



Planning Panels Victoria

Department of Transport and Planning

1 Spring Street
Melbourne Victoria 3000
GPO Box 2392
Melbourne, Victoria 3001
Telephone (03) 5381 9457

6 February 2026

Dear Submitter

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Amendments C444ggee and C453ggee: Southeast Lara Residential Growth Area and Lara Industrial Business Park

We are writing to you because you made a submission to the above planning scheme amendments. Greater Geelong Council has referred all submissions to a Panel. The members for this Panel are in the process of being appointed.

This letter:

- tells you about the Public Hearing process
- tells you what you need to do if you want to participate in the Public Hearing
- explains how we will use information we collect
- sets out draft directions for the Hearing.

The Amendments

Amendment C444ggee (Southeast Lara Residential Growth Area) proposes to facilitate the residential development of land within urban Geelong's Settlement Boundary and identified in the Lara Structure Plan 2011 as being able to accommodate residential development. The Amendment seeks to do this by rezoning land for residential development from Farming Zone to General Residential Zone Schedule 1 and land reserved for open space and drainage from Farming Zone to Industrial 3 Zone to ensure alignment with future surrounding land use. The Amendment also applies the Environmental Audit Overlay and a new Development Plan Overlay Schedule 48.

Amendment C453ggee (Lara Industrial Business Park) proposes to facilitate the industrial and commercial development of land in accordance with the objectives sought under the G21 Regional Growth Plan 2013 and Lara Structure Plan 2011. The Amendment seeks to do this by rezoning land from Farming Zone to Industrial 3 Zone and Industrial 1 Zone and applying Design and Development Overlay Schedule 55.

Council is the Planning Authority for the Amendments. The Proponent is Tract Consultants Pty Ltd on behalf of Lara Farms Pty Ltd.

The Hearing process

The public Panel process includes a Directions Hearing and a main Hearing.

The Panel will:

- consider submitters in an independent forum
- be informal and not like a court
- give fair, unbiased advice to Council and the Minister for Planning about the Amendments.

Submissions and other information presented throughout the process, including the Hearing, **will be treated as public documents**. Please carefully read the attached *Privacy Collection Notice*.

Privacy Statement

Any personal information about you or a third party in your correspondence will be protected under the provisions of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. It will only be used or disclosed to appropriate Ministerial, Statutory Authority, or departmental staff in regard to the purpose for which it was provided, unless required or authorised by law. Enquiries about access to information about you held by the Department should be directed to the Privacy Coordinator, Department of Transport and Planning, GPO Box 2392, East Melbourne, Victoria 3001.



Directions Hearing

The purpose of the Directions Hearing is for parties to introduce themselves, discuss the process and make arrangements for the main Hearing.

You should attend the Directions Hearing if you:

- are new to the Panel process and/or wish to participate in the Hearing
- have questions about the Panel process or wish to raise procedural issues.

At the Directions Hearing, the Panel will:

- give directions about exchanging information before the Hearing and the conduct of the Hearing
- consider Hearing times and venue and site inspections
- answer questions people have about the Panel process including the Hearing.

The Panel will issue written directions after considering all requests to be heard and any additional matters raised at the Directions Hearing.

The Directions Hearing will be held online

10:00am, Monday, 2 March 2026

You can join online by video using Microsoft Teams: [Join the meeting](#)

Hearing

The purpose of the main Hearing is for people to speak to their written submission and to hear from the Planning Authority and/or Proponent. The Hearing will start on Monday 13 April 2026 and should run for six days. The Hearing is open for anyone to attend.

The Panel will consider all referred written submissions when preparing its report, including those from submitters who do not attend the Hearing.

Key dates

The Key Information attached to this letter includes a list of key dates for circulating information in the leadup to the Hearing. If you wish to comment on the key dates or any other matters but are unable to attend the Directions Hearing, you can provide comments in writing to office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au by Friday, 27 February 2026.

If you wish to be involved in the Hearing

Please complete the [online request to be heard form](#) by 12 noon on Friday 27 February 2026 if:

- you wish to be involved in the Hearing
- you do not wish to speak but would like a copy of the timetable and directions.

Notes on completing the online request to be heard form are attached.

Further Information

Please find attached to this letter:

- Guidance on completing the online request to be heard form
- Key information including proposed dates and directions, more about how like submissions will be treated, and the Foley's List Legal Assistance Service
- The *Privacy Collection Notice* which explains how your submission will be used by the Panel.

Further information including the *What is a Panel?* guide, *Guide to the Public Hearing* and *Frequently Asked Questions* are available at:

www.planningpanels.vic.gov.au/guides-and-resources

If you need a paper copy of these documents or if you have any other questions, please contact Chris Brennan, Senior Project Officer, Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 9935 4142 or email office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Laura Travis

Office Manager, Planning Panels Victoria

Completing the Request to be Heard Form

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Amendments C444ggee and C453ggee:
Southeast Lara Residential Growth Area and Lara Industrial Business Park

When completing the online [request to be heard](#) form, please note the following details.

When will the Hearing be held?

The expected hearing dates are between 13/04/2026 and 20/04/2026.

What if I have availability issues during the expected hearing dates?

You can tell us when you are not available.

The Panel will accommodate your availability where possible.

Time required to present your submission

You will be allocated 10 minutes for your submission if this field is left blank.

Experts

An expert gives evidence in a field of expertise and must prepare an expert statement.

If you propose to call experts, you must:

- provide details of all experts on the request to be heard form – this includes their name, organisation, and field of expertise
- circulate expert reports at the time directed by the Panel before the Hearing.

Please note that it is critical the Panel receives this information about experts on time as it assists in planning the draft timetable for the Hearing before the Directions Hearing.

Experts may be directed to participate in a conference of experts and contribute to preparing a joint experts report.

Participants in the Hearing can generally cross-examine experts.

What happens after I complete the form?

If you complete this form, a letter with directions and a timetable for the Hearing will be emailed to you after the Directions Hearing. Your name and email address will be added to the Distribution List for circulating information, including reports and submissions for the Hearing unless you tell us otherwise.

What if I do not have an email address?

Please contact Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 5381 9457 as soon as possible if you need a form mailed to you. A paper copy of documents such as the timetable will be mailed to submitters who provide a postal address.

How will my contact information be used?

We will use your contact address to contact you. We will provide your email or postal address to participants in the Hearing so that they can share reports and submissions unless you tell us otherwise.

Access requirements

Please contact PPV with any access requirements. Some Hearings are at PPV, some are at other locations (for example, local Council offices) and some are held online. PPV Hearing Rooms are equipped with a hearing loop, and a laptop and projector if required. If the Hearing is held at another location, we may need to ensure access requirements can be met.

Key information

Greater Geelong Planning Scheme Amendments C444ggee and C453ggee:
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Preliminary list of issues

Council has identified the following issues in submissions:

- Increased traffic levels
- Inadequate road infrastructure
- Drafting changes to overlay schedules
- School capacities.

Summary of proposed key dates and directions

The following dates are proposed:

Time	Date	Documents to be circulated and other matters
12 noon	Friday, 13 March 2026	Expert details
12 noon	Friday, 13 March 2026	Council must provide a submitter location map to the Panel only
12 noon	Friday, 13 March 2026	Council documents specified
12 noon	Friday, 13 March 2026	The Proponent documents specified
12 noon	Monday, 30 March 2026	Council/Proponent agreed statement of issues
12 noon	Monday, 30 March 2026	Council Part A (background and context) submission
12 noon	Monday, 30 March 2026	Proponent background submission
12 noon	Tuesday, 7 April 2026	Council expert statement(s)
12 noon	Tuesday, 7 April 2026	Proponent expert statement(s)
12 noon	Tuesday, 7 April 2026	Other parties expert statement(s)
12 noon	Friday, 10 April 2026	Any supplementary submission from a party not appearing at the Hearing
10:00am	Monday, 13 April 2026	Hearing commences

Key information:

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How 'like submissions' will be treated

In determining whether submissions are like submissions, the Panel may have regard to any of the following (section 158C(2) of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*):

- whether the issues raised in the submissions are the same or substantially the same
- whether the wording of the submissions is the same or substantially the same
- any other relevant matter.

Submitters who prepared like submissions should note:

- if a lead submitter is designated, the Panel will only be required to hear from the lead submitter
- if no lead submitter is designated because no person consents to being designated, the Panel is not required to hear from any submitters who prepared submissions that are the same or substantially the same.

Refer to sections 158C, 158D and 158E of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

Foley's List Legal Assistance Service

The Legal Assistance Service, offered by Foley's List barristers, offers low-cost or no-cost legal support to eligible submitters in Planning Panels Victoria hearings. Available to individuals and community groups, the service offers legal advice and representation to help participants navigate PPV processes (subject to barrister availability). Assistance ranges from preliminary advice to full representation, with fees reduced or waived. To participate, submitters must meet eligibility criteria. More information about the service is available on the PPV [website](#), including information on who to contact at Foley's List to apply for the service.

Planning Panels Victoria Privacy Notice

Your personal information will be collected during this Panel process for the purpose of documenting your views about the Amendments, advising the planning authority and the Minister for Planning about the Amendments, and communicating with you throughout the Panel process.

While the Panel process is underway

Natural justice for all participants and transparency are important parts of the Panel process. The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* requires the Panel to conduct any Hearing it holds in public, and to keep a public record of the material provided to the Panel. Planning Panels Victoria (PPV) may:

- provide a copy of your material with all contact details to the Proponent, government agencies and other parties to the Hearing
- provide a copy of your material to any other person who requests it (your personal information will be removed first)
- provide a copy of your material to the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) if needed for preparing Ministerial briefings
- publicly display a copy of your material in the PPV Office or Hearing room
- direct that a copy of your material be publicly displayed in the relevant local council office or DTP regional office.

Hearings

The Panel may conduct a Hearing, either in person or using video conferencing. Hearings by video conference have special privacy requirements. If you choose to participate in the Hearing, you should be aware:

- a link to the Hearing will be published on the internet, and third parties will be able to join the Hearing and observe
- the Panel may broadcast the Hearing live on the internet.

The Panel may make a recording of the Hearing and may provide a copy of any recording to any person who requests it. Where Hearings are recorded, generally audio only is recorded (not video).

The Panel can hear submissions or accept material on a confidential basis, provided this would be fair to the other parties to the Hearing. If you want to make your submissions or provide material to the Panel confidentially, you will need to ask permission from the Panel Chair and provide reasons why the Panel should treat your submissions or material confidentially.

The Panel report

Under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*, a Panel report is a public document. The Panel's report will include a list of the names of submitters and a list of the names of the parties to the Hearing. It may include direct quotes from submitters. The report will be published on the internet up to 10 business days after it has been provided to the Planning Authority.

After the Panel has reported

When the Panel has reported to the Planning Authority, your material will be removed from public display.

Requesting copies

If you would like a copy of any submissions or material collected by the Panel, or a copy of any recording the Panel makes of the Hearing, make a request to PPV by email at office@planningpanels.vic.gov.au before the Panel submits its report. If the Panel has reported, you should submit your request to the DTP Freedom of Information and Privacy Unit at foi.unit@transport.vic.gov.au.

If you have any concerns about how your submission will be used, please contact Planning Panels Victoria on (03) 8572 7999.