \$588,765 per hectare is significant and it is important to ensure a nexus is established between the need for all identified projects and development in the Amendment Area. Similarly, it may be appropriate to consider the extent to which use of projects outside the Amendment Area should be subject to external apportionment.
65. Several matters require clarification, including:
- The Precinct Plan (June 2021, page 29) refers to the precinct being developed at 80 dwellings per net developable hectare (660 dwellings in total). The amendment documentation and Shared Infrastructure Funding Plan are based on an assumed density of 60 dwellings per net developable hectare. The draft Section 173 Agreement also is informed by an assumption of 60 dwellings per net developable hectare.
  - The Precinct Plan (at page 29) deals with the issue of public open space noting that "if the 10 percent requirement is not fully delivered on the ground, a cash in lieu payment will be required". The Shared Funding Plan and Section 173 Agreement do not appear to deal with public open space (in terms an equalisation calculation) and does not appear to contemplate a situation where an owner may be an over-provider or under-provider of open space.

## 6.0 Key Findings

66. The Geelong Saleyards precinct represents an important and strategic redevelopment site to the north of the Geelong CBD. A key asset of the precinct is its relative proximity to North Geelong station.
67. The proposed CDP outlines a preferred maximum height limit of 6 levels to much of the precinct and 4 levels in specific areas. Proposed Schedule 4 to the CDZ provides for an increase from 6 levels to 10 levels based on certain conditions being met.
68. Greater Geelong is expected to continue its recent history of strong population growth. To accommodate forecast growth, an average of 3,670 dwellings will need to be delivered each year.

69. The majority of this growth has been and, in the short to medium term, will continue to occur in growth areas on the edge of the existing urban area.
70. Planning policy however, seeks to direct an increased proportion of future growth into the established urban area, in the form of medium and high density housing.
71. To achieve this objective, it will be necessary to ensure key development sites are developed at an intensity that has regard for the locational and other attributes that each site present.
72. Having regard for the attributes of the Saleyards Precinct, it is my opinion that additional development intensity should be encouraged with the preferred maximum height set out in the CDP being increased to at least 10 levels.
73. The draft Shared Infrastructure Plan provides for the funding of a number of projects outside the Amendment Area. It is not apparent that a clear nexus has been established between the need for these projects and the development of the Saleyards Precinct.

**Declaration**

I have made all the inquiries that I believe are desirable and appropriate and no matters of significance that I regard as relevant have to my knowledge been withheld.



John Christopher McNeill  
Director, Economics  
**Ethos Urban Pty Ltd**  
21 November 2022

## **7.0 ATTACHMENT: John Christopher McNeill CV**

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## Chris McNeill

Director, Economics — B.Econ, VPELA (Fellow)



Chris is a demographer and urban economist with more than 25 years of experience. He is armed with a deep knowledge of Australia's urban landscape and is a regular conference presenter and expert witness in matters relating to urban planning and development.

Chris has a Bachelor of Economics degree and post-graduate Certificate qualifications in international business from the Siemens business school in Germany. He is a Fellow of the Victorian Planning and Environmental Law Association and a former Sessional Member of Planning Panels Victoria.

Chris has worked in the manufacturing industry as a commercial manager, and as an urban economist with an industry association and as a consultant in private practice. Chris was appointed as a Sessional Member of Planning Panels Victoria for an eight-year period between 2005 and 2013, during which he chaired a number of significant Panels and Advisory Committees.

His urban economics experience covers a range of projects in urban and regional economic development and land use planning; industry sector analysis; residential, commercial, industrial and retail location and development; development contributions plan analysis and review; community infrastructure planning; urban policy analysis and concept feasibility testing; and appearing as expert witness at planning appeal tribunals and panels.

### PAST POSITIONS

- **Director**, Essential Economics, 2017–2019
- **Founding Director**, Spade Consultants, 2007–2016
- **Sessional Member**, Planning Panels Victoria, 2005–2013
- **Policy Director**, UDIA Victoria, 2003–2006
- **Senior Manager**, Ernst & Young, 2001–2002
- **Commercial Manager**, Australian Defence Industries, 1997–2000
- **Senior Commercial Officer**, Siemens Limited, 1991–1996.

### STRATEGIC AND URBAN PLANNING

- **Darebin**: Economic Land Use Strategy and expert evidence. Client: City of Darebin.
- **Southern and Inner South-East**: Regional Framework Plans. Client: DELWP.
- **Mackay Industrial Land Study**. Client: Mackay Regional Council.
- **Mornington Aged Care Analysis**. Client: AMP Capital Investments.
- **Numurkah Economic Development Plan**. Client: Moira Shire Council.

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## URBAN POLICY ANALYSIS

- **Armstrong Creek:** Development Contributions Analysis. Client: Coles.
- **Ballarat West:** Development Contributions Plan analysis and expert evidence. Client: G&N Closter.
- **Cost Benefit Analysis** of Level Crossing Removals (Mitcham, Rooks and Springvale Roads). Client: VicRoads
- **Gold Coast City Plan Review.** Client: Gold Coast City Council.
- **Fishermans Bend:** High-Density Residential Concept Testing. Client: Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria).
- **Heidelberg Parking Strategy and expert evidence.** Client: Banyule City Council.
- **Northland High-Density Residential Development Concept Testing.** Client: Department of Sustainability and Environment.
- **Viability of Higher-Density Residential Development in Middle Melbourne.** Client: the Priority Development Panel and 10 Year Report Refresh for DELWP.

## RESIDENTIAL AND AGED CARE ASSESSMENT

- **Armstrong Creek:** Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence. Client: Dennis Family Corporation.
- **Ballarat Residential Land Assessment.** Client: Thorney Investments.
- **Bendigo Housing Strategy Review and Evidence.** Client: Urban Development Institute of Australia (Victoria).
- **Cape Patterson:** Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence. Client: Wallis Watson.
- **Kyneton Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence.** Client: ZFN Management Services.
- **Melbourne Inner North:** Residential Market Assessment. Client: Department of Planning and Community Development.
- **Shepparton North-East:** Growth Area Residential Land Assessment. Client: Mondous Property.

- **Torquay Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence.** Client: Amex Corporation.
- **Warragul:** Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence. Client: Planning Central.
- **Warrnambool:** Housing Strategy Analysis and expert evidence. Client: Rodgers Properties.
- **Woodend:** Residential Land Assessment and expert evidence. Client: Villawood Properties.

## RETAIL, COMMERCIAL, INDUSTRIAL AND TOURISM ANALYSIS

- **Western Geelong:** Growth Area Activity Centre. Client: McCann Family.
- **Mildura:** Industrial Land Assessment and expert evidence. Client: Turk Superannuation Fund.
- **Nathalia and Numurkah:** Industrial Land Demand and Feasibility Assessment. Client: Nathalia Community Bank.
- **Proposed Theme Park Economic Assessment.** Client: Beveridge Williams.
- **Regional Urban Development Program (Industrial).** Client: Department of Planning and Community Development.
- **Tocumwal Foreshore:** Masterplan Economic Benefits Analysis. Client: Berrigan Shire Council.
- **Wangaratta CBD:** Master Plan Economic Benefits Analysis. Client: Wangaratta City Council.

## OTHER

- **VCAT, Planning Panels Victoria, and New South Wales Land and Environment Court:** Role as Expert Witness on behalf of private and public sector clients.
- **Sessional Member.** Client: Planning Panels Victoria (2005–2013).
- **Urban Economics for Property Developers:** UDIA Victoria, preparation and presentation for industry property development course (annual, between 2009 and 2013).
- **Conference Presentations and Published Articles.**